

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Prima pars

Quaestio 13 [De divinis nominibus]

Prooemium

Consideratis his quae ad divinam cognitionem pertinent, procedendum est ad considerationem divinorum nominum, unumquodque enim nominatur a nobis, secundum quod ipsum cognoscimus. Circa hoc ergo quaeruntur duodecim. Primo, utrum Deus sit nominabilis a nobis. Secundo, utrum aliqua nomina dicta de Deo, praedicentur de ipso substantialiter. Tertio, utrum aliqua nomina dicta de Deo, proprie dicantur de ipso; an omnia attribuantur ei metaphorice. Quarto, utrum multa nomina dicta de Deo, sint synonyma. Quinto, utrum nomina aliqua dicantur de Deo et creaturis univoce, vel aequivoce. Sexto, supposito quod dicantur analogice, utrum dicantur de Deo per prius, vel de creaturis. Septimo, utrum aliqua nomina dicantur de Deo ex tempore. Octavo, utrum hoc nomen Deus sit nomen naturae, vel operationis. Nono, utrum hoc nomen Deus sit nomen communicabile. Decimo, utrum accipiatur univoce vel aequivoce, secundum quod significat Deum per naturam, et per participationem, et secundum opinionem. Undecimo, utrum hoc nomen qui est sit maxime proprium nomen Dei. Duodecimo, utrum propositiones affirmativae possint formari de Deo.

Articulus 1

Ad primum sic proceditur. Videtur quod nullum nomen Deo conveniat.

1. Dicit enim Dionysius, I cap. de Div. Nom., quod neque nomen eius est, neque opinio. Et Prov. XXX dicitur, *quod nomen eius, et quod nomen filii eius, si nosti?*
2. Praeterea, omne nomen aut dicitur in abstracto, aut in concreto. Sed nomina significantia in concreto, non competunt Deo, cum simplex sit, neque nomina significantia in abstracto, quia non significant aliquid perfectum subsistens. Ergo nullum nomen potest dici de Deo.
3. Praeterea, nomina significant substantiam cum qualitate; verba autem et participia significant cum tempore; pronomina autem cum demonstratione vel relatione. Quorum nihil competit Deo, quia sine qualitate est et sine omni accidente, et sine tempore; et sentiri non potest, ut demonstrari possit; nec relative significari, cum relativa sint aliquorum antedictorum recordativa, vel nominum, vel participiorum, vel pronominum demonstrativorum. Ergo Deus nullo modo potest nominari a nobis.

Sed contra est quod dicitur Exod. XV, *dominus quasi vir pugnator, omnipotens nomen eius.*

Respondeo dicendum quod, secundum philosophum, voces sunt signa intellectuum, et intellectus sunt rerum similitudines. Et sic patet quod voces referuntur ad res significandas, mediante conceptione intellectus. Secundum igitur quod aliquid a nobis intellectu cognosci potest, sic a nobis potest nominari. Ostensum est autem supra quod Deus in hac vita non potest a nobis videri per suam essentiam; sed cognoscitur a nobis ex creaturis, secundum habitudinem principii, et per modum excellentiae et remotiois. Sic igitur potest nominari a nobis ex creaturis, non tamen ita quod nomen significans ipsum, exprimat divinam essentiam secundum quod est, sicut hoc nomen homo exprimit sua significatione essentiam hominis secundum quod est, significat enim eius definitionem, declarantem eius essentiam; ratio enim quam significat nomen, est definitio.

Ad primum ergo dicendum quod ea ratione dicitur Deus non habere nomen, vel esse supra nominationem, quia essentia eius est supra id quod de Deo intelligimus et voce significamus.

Ad secundum dicendum quod, quia ex creaturis in Dei cognitionem venimus, et ex ipsis eum nominamus, nomina quae Deo attribuimus, hoc modo significant, secundum quod competit creaturis materialibus, quarum cognitio est nobis connaturalis, ut supra dictum est. Et quia in huiusmodi creaturis, ea quae sunt perfecta et subsistentia sunt composita; forma autem in eis non est aliquid completum subsistens, sed magis quo aliquid est, inde est quod omnia nomina a nobis imposita ad significandum aliquid completum subsistens, significant in concrectione, prout competit compositis; quae autem imponuntur ad significandas formas simplices, significant aliquid non ut subsistens, sed ut quo aliquid est, sicut albedo significat ut quo aliquid est album. Quia igitur et Deus simplex est, et subsistens est, attribuimus ei et nomina abstracta, ad significandam simplicitatem eius; et nomina concreta, ad significandum subsistentiam et perfectionem ipsius, quamvis utraque nomina deficient a modo ipsius, sicut intellectus noster non cognoscit eum ut est, secundum hanc vitam.

Ad tertium dicendum quod significare substantiam cum qualitate, est significare suppositum cum natura vel forma determinata in qua subsistit. Unde, sicut de Deo dicuntur aliqua in concrectione, ad significandum subsistentiam et perfectionem ipsius, sicut iam dictum est, ita dicuntur de Deo nomina significantia substantiam cum qualitate. Verba vero et participia consignantia tempus dicuntur de ipso, ex eo quod aeternitas includit omne tempus, sicut enim simplicia subsistentia non possumus apprehendere et significare nisi per modum compositorum, ita simplicem aeternitatem non possumus intelligere vel voce exprimere, nisi per modum temporalium rerum; et hoc propter connaturalitatem intellectus nostri ad res compositas et temporales. Pronomina vero demonstrativa dicuntur de Deo, secundum quod faciunt demonstrationem ad id quod intelligitur, non ad id quod sentitur, secundum enim quod a nobis intelligitur, secundum hoc sub demonstratione cadit. Et sic, secundum illum modum quo nomina et participia et pronomina demonstrativa de Deo dicuntur, secundum hoc et pronomibus relativis significari potest.

Comments

The Latin *nomen* in the question “*utrum aliquod nomen Deo conveniat?*” can be translated either as “name” or “noun,” the latter suggesting grammatical considerations, which we sometimes get, as in the answer to the third objection. But the text Thomas refers to for a reminder of how words signify is in a logical work, the *Perihermeneias*. This suggests that speaking about how words signify is a logical matter, but then how does logic relate to grammar?

Both are reflexive, or second-order, considerations. We speak and talk about things before we say anything about speaking or talking as such; we first have to talk to have something to talk

about in this way, and that is what is meant by saying it is a second-order consideration. It is as if we become aware that we have been speaking prose all along.

But first of all, the logic of meaning. Words are signs of concepts, what we understand, and concepts are likenesses of things. This has been called a triadic theory: words mean things via what we conceive or know of them. But isn't conceiving or thinking a psychological activity? Do our words first signify our mental activity, something going on in our minds, and then lead on to external things? Psychology too may be described as second-order. That is, it is only after having used our minds, having thought, put things together, and the like, that we would have anything to describe.

So we have three disciplines, grammar, logic and psychology, all of which are what we are calling second-order disciplines—they all presuppose an ongoing more or less unreflective activity which they proceed to reflect upon. Of course the second-order account is an account of first-order activities.

First, then, logic. Thomas will distinguish two kinds of terms or words or names, *nomina rerum* and words which name relations which attach to things insofar as we know and name them. "Bird," "gazelle" and "tree" are examples of the first kind of name; they name things in the external world. "The cat is on the mat," describes some state of affairs in the real order. As opposed to what? If I should say, "The word 'cat' means a four footed feline given to purring," Thomas would call that meaning the *ratio nominis*. Four footed felines given to purring exist in the external world, for good or ill, but to speak *of* that quasi-definition as the *meaning* of the word "cat" is not to add another characteristic to existent cats. So too when I observe that that *ratio* is shared by all those purring beasts and "cat" as meaning that is said of them all, I can sum this up by saying "Cat is a species." Which means that it is said of many numerically different things. But to be said of many numerically different things is not a property of any cats prowling about in the world. "Species" here names a logical relation, the relation we establish between a given word, "cat", and the grasp or understanding we have. Our understanding is of things in the world, but logical relations are not features of them as they exist out there.

First-order names are called names of first intention; second order names are names of second intention. In English "having second intentions" can mean that one has come to doubt the course he has embarked on; that is not of course the meaning here.

The account of signification—words are signs of concepts and concepts are likenesses of things—is *about* words of first-intention, *nomina rerum*. Given the fact that second-order names are *about* what goes on in our minds, the way in which first-order words mean things via our understanding of them, suggests that mental activity is not a pause on the route from words to things.

1. Cat is a four-footed feline given to purring.
2. Cat is a species.
3. Cat is a noun.

These three all seem to be about the same thing, the cat. But in (1) we are saying something about cats as they exist, in (2) we are referring to what happens to the feline nature as thought by us, and in (3) we are referring to a part of speech that the word "cat" exhibits in our language.

Let this preliminary explanation suffice for now.

Talk about naming draws our attention to logical relations. Logical relations attach to natures as we know them and are attributed to them, as in (2), but only obliquely or indirectly. Obviously it is important not to confuse the predicates of (1) and (2); equally obviously, it is easy to confuse them, since both are affirmations about the cat.

We name things as we know them, then, and this is also true in the case of God. We come to know God from the things around us, he cannot be known directly by us, and so it is that we transfer words used to speak of the things around us to God.

[Deus] cognoscitur a nobis ex creaturis, secundum habitudinem principii, et per modum excellentiae et remotionis.

These three ways of knowing God will become very familiar to us in the course of Question 13. But if they are the ways we know Him, and we name things as we know them, the divine names or attributes are going to reflect these three ways of knowing Him. Many things will be said of God in the course of this question, and many of them will be said of Him insofar as He is known and named by us. That is, they will be second-order or logical remarks. The occurrence of the term *ratio* in the sense of the meaning of a word or name, will alert us to this.

But lest the argument of the article be lost, let us summarize. Words are signs of concepts which are likenesses of things. We name things as we know them. God Himself cannot be directly known by us, but He becomes known to us in three ways from our knowledge of creatures. Names are transferred from their natural habitat, so to say, to God.

And of course this raises problems. A first is considered in the answer to the first objection. Our names are either concrete or abstract; this is so because of the things we directly know, the commensurate object of our minds, sensible reality. The concrete name signifies an existent something, but as complex: “man” is something having human nature. Abstract terms, on the other hand, signify the nature as such, humanity, but we don’t say that humanity exists in the way man does: the abstract term picks out that whereby men are men. Once more complexity. But in Question 3, we learned to remove all complexity from God; He is simple. So how can either abstract or concrete names be said of God? Only with care, only by denying that the complexity belongs to Him, and concentrating on the way concrete names are used to mean something subsistent—and we want to say that of God—and abstract names suggest simplicity—and we want to say that of God—but at the expense of subsistence. In either case, speaking of God requires concentrating on what we want to say of Him—that He subsists, that He is simple—and thinking away what we will learn to call the “way of signifying,” the *modus significandi* of our words, which always ties them to complex, sensible things. “Omne nomen cum defectu est quantum ad modum significandi,” as said of God. (I SCG 30)

Ad 2m: parts of grammar

- nouns signify *substantiam cum qualitate*

- Verbs and participles signify with time

- Pronouns, demonstrative and relative, refer to what is understood.

Articulus 2

Ad secundum sic proceditur. Videtur quod nullum nomen dicatur de Deo substantialiter.

1. Dicit enim Damascenus, *oportet singulum eorum quae de Deo dicuntur, non quid est secundum substantiam significare, sed quid non est ostendere, aut habitudinem quandam, aut aliquid eorum quae assequuntur naturam vel operationem.*

2. Praeterea, dicit Dionysius, I cap. de Div. Nom., *omnem sanctorum theologorum hymnum invenies, ad bonos thearchiae processus, manifestative et laudative Dei nominationes dividendum, et est sensus, quod nomina quae in divinam laudem sancti doctores assumunt, secundum processus ipsius Dei distinguuntur. Sed quod significat processum alicuius rei, nihil significat ad eius essentiam pertinens. Ergo nomina dicta de Deo, non dicuntur de ipso substantialiter.*

3. Praeterea, secundum hoc nominatur aliquid a nobis, secundum quod intelligitur. Sed non intelligitur Deus a nobis in hac vita secundum suam substantiam. Ergo nec aliquod nomen impositum a nobis, dicitur de Deo secundum suam substantiam.

Sed contra est quod dicit Augustinus, VI de Trin., *Deo hoc est esse, quod fortem esse vel sapientem esse, et si quid de illa simplicitate dixeris, quo eius substantia significatur.* Ergo omnia nomina huiusmodi significant divinam substantiam.

Respondeo dicendum quod de nominibus quae de Deo dicuntur negative, vel quae relationem ipsius ad creaturam significant, manifestum est quod substantiam eius nullo modo significant; sed remotionem alicuius ab ipso, vel relationem eius ad alium, vel potius alicuius ad ipsum. Sed de nominibus quae absolute et affirmative de Deo dicuntur, sicut bonus, sapiens, et huiusmodi, multipliciter aliqui sunt opinati.

Quidam enim dixerunt quod haec omnia nomina, licet affirmative de Deo dicantur, tamen magis inventa sunt ad aliquid removendum a Deo, quam ad aliquid ponendum in ipso. Unde dicunt quod, cum dicimus Deum esse viventem, significamus quod Deus non hoc modo est, sicut res inanimatae, et similiter accipiendum est in aliis. Et hoc posuit Rabbi Moyses.

Alii vero dicunt quod haec nomina imposita sunt ad significandum habitudinem eius ad creatura, ut, cum dicimus Deus est bonus, sit sensus, Deus est causa bonitatis in rebus. Et eadem ratio est in aliis.

Sed utrumque istorum videtur esse inconveniens, propter tria. Primo quidem, quia secundum neutram harum positionum posset assignari ratio quare quaedam nomina magis de Deo dicerentur quam alia. Sic enim est causa corporum, sicut est causa bonorum, unde, si nihil aliud significatur, cum dicitur Deus est bonus, nisi Deus est causa bonorum, poterit similiter dici quod Deus est corpus, quia est causa corporum. Item, per hoc quod dicitur quod est corpus, removetur quod non sit ens in potentia tantum, sicut materia prima. Secundo, quia sequeretur quod omnia nomina dicta de Deo, per posterius dicerentur de ipso, sicut sanum per posterius dicitur de medicina, eo quod significat hoc tantum quod sit causa sanitatis in animali, quod per prius dicitur sanum. Tertio, quia hoc est contra intentionem loquentium de Deo. Aliud enim intendunt dicere, cum dicunt Deum viventem, quam quod sit causa vitae nostrae, vel quod differat a corporibus inanimatis.

Et ideo aliter dicendum est, quod huiusmodi quidem nomina significant substantiam divinam, et praedicantur de Deo substantialiter, sed deficiunt a repraesentatione ipsius. Quod sic patet. Significant enim sic nomina Deum, secundum quod intellectus noster cognoscit ipsum. Intellectus autem noster, cum cognoscat Deum ex creaturis, sic cognoscit ipsum, secundum quod creaturae ipsum repraesentant. Ostensum est autem supra quod Deus in se praehabet omnes perfectiones creaturarum, quasi simpliciter et universaliter perfectus. Unde quaelibet creatura intantum eum repraesentat, et est ei similis, inquantum perfectionem aliquam habet, non tamen ita quod repraesentet eum sicut aliquid eiusdem speciei vel generis, sed sicut excellens principium, a cuius forma effectus deficiunt, cuius tamen aliqualem similitudinem effectus consequuntur; sicut formae corporum inferiorum repraesentant virtutem solarem. Et hoc supra expositum est, cum de perfectione divina agebatur. Sic igitur praedicta nomina divinam substantiam significant, imperfecte tamen, sicut et creaturae imperfecte eam repraesentant.

Cum igitur dicitur Deus est bonus, non est sensus, Deus est causa bonitatis, vel Deus non est malus, sed est sensus, id quod bonitatem dicimus in creaturis, praeeexistit in Deo, et hoc quidem secundum modum altiorem. Unde ex hoc non sequitur quod Deo competat esse bonum inquantum causat bonitatem, sed potius e converso, quia est bonus, bonitatem rebus diffundit, secundum illud Augustini, de Doct. Christ., *inquantum bonus est, sumus.*

Ad primum ergo dicendum quod Damascenus ideo dicit quod haec nomina non significant quid est Deus, quia a nullo istorum nominum exprimitur quid est Deus perfecte, sed unumquodque imperfecte eum significat, sicut et creaturae imperfecte eum repraesentant.

Ad secundum dicendum quod in significatione nominum, aliud est quandoque a quo imponitur nomen ad significandum, et id ad quod significandum nomen imponitur, sicut hoc nomen lapis imponitur ab eo quod laedit pedem, non tamen imponitur ad hoc significandum quod significet laedens pedem, sed ad significandam quandam speciem corporum; alioquin omne laedens pedem esset lapis. Sic igitur dicendum est quod huiusmodi divina nomina imponuntur quidem a processibus deitatis, sicut enim secundum diversos processus perfectionum, creaturae Deum repraesentant, licet imperfecte; ita intellectus noster, secundum unumquemque processum, Deum cognoscit et nominat. Sed tamen haec nomina non imponit ad significandum ipsos processus, ut, cum dicitur Deus est vivens, sit sensus, ab eo procedit vita, sed ad significandum ipsum rerum principium, prout in eo praeexistit vita, licet eminentiori modo quam intelligatur vel significetur.

Ad tertium dicendum quod essentiam Dei in hac vita cognoscere non possumus secundum quod in se est, sed cognoscimus eam secundum quod repraesentatur in perfectionibus creaturarum. Et sic nomina a nobis imposita eam significant.

Comments

The meaning of *substantialiter* is shown by contrasting it with names said negatively, to remove something from God, and with names said relatively, to relate God to creatures. These names are not predicated of God *substantialiter*, that is, do not signify the divine substance. But names which are said *absolute et affirmative*, such as “wise” and “good” are expressive of the divine nature, the substance of God.

This has been denied in two ways: one, by interpreting such names as if they are meant to deny something of God or to remove something from Him, as if to say that God is living means that he is not non-living or not inanimate. This view is ascribed to Moses Maimonides.

Others hold the former view, that positive or affirmative attributes are meant to relate God to creatures, not to express what He is. Thus to say of God that He is good means only that He is the cause of good in creatures. And so with the other affirmative attributes.

The discussion thus implies that divine attributes are of three kinds: negative, relative and affirmative, with some suggesting that there is only one kind, negative or relative.

When the reader reflects on the discussion that God is infinite (q. 7) or immutable (q. 9), that He is eternal (non-temporal) (q. 10) and one (q. 11), he becomes aware that these are negative attributes. On the other hand, to say that God is good (q. 6), the suggestion now is, is not to say what He is, but to denominate him from His effects, sc. that He causes goodness in creatures. It is this attribute, “good”, that provides the test case here for the view that would reduce all attributes to relative or negative status.

Three reasons are advanced against this reduction:

a) neither position seems to provide us with a reason why some names are said of God rather than others. After all, God is the cause of bodies which, on the reductive view, should lead to asserting that God is a body, that is, incorporeal, viz. not potential being, like prime matter. That would be parallel to interpreting “God is good” as merely signifying that God is not evil.

b) The reductive view entails that whatever is said of God is said of Him *per posterius*, secondarily or derivatively, much as “healthy” as said of medicine means that medicine is the cause of health in the animal. This choice of “healthy” is significant, as we shall see: this is the privileged

example of the analogous use of a term, and invoking it is meant to show that calling God good is to employ a secondary meaning of the term, “cause of goodness,” which invokes *sotto voce* the question: in what? And the answer would be like: cause of health in the animal. The latter meaning, “subject of health,” is the controlling meaning of the shared term, so that when it is in play, as in calling Fido healthy, “healthy” is being applied to its primary referent, that is, to that to which it applies *per prius*, not *per posterius*. In short, on this view saying that God is good would be just like saying medicine is healthy.

c) Quite simply, the reductive views of affirmative attributes go contrary to what we mean to say when employing them. When we say that God is living we just don’t mean that he is not inanimate or that He is the cause of our life.

The view that Thomas maintains arises from these rejections and undermines all efforts to interpret his view of divine names as ultimately expressive of the fact that we just don’t know anything positive about God. This apophatic view has captured the allegiance of many. It is clearly irreconcilable with this ringing assertion:

Et ideo aliter dicendum est, quod hujusmodi quidem nomina [i.e. positive or affirmative attributes] significant substantiam divinam, et praedicantur de Deo substantialiter, sed deficiunt a repraesentatione ipsius.

That final qualification, always made, cannot be taken simply to negate what it qualifies. Rather it draws attention to the rule expressed in article 1. Our names can signify God only insofar as we know Him; but we come to knowledge of God from knowledge of creatures, and this is to know Him insofar as creatures can represent Him. We are reminded of the earlier discussion in Question 4 where God was seen to have in a simply and universally perfect way all the perfections found in creatures. A creature can be taken to represent God, to be similar to Him, insofar as it has some perfection.

The underlying principle is captured in the maxim: *omne agens agit sibi simile*. Its effects are similar to the cause that brings them about. Sometimes, the similarity of the effect involves inclusion in the species or genus that contains the cause. In the case of the divine causality, effects are similar to him, not generically or specifically, but as relating to an *excellens principium* from which the forms of the effects will always fall short (*deficiunt*). A parallel is suggested in the causality of the sun with reference to terrestrial bodies, which have a certain likeness to the solar cause. Thomas’s intended reader will be reminded of the discussion of equivocal, as opposed to univocal, causes in Aristotle, although this terminology will not be expressly employed until the first objection in article 5 is discussed.

And, underscoring the importance he attaches to it, Thomas repeats what he takes to be the truth of the matter: “Sic igitur praedicta nomina divinam substantiam significant: imperfecte tamen, sicut et creaturae imperfecte eam repraesentant.” Our hope that more will be said of the source of this imperfection will be rewarded as the discussion continues.

So how should we interpret “God is good” understood *substantialiter*, and not merely negatively or relatively? Its sense is this: that which we call goodness in creature preexists in God but in a higher way (*modus*). Against the merely causal interpretation, Thomas observes that God is not good because he causes goodness; rather it is because He is goodness that he causes goodness in things. “Insofar as He is good,” Augustine observed, “we are.”

The second objection invokes the authority of the Dionysius of the *De divinis nominibus* to put forward the view that the divine names signify the processions from God, his causal activity on creatures. But to denominate an agent from what he causes is not to signify that agent *substantialiter*.

Id a quo et id ad quod nomen imponitur ad significandum

Since we name God according as we know him, and we come to know Him from creatures, how else could we name Him save from these effects? The objection seems unanswerable. Thomas addresses it by making a distinction between that from which a name is imposed to signify and that which it is imposed to signify. What does the distinction mean? It is explained by appealing to the term *lapis*, stone. This name is taken to be drawn from the fact that a stone can be an impediment, something against which we stumble, but the term “stone” does not mean that, but rather a certain kind of body—otherwise anything we stumble on would be a stone. So too it is with the divine names. They are imposed to signify from what proceeds from God (a processibus deitatis), creatures who represent God since they, as his effects, are like Him, although imperfectly. God is known and named from each such effect. But as is the case with the presumed etymology of “stone,” such names do not signify that from which they are imposed to signify, since they are used to mean the very principle or cause of things. For example, when we say that “God is living” we do not mean simply that living things are caused by Him, although the use or imposition of the name takes off from them; what we mean to say and signify is the principle of living things insofar as life preexists in Him, although in a more eminent way than can be understood or meant.

The third objection expresses the agnostic temptation. Something is signified by us to the degree that we know it. But we cannot understand God in this life as He is (*secundum suam substantiam*). It seems to follow that no name imposed by us could be expressive of the divine substance.

In reply, Thomas of course concedes that the divine essence cannot be known by us in this life as it is in itself. Nonetheless, we do know him, what He is, to the degree that he is represented in created perfections. And so it is that names imposed by us signify Him.

Articulus 3

Ad tertium sic proceditur. Videtur quod nullum nomen dicatur de Deo proprie.

1. Omnia enim nomina quae de Deo dicimus, sunt a creaturis accepta, ut dictum est. Sed nomina creaturarum metaphorice dicuntur de Deo, sicut cum dicitur Deus est lapis, vel leo, vel aliquid huiusmodi. Ergo omnia nomina dicta de Deo, dicuntur metaphorice.

2. Praeterea, nullum nomen proprie dicitur de aliquo, a quo verius removetur quam de eo praedicatur. Sed omnia huiusmodi nomina, bonus sapiens, et similia, verius removentur a Deo quam de eo praedicentur, ut patet per Dionysium, II cap. Cael. Hier. Ergo nullum istorum nominum proprie dicitur de Deo.

3. Praeterea, nomina corporum non dicuntur de Deo nisi metaphorice, cum sit incorporeus. Sed omnia huiusmodi nomina implicant quasdam corporales conditiones, significant enim cum tempore, et cum compositione, et cum aliis huiusmodi, quae sunt conditiones corporum. Ergo omnia huiusmodi nomina dicuntur de Deo metaphorice.

Sed contra est quod dicit Ambrosius, in Lib. II de fide, *sunt quaedam nomina, quae evidenter proprietatem divinitatis ostendunt; et quaedam quae perspicuam divinae maiestatis exprimunt veritatem; alia vero sunt, quae translative per similitudinem de Deo dicuntur*. Non igitur omnia nomina dicuntur de Deo metaphorice, sed aliqua dicuntur proprie.

Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut dictum est, Deum cognoscimus ex perfectionibus procedentibus in creaturas ab ipso; quae quidem perfectiones in Deo sunt secundum eminentiorem modum quam in creaturis. Intellectus autem noster eo modo apprehendit eas, secundum quod sunt in creaturis, et secundum quod apprehendit, ita significat per nomina. In nominibus igitur quae Deo attribuimus, est duo considerare, scilicet, perfectiones ipsas significatas, ut bonitatem, vitam, et huiusmodi; et modum significandi. Quantum igitur ad id quod significant huiusmodi nomina, proprie competunt Deo, et magis proprie quam ipsis creaturis, et per prius dicuntur de eo. Quantum vero ad modum significandi, non proprie dicuntur de Deo, habent enim modum significandi qui creaturis competit.

Ad primum ergo dicendum quod quaedam nomina significant huiusmodi perfectiones a Deo procedentes in res creatas, hoc modo quod ipse modus imperfectus quo a creatura participatur divina perfectio, in ipso nominis significato includitur, sicut lapis significat aliquid materialiter ens, et huiusmodi nomina non possunt attribui Deo nisi metaphorice. Quaedam vero nomina significant ipsas perfectiones absolute, absque hoc quod aliquis modus participandi claudatur in eorum significatione, ut ens, bonum vivens, et huiusmodi, et talia proprie dicuntur de Deo.

Ad secundum dicendum quod ideo huiusmodi nomina dicit Dionysius negari a Deo, quia id quod significatur per nomen, non convenit eo modo ei, quo nomen significat, sed excellentiori modo. Unde ibidem dicit Dionysius quod Deus est super omnem substantiam et vitam.

Ad tertium dicendum quod ista nomina quae proprie dicuntur de Deo important conditiones corporales, non in ipso significato nominis, sed quantum ad modum significandi. Ea vero quae metaphorice de Deo dicuntur, important conditionem corporalem in ipso suo significato.

Comments

Just as the meaning of substantialiter was established by contrasting it with names that signify negatively or relatively, so proprie is explained by contrasting it with the metaphorical or improprie. “Non igitur omnia nomina dicuntur de Deo metaphorice, sed aliqua dicuntur proprie.” (Sed contra)

If all names said of God are drawn from prior application to creatures, it would seem that they are all metaphorical. After all, “metaphor” involves a *metapherein* or transfer, and names are transferred from creatures to God. Perhaps this is why Dionysius says that such attributes as “good” and “wise” are more truly denied of God than affirmed of Him. (Obj. 2) Names of corporeal things are said of God metaphorically, but the original signification of all our names, given their origin in sense experience, ties them to corporeal things. How then can any divine name escape being used metaphorically?

Rather than skirting around the source of these objections, Thomas begins by insisting on it. We know God from the perfections He causes in creatures, perfections which exist in God in a more eminent way than they do in creatures.

Intellectus autem noster eo modo apprehendit eas, secundum quod sunt in creaturis, et secundum quod apprehendit, ita significat per nomina,

The epistemological and linguistic priority of the signification of such names derives from their signifying created perfections. How then can any divine name be other than metaphorical?

Id quod significatur et modus significandi eam

Thomas now introduces a crucial distinction, that between what a word signifies, the perfection, such as goodness, life and the like, and the way the perfection is signified. While the mode of signifying of all divine names will reflect their epistemological origin, in the case of such names as “good” and “living” the perfection signified by the name belongs properly to God (*proprie*) and indeed such names are said first of all (*per prius*) of Him. “Quantum vero ad modum significandi, non proprie dicuntur de Deo, habent enim modus significandi qui creaturis competit.” As Thomas has said in I *Summa contra gentes* 30, “Omne nomen cum defectu est quantum ad modum significandi.”

But if such names—“good,” “living,” and the like—involve a way of signifying a perfection that ties them to creatures, how can that be overcome when they are applied to God such that they are properly so applied and, indeed, said first of all of Him?

We must consider how such names are distinguished from others which are admittedly used only metaphorically of God. Divine names are metaphors when the creaturely way of participating in the divine perfection is included in what the word means, its *id quod significatur*. Thus the word “stone” includes in its very meaning something that exists materially (*aliquid materialiter ens*). Such a word can only be used metaphorically of God, since there is no way corporeality can be said properly of Him. As the parenthetical phrase indicates, if the stone were called simply a being (*ens*), it would be another story.

By contrast with such terms which can only be attributed to God metaphorically, there are others which signify a perfection *absolute*: that is, which do not involve in their principal meaning (*id quod significatur*) any mode of having or participating in that perfection. “Quaedam vero nomina significant ipsas perfectiones absolute, absque hoc quod aliquis modus participandi claudatur in eorum significationem ut ens, bonum, vivens, et hujusmodi: et talia proprie dicuntur de Deo.”

The *ratio* of any name, what it signifies, will always be complex, as is clear in the privileged instance when that ratio is the definition of the thing. To call a car an automobile does not take us anywhere if we are interested in knowing what a car is. The answer merely puts off the evil day. The distinction between what a word signifies and how it signifies it is a variation on this. But if the way the perfection is signified is the creaturely mode, even if the perfection does not involve a created mode of participating in the perfection, we seem to be faced with the need to say both that such an attribute as “wise” is said properly of God, *quantum ad rem significatam*, and that it is said improperly of Him, *quantum ad modum significandi*. Nonetheless, we can still distinguish such attributes from metaphors which involve creaturely limitation both in the *res significata* and in the *modus significandi*.

But that does not capture sufficiently what we are being told. Another mode of signifying the perfection seems called for when such terms are applied to God. Dionysius suggested some such progression as follows.

1. God is wise.
2. God is not wise.
3. God is wise in a more eminent mode.

But aren't 1 (the *via affirmationis*) and 2 (the *via negationis*) contradictory? To say both would seem to be to say nothing. But when the affirmation in 1 is taken to bear on the *res significata*, and the negation in 2 on the creaturely *modus significandi*, the two do not relate as contradictories. Furthermore, the negation of the creaturely mode is the basis for introducing the so-to-say divine mode (*excellentiore modus*; “super omnem substantiam et vitam,” in Dionysius’s phrase: the *via eminentiae*). This process would seem to be implicit in understanding any attribute which is said properly and not metaphorically of God. The effort to free the perfection from the created mode in

which we first become aware of it, and talk about it, must take into account the way the creaturely mode clings to our language. What was said earlier about the way in which concrete and abstract terms signify is obviously relevant here. When we call God “wisdom” we seem to escape from the creaturely mode of signification which ties the perfection down to an acquired characteristic of a subject distinct from that characteristic, as we understand “wise” in “Socrates is wise.” But of course abstract terms involve their own creaturely mode of signifying: wisdom is that whereby wise men are wise. So once again there is a mode of signifying that has to be denied of God: in “God is wisdom,” wisdom does not mean some perfection thanks to which He is wise, as if He were one thing and His wisdom another. This makes it clear that the remark that *omne nomen cum defectu est quantum ad modum significandi* applies to abstract as well as concrete nouns.

Articulus 4

Ad quartum sic proceditur. Videtur quod ista nomina dicta de Deo, sint nomina synonyma.

1. Synonyma enim nomina dicuntur, quae omnino idem significant. Sed ista nomina dicta de Deo, omnino idem significant in Deo, quia bonitas Dei est eius essentia, et similiter sapientia. Ergo ista nomina sunt omnino synonyma.
2. Si dicatur quod ista nomina significant idem secundum rem, sed secundum rationes diversas, contra, ratio cui non respondet aliquid in re, est vana; si ergo istae rationes sunt multae, et res est una, videtur quod rationes istae sint vanae.
3. Praeterea, magis est unum quod est unum re et ratione, quam quod est unum re et multiplex ratione. Sed Deus est maxime unus. Ergo videtur quod non sit unus re et multiplex ratione. Et sic nomina dicta de Deo non significant rationes diversas, et ita sunt synonyma.

Sed contra, omnia synonyma, sibi invicem adiuncta, negationem adducunt, sicut si dicatur vestis indumentum. Si igitur omnia nomina dicta de Deo sunt synonyma, non posset convenienter dici Deus bonus, vel aliquid huiusmodi; cum tamen scriptum sit Ierem. XXXII, *fortissime, magne, potens, dominus exercituum nomen tibi.*

Respondeo dicendum quod huiusmodi nomina dicta de Deo, non sunt synonyma. Quod quidem facile esset videre, si diceremus quod huiusmodi nomina sunt inducta ad removendum, vel ad designandum habitudinem causae respectu creaturarum, sic enim essent diversae rationes horum nominum secundum diversa negata, vel secundum diversos effectus connotatos. Sed secundum quod dictum est huiusmodi nomina substantiam divinam significare, licet imperfecte, etiam plane apparet, secundum praemissa, quod habent rationes diversas. Ratio enim quam significat nomen, est conceptio intellectus de re significata per nomen. Intellectus autem noster, cum cognoscat Deum ex creaturis, format ad intelligendum Deum conceptiones proportionatas perfectionibus procedentibus a Deo in creaturas. Quae quidem perfectiones in Deo praeexistunt unite et simpliciter, in creaturis vero recipiuntur divise et multipliciter. Sicut igitur diversis perfectionibus creaturarum respondet unum simplex principium, repraesentatum per diversas perfectiones creaturarum varie et multipliciter; ita variis et multiplicibus conceptibus intellectus nostri respondet unum omnino simplex, secundum huiusmodi conceptiones imperfecte intellectum. Et ideo nomina Deo attributa, licet significant unam rem, tamen, quia significant eam sub rationibus multis et diversis, non sunt synonyma

Et sic patet solutio ad primum, quia nomina synonyma dicuntur, quae significant unum secundum unam rationem. Quae enim significant rationes diversas unius rei, non primo et per se unum significant, quia nomen non significat rem, nisi mediante conceptione intellectus, ut dictum est.

Ad secundum dicendum quod rationes plures horum nominum non sunt cassae et vanae, quia omnibus eis respondet unum quid simplex, per omnia huiusmodi multipliciter et imperfecte repraesentatum.

Ad tertium dicendum quod hoc ipsum ad perfectam Dei unitatem pertinet, quod ea quae sunt multipliciter et divisim in aliis, in ipso sunt simpliciter et unite. Et ex hoc contingit quod est unus re et plures secundum rationem, quia intellectus noster ita multipliciter apprehendit eum, sicut res multipliciter ipsum repraesentant.

Comments

There is a plurality of divine attributes but only one God, so these attributes seem to be synonyms, synonyms being terms quod omnino idem significant. The difficulty arises from the claim that some names are said *proprie* of God. If the divine attributes were interpreted as some would have it, as effectively negative (“God is living” being taken to mean the denial that He is inanimate) or as relating God to creatures (“God is living” taken to mean that He is the cause of living things), they clearly would not be synonymous since their meanings would vary with the things negated or caused. This path is not open to Thomas, because of his insistence that the affirmative attributes signify the divine substance, although imperfectly. But if they all signify the divine substance, and the divine substance is one, don’t they signify in a way that is wholly the same? How could they differ in meaning? Thomas’s solution draws attention to the cumulative effect of the discussions in Question 13.

Sed secundum quod dictum est (art. 1) huiusmodi nomina substantiam divinam significare, licet imperfecte, etiam plane apparet secundum praemissa (aa. 1, 2), quod habet rationes diversas. Ratio enim quam significat nomen, est conceptio intellectus de re significata per nomen. Intellectus autem noster, cum cognoscat Deum ex creaturis, format ad intelligendum Deum conceptiones proportionatas perfectionibus procedentibus a Deo in creaturas.

Our words have meanings based on our experience of that which is the commensurate object of our intellect, the quiddity of sensible substance. That is, we form ideas to express what the things we experience are. Such quiddities or natures are discerned by the agent intellect in the experience gained by the senses. (Q. 12, a. 4) There are some sensibles that are known in themselves, such as heat and color, the proper objects of the external senses, and when these are named they are not named from something more obvious than themselves. They are immediately known and obvious to us, such that other things are denominated from them, e.g. the hot or colored thing. (see below, article 8) To say that the quiddity or essence of sensible things is the commensurate object of our mind does not mean that we straightaway grasp the essences of things in their particularity. Substances are denominated from their sensible accidents (and thus as a class are called sensibilia, things that can be sensed), but the essence is not a direct object of the external or internal senses. The phantasm formed by the inner senses from the data of the external senses is that in which the agent intellect discerns the nature, abstracting it from singular conditions. But obviously the essence

in its specificity is not grasped right off the bat, as if we simply formed the proper definitions of sensible substances more or less immediately.

Intellectual knowledge begins with the vaguest and most commodious concepts of the things of our sense experience. Not only does our intellect know things universally, prescinding from their singular characteristics, it first knows them in a most universal and generic way. (See below, article 9) Our way of knowing the things which are the commensurate objects of our mind involves an extended process which may eventually result in the proper or specific definition of a nature or quiddity. But the preceding more universal grasps are grasps of that nature.

One could go on, but perhaps this will suffice to indicate the complexity of what Thomas in his commentary on the Physics calls the *ordo determinandi*. More and more determinate knowledge is gained by a process, and initial analyses of the things around us involve a terminology which can be retained and put to new uses as more determinate knowledge is gained. This can be seen by considering the careers of such terms as “form” and “matter” as well as of “act” and “potency.”

The first things we say of the things around us, things which come to be as the result of a change, which constantly alter and move around, and ultimately cease to be, are of glittering generality. Whatever comes to be involves a subject which, from not having a given characteristic, comes to have that characteristic. In terms of an example of what one comes to call an alteration, a change in quality, the terms in the preceding statement are replaced by matter (subject) and form (characteristic). Wood which was hitherto of a natural shape emerges from the mill in the form of planks. The Greek word for wood is *hyle*, the Greek word for form is *morphe*. The result of such a change is a new shape of the subject or matter, hence talk of the hylomorphic composition of things which result from a change. This terminology is retained when the analysis moves on to change in the order of quantity and change of place, and its retention is a reminder of the earlier and very accessible example. Such analyses bear on the things around us, but denominate them from very obvious changes. There is nothing daring about such talk, and anyone can follow what is being said, not least because it is not telling us very much. But it is a first step.

Since the changes of things first analyzed leave untouched the bearers of the forms involved, the question arises as to whether this preliminary analysis can be applied to the bearers of such qualities as well, to the basic things, the countable particulars in the world, call them substances (entities). This next step—do substances themselves come to be and not merely take on new qualities and lose others while remaining basically the same?—reposes on two unquestionable facts. First, there are indeed basic entities in the world, known through but not identifiable with the characteristics or forms they gain and lose. Second, these substances come into being and pass away. There was a time when Fido did not exist and, alas, the day will come when Fido is no more. No one is likely to deny that, or deny that Fido is one thing, the tree he is writing on another, his master yet another, and so on and on. But what is the subject or matter of the change which results in the existence of a substance or entity tout court?

Aristotle suggests that we can know it on an analogy with the subject or matter of incidental change. That is, just as a subject like water changes from warm to hot, from not being hot to being hot, so there must be a subject which from not being Fido comes to be Fido—if Fido comes to be as the result of a change. When Fido, from being asleep comes to be awake, the subject is Fido. Since Fido is there before and after the change, he comes to be only in a certain respect, temperature; he does not come to be without qualification. The subject of substantial change, that to which it is attributed, must also survive the change, but if it were itself an entity or substance, whatever it gained would make it to be only in a certain respect. This leads to the recognition that the subject of substantial change cannot itself be a substance. It is therefore designated negatively—it is not itself a substance but a constituent or element of substance. And the form gained is not merely an accidental modification of the subject, but results in a kind of thing, an entity or substance. All

this is gathered into an account of the subject of substantial change by calling it prime matter. The form it gains is not an incidental but rather a constitutive characteristic, call it substantial form.

All this has been meant to give some sense of how complicated a thing is covered by the phrase, “ratio quam nomen significat est conceptio intellectus de re significata per nomen.” Since God is known by us on the basis of what we know of creatures, the mind forms conceptions to understand him which are proportionate to the perfections God has created. Since these perfections differ, the notions differ, and there is a plurality of divine names. But these diverse created perfections imperfectly represent God because in Him these exist in a unified and simple way. Wisdom and justice and life are, in creatures, different perfections but in God they are all identical with His substance. His one simple substance is represented variously and multiply by the perfections in His creatures. The many ideas we form to express created perfections imperfectly reflect their single and simple source.

Et ideo nomina Deo attributa, licet significant unam rem, tamen, quia significant eam sub rationibus multis et diversis, non sunt synonyma.

We might say that, while they have different senses, they have the same reference.

If the divine attributes were synonymous, they would not only signify or refer to the same thing, they would name and signify it by the same senses or meanings (rationes). As it is, given their origin in created perfections, their many notions, the divine attributes may be said to mean the same thing, but via different meanings. (It is these two senses of “mean” that gives rise to the problem.) And vocal sounds, we remember, signify the thing through the conceptions formed of it: signification is not a one-to-one relation between name and thing.

Articulus 5

Ad quintum sic proceditur. Videtur quod ea quae dicuntur de Deo et creaturis, univoce de ipsis dicantur.

1. Omne enim aequivocum reducitur ad univocum, sicut multa ad unum. Nam si hoc nomen canis aequivoce dicitur de latrabili et marino, oportet quod de aliquibus univoce dicatur, scilicet de omnibus latrabilibus, aliter enim esset procedere in infinitum. Inveniuntur autem quaedam agentia univoca, quae conveniunt cum suis effectibus in nomine et definitione, ut homo generat hominem; quaedam vero agentia aequivoca, sicut sol causat calidum, cum tamen ipse non sit calidus nisi aequivoce. Videtur igitur quod primum agens, ad quod omnia agentia reducuntur, sit agens univocum. Et ita, quae de Deo et creaturis dicuntur, univoce praedicantur.

2. Praeterea, secundum aequivoca non attenditur aliqua similitudo. Cum igitur creaturae ad Deum sit aliqua similitudo, secundum illud Genes. I, *faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram*, videtur quod aliquid univoce de Deo et creaturis dicatur.

3. Praeterea, mensura est homogenera mensurato, ut dicitur in X Metaphys. Sed Deus est prima mensura omnium entium, ut ibidem dicitur. Ergo Deus est homogenerus creaturis. Et ita aliquid univoce de Deo et creaturis dici potest.

Sed contra, quidquid praedicatur de aliquibus secundum idem nomen et non secundum eandem rationem, praedicatur de eis aequivoce. Sed nullum nomen convenit Deo secundum illam rationem, secundum quam dicitur de creatura, nam sapientia in creaturis est qualitas, non autem in Deo;

genus autem variatum mutat rationem, cum sit pars definitionis. Et eadem ratio est in aliis. Quidquid ergo de Deo et creaturis dicitur, aequivoce dicitur.

Praeterea, Deus plus distat a creaturis, quam quaecumque creaturae ab invicem. Sed propter distantiam quarundam creaturarum, contingit quod nihil univoce de eis praedicari potest; sicut de his quae non conveniunt in aliquo genere. Ergo multo minus de Deo et creaturis aliquid univoce praedicatur, sed omnia praedicantur aequivoce

Respondeo dicendum quod impossibile est aliquid praedicari de Deo et creaturis univoce. Quia omnis effectus non adaequans virtutem causae agentis, recipit similitudinem agentis non secundum eandem rationem, sed deficienter, ita ut quod divisim et multipliciter est in effectibus, in causa est simpliciter et eodem modo; sicut sol secundum unam virtutem, multiformes et varias formas in istis inferioribus producit. Eodem modo, ut supra dictum est, omnes rerum perfectiones, quae sunt in rebus creatis divisim et multipliciter, in Deo praeexistunt unite. Sic igitur, cum aliquod nomen ad perfectionem pertinens de creatura dicitur, significat illam perfectionem ut distinctam secundum rationem definitionis ab aliis, puta cum hoc nomen sapiens de homine dicitur, significamus aliquam perfectionem distinctam ab essentia hominis, et a potentia et ab esse ipsius, et ab omnibus huiusmodi. Sed cum hoc nomen de Deo dicimus, non intendimus significare aliquid distinctum ab essentia vel potentia vel esse ipsius. Et sic, cum hoc nomen sapiens de homine dicitur, quodammodo circumscibit et comprehendit rem significatam, non autem cum dicitur de Deo, sed relinquit rem significatam ut incomprehensam, et excedentem nominis significationem. Unde patet quod non secundum eandem rationem hoc nomen sapiens de Deo et de homine dicitur. Et eadem ratio est de aliis. Unde nullum nomen univoce de Deo et creaturis praedicatur.

Sed nec etiam pure aequivoce, ut aliqui dixerunt. Quia secundum hoc, ex creaturis nihil posset cognosci de Deo, nec demonstrari; sed semper incideret fallacia aequivocationis. Et hoc est tam contra philosophos, qui multa demonstrative de Deo probant, quam etiam contra apostolum dicentem, Rom. I, *invisibilia Dei per ea quae facta sunt, intellecta, conspiciuntur.*

Dicendum est igitur quod huiusmodi nomina dicuntur de Deo et creaturis secundum analogiam, idest proportionem. Quod quidem dupliciter contingit in nominibus, vel quia multa habent proportionem ad unum, sicut sanum dicitur de medicina et urina, inquantum utrumque habet ordinem et proportionem ad sanitatem animalis, cuius hoc quidem signum est, illud vero causa; vel ex eo quod unum habet proportionem ad alterum, sicut sanum dicitur de medicina et animali, inquantum medicina est causa sanitatis quae est in animali. Et hoc modo aliqua dicuntur de Deo et creaturis analogice, et non aequivoce pure, neque univoce. Non enim possumus nominare Deum nisi ex creaturis, ut supra dictum est. Et sic, quidquid dicitur de Deo et creaturis, dicitur secundum quod est aliquis ordo creaturae ad Deum, ut ad principium et causam, in qua praeexistunt excellenter omnes rerum perfectiones.

Et iste modus communitatis medius est inter puram aequivocationem et simplicem univocationem. Neque enim in his quae analogice dicuntur, est una ratio, sicut est in univocis; nec totaliter diversa, sicut in aequivocis; sed nomen quod sic multipliciter dicitur, significat diversas proportionem ad aliquid unum; sicut sanum, de urina dictum, significat signum sanitatis animalis, de medicina vero dictum, significat causam eiusdem sanitatis

Ad primum ergo dicendum quod, licet in praedicationibus oporteat aequivoca ad univoca reduci, tamen in actionibus agens non univocum ex necessitate praecedat agens univocum. Agens enim non univocum est causa universalis totius speciei, ut sol est causa generationis omnium hominum. Agens vero univocum non est causa agens universalis totius speciei (alioquin esset causa sui ipsius, cum

sub specie contineatur), sed est causa particularis respectu huius individui, quod in participatione speciei constituit. Causa igitur universalis totius speciei non est agens univocum. Causa autem universalis est prior particulari. Hoc autem agens universale, licet non sit univocum, non tamen est omnino aequivocum, quia sic non faceret sibi simile; sed potest dici agens analogicum, sicut in praedicationibus omnia univoca reducuntur ad unum primum, non univocum, sed analogicum, quod est ens.

Ad secundum dicendum quod similitudo creaturae ad Deum est imperfecta, quia etiam nec idem secundum genus repraesentat, ut supra dictum est.

Ad tertium dicendum quod Deus non est mensura proportionata mensuratis. Unde non oportet quod Deus et creaturae sub uno genere contineantur.

Ea vero quae sunt in contrarium, concludunt quod non univoce huiusmodi nomina de Deo et creaturis praedicentur, non autem quod aequivoce.

Comments

The divine names are predicated of God analogically. The meaning of this is developed by contrasting analogously common names with those which are univocally or equivocally common.

Thomas's intended reader will remember the opening of the Categories of Aristotle, knowledge of which he has brought with him to a reading of the Summa. Aristotle begins that little work with the distinctions assumed here.

Things are named equivocally which share the same name but the name has different meanings as applied to each.

Things are named univocally which share the same name and that name has the same account or meaning as applied to each of them.

Aristotle's example of equivocation is taken from a man and his portrait both being called "man." The term gets different accounts in the two uses. But when Socrates is called a man, the term gets the same account it has when Alcibiades is called a man.

1. Macbeth is pale.
2. Lady Macbeth is beyond the pale.

The Macbeths share many things, and in this case it is the attribution "pale." You and I are not Elizabethans nor is our command of the Queen's English remotely comparable to Shakespeare's, but we readily respond to the utterance of 2 right after 1. We would also readily respond to sentences which say that Macbeth is pale and that Lady Macbeth is pale, but in the first case our response would include the realization, however faint, that words can delight as well as inform. Some profess to find equivocation misleading. Not you and I, of course, we are native speakers of the language and are not confused or put off when we are told that a line of Shakespeare's has five feet while he has only two, that your uncle is in the pen for stealing a pen, that a daughter was scolded by her mother for darning a sock, that a miner had his pick of picks, that its sole was your sole reason for going to this restaurant, that a papal bull is in no danger from a matador, and on and on. Knowing any language is simply to know that the same word can have many unrelated meanings. There is, of course, even more variety in the spoken as opposed to the written language. Elocutionists may insist that we pronounce "bin" and "been" differently, but we don't, anymore than in speaking we signal the difference between "tear" and "tier," "shown" and "shone," "through" and "threw," etc., etc., etc. Sometimes, of course, the placing of an accent sets uses off, as when you are said to be content with the content of your glass. Colonel McCormick, the redoubtable founder of the Chicago Tribune, George Bernard Shaw and your average formal logician profess to be dismayed by

what they consider the wild anarchy of English. The formal logician would include every “natural” language in the object of his discontent. Words ought to behave themselves and they can do so only if each of them has a single meaning. But the replacement of words by x and y and z in logical formulae can provide only temporary respite, since eventually such symbols will have to be translatable back into words if logic is to have any use.

One could go on and, prior to turning to theology, Thomas’s intended reader already has. Now such matters are recalled in order to deal with such a list as:

Socrates is wise.

God is wise.

Is the shared term here univocal or equivocal? When Socrates is said to be wise, we are referring to a characteristic he has achieved over a long lifetime frequenting the forum in Athens. When he first got out of the army, he was like the rest of men, but gradually, dialectically, in pursuing questions with the young, he acquired the outlook—call it seeing things and their interrelationships and above all their order of importance clearly—that leads us to call him wise. Had he not run afoul of the law, had he advanced into extreme old age and eventually sat vacant eyed and drooling in the sun, it might have been said of him, “Alas, poor Socrates has lost it.” We would be remarking on the loss of that adroitness he displayed in the early dialogues of Plato. This is enough to indicate that, however right it may seem to call both Socrates and God wise, the shared term will, on reflection, be given different accounts.

Et sic, cum hoc nomen sapiens de homine dicitur, significamus aliquam perfectionem distinctam ab essentia hominis, et a potentia et esse ipsius, et ab omnibus hujusmodi. Sed cum hoc nomen de Deo dicimus, non intelligimus significare aliquid distinctam ab essentia vel potentia vel esse ipsius.

We would not mean that in calling God wise, if only because of all the things we learned in Question 3. When we call Socrates wise it is possible to pin down the meaning of the name in such a way that we feel it captures this characteristic of Socrates adequately. But we cannot have this feeling in calling God wise because, as Thomas puts it, here the word “relinquit rem significatam ut incomprehensam, et excedentem nominis significationem.” Such considerations lead to the denial that the term is shared univocally by man and God.

Are Socrates and God called wise equivocally? This possibility does not appeal, and Thomas pays deference to the logician in rejecting it. There is, after all, a fallacy of equivocation. If I speak of the rent in Alcibiades’ toga and you then demand that he pay his landlord, you have committed a fallacy, assuming that “rent” in the two uses has the same or similar meanings. In philosophy, we proved many things of God, and such proofs entail that a term that shows up in the conclusion has the same or similar meaning that it has when it occurs in the premises. Thomas applies a little theological muscle to his rejection by citing St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, I, 20, a text that tells us that men, even Romans, can from the things that are made come to knowledge of the invisible things of God.

If the only way things can share a term is univocally or equivocally, we have arrived at an impasse. The names used of God and creature are neither univocally nor equivocally common to them. And yet we do often apply the same terms properly to both. How explain this? By saying that names are said of God and creature according to an analogy, that is, according to a proportion. We remember from Question 12, a. 1, ad 4, that Thomas has drawn attention to two meanings of “proportio.” It can mean the determinate relation between two quantities, as in half, double, and the like, but it can also mean any relation between two things. We are now about to see how one meaning of a term relates to, is proportioned or analogous, to another.

Thomas provides two examples of what he means. When medicine and urine are called healthy they are referred to, are proportioned or analogous, to a third meaning, namely, to the signifying the animal that has the quality of health. It is the animal's health that medicine would restore and that urine may signify, and the two are called healthy on that basis. But then, when medicine and the animal are called healthy, one of things being spoken of is referred to the other, not to some third. It is the latter that exemplifies what is going on when God and creature share a common name.

Et hoc modo aliqua dicuntur de Deo et creaturis analogice, et non aequivoce pure, neque univoce. Non enim possumus nominare Deum nisi ex creaturis, ut supra [art. 1] dictum est. Et sic, quidquid dicitur de Deo et creaturis, dicitur secundum quod est aliqualis ordo creaturae ad Deum, ut ad principium et causam, in qua praexistunt excellenter rerum perfectiones.

Obviously, when Socrates is called wise, there is no overt comparison of this affirmation with talk about God. We speak of the things around us, and of ourselves, pretty straightforwardly. These are the kinds of thing we are fashioned to know, given the kind of knower we are, one with a soul that is the actuality of a body and for whom intellectual activity always presupposes and rides piggy-back on sense knowledge, the direct knowledge of the external senses, the gathering cognition of the internal senses. And we can also reflect on such cognitive activity and thereby arrive at knowledge of what characterizes it and the kind of soul we have. But the quest of knowledge, leads us on from knowledge of sensible things, and reflectively of ourselves, to curiosity about ultimate causes. Changeable things are such that, in order to be what they are, moved movers, they enable us to see that there must be a first unmoved mover, and we come to see that our intellectual cognition involves a wholly immaterial reception of form: a soul capable of such immaterial activity must itself be immaterial, that is, not subject to corruption, matter being the possibility of that.

And so a science beyond natural philosophy and mathematics becomes a possibility. We can ask after being as such, that is, being as it embraces both material and immaterial being, because now we know that there are things which exist which are not material, the soul and the prime mover. The telos of philosophy is to acquire such knowledge as we can of the first cause, God. And what can we know or say about God? The Metaphysics makes it clear that this quest must rely on the knowledge we have of sensible things. This is clear in the discussion of essence or quiddity in Books 7 and 8. How can essence, which is first known as what is principally substance in sensible things, be refined so that it can be predicated of God? How can act, which is first encountered in physical objects and their activities, be developed so that it makes sense to say of God that He is First Act, Primary Actuality, the being in whom there is no distinction between what He is and that He is, who is existence or *energeia*?

The reader for whom Thomas is writing the Summa will find the claims made in Question 13 to be reminders of familiar doctrine. The Metaphysics as a whole is an eloquent reminder that the only way we can say anything about God is by grounding that knowledge in what we know of sensible reality. And, since we name as we know, the language we use in this effort will express its epistemological dependence on knowledge of *sensibilia*.

When we do predicate the same term of God and, in doing so, intend to speak properly, not metaphorically, intend to say not simply that God is the cause of something or other, or that he is other than something or other, but to say what He is, the suggestion is that one meaning of the common or shared term is analogous to or proportioned to the other.

Before his final peroration in article 5, Thomas observes that what he is calling analogy is midway between pure equivocation and simple univocity. This links what he is saying to Aristotle, who distinguished pure equivocation from deliberate or partial equivocation. In equivocation sans

phrase, pure equivocation, there is no connection between the different meanings that the common term bears. In controlled equivocation, we do not have the identity of account that characterizes univocity, but rather an ordered set of meanings in which one meaning takes precedence and is that to which the others are proportioned or analogous. One consequence of recalling this distinction between pure and controlled equivocation is to notice that the example Aristotle gave of things named equivocally at the outset of the *Categories*—a man and a picture of a man being called man—is not one of pure equivocation. (See below, art. 10, ad 4) This is only fitting, of course, because the work deals with the categories, the supreme genera, and, although things which fall within a genus will exhibit univocity, the supreme genera themselves exhibit controlled equivocation with respect to the term common to them all, being, and substance is the privileged meaning of being by analogy to which the other categories share the common predicate. In Thomas’s terminology, Aristotle begins the *Categories* by distinguishing names which are analogously common from those which are univocally common.

And now what I have called the peroration:

Neque enim in his quae analogice dicuntur, est una ratio, sicut est in univocis; nec totaliter diversa, sicut in aequivoca, sed nomen quod sic multipliciter dicitur, significat diversas proportiones ad aliquid unum; nam sicut sanum de urina dictum, significatur signum sanitatis animalis, de medicina vero dictum, sicut causam eiusdem sanitatis.

The first thing to notice about this passage is the invocation of *multipliciter dicitur*, which links what Thomas calls analogy to what Aristotle means by *pollakos legomena kata mian phusin*. Even when Thomas is commenting on Aristotelian treatises, it is impossible to map what he says about analogy in the commentary onto the text he is commenting. Thus, in Book Four, chapter two of the *Metaphysics*, where Aristotle speaks of things said in many ways, *pollakos legomena*, Thomas in the commentary speaks of things said analogously. It is the same doctrine, but the language in which Aristotle expresses it does not provide the basis for Thomas speaking of analogy. This text in article 5, makes clear that Thomas identifies what he means by things said analogously with what Aristotle means by things said in many ways.

But back to the text. An analogous term does not have only one account (ratio) as is the case with univocally common names, nor wholly diverse accounts, as is the case with pure equivocation. Rather, the name said in many ways in this fashion signifies diverse proportions to something one. And, as one has come to expect, this is illustrated by the trusty example of “healthy.” Said of urine, “healthy” means a sign of health in the animal, and said of medicine it means the cause of that same health. The one meaning to which these meanings of “healthy” refer, to which they are proportioned or analogous, expresses the health of the animal, the subject of health.

Thomas leaves the question of exactly how this is exemplified in names common to God and creature, a question which surges into the reader’s mind, to the following article.

Analogical causes

The first objection had argued that equivocation is reducible to univocity. “The dog” is equivocally common to an animal and to one of the stars, the dog-star. But “dog” is univocally common to all barking animals, *aliter enim procedere in infinitum*. That is, if “dog” were said equivocally of all barking animals, there would be no end to the quest of finding out what we mean by a common term. That being given, the objector notes that there are causes which can be called univocal, because they share a name and an account with their effect. The parent and child are both called man and in the same sense of the common term. Thus, if equivocals are reducible to univocals, it would seem that equivocal causes must be reduced to univocal causes. An equivocal cause is one

which shares a name with its effect, but that name gets different accounts. On this basis, we are invited to think that the first agent, to which all other agents are reduced, is a univocal agent. And thus what is said of God and his effects must receive an identical account.

In replying to this, Thomas distinguishes between the order of predication and the order of causality or of agent causes. As to agents, univocal agents are necessarily preceded by non-univocal agents. The non-univocal agent is the universal cause of a whole species, as the sun is a cause of the generation of every man. The univocal agent, on the other hand, is not a universal cause of the whole species. If Socrates senior were the cause of what it is to be a man in bringing about Socrates junior, he would be cause of himself as well. The parent is a particular cause of an instance of the species, not a universal cause of the species. The universal cause of the species is not a univocal cause and is prior to the particular or univocal cause.

Hoc autem agens universale, licet non est univocum, non tamen est omnino aequivocum, quia sic non faceret sibi simile; sed potest dici agens analogicum: sicut in praedicationibus omnia univoca reducuntur ad unum primum, non univocum, sed analogicum, quod est ens.

The rule invoked in the objection—that equivocals are reduced to univocals—is reinterpreted. If it is taken to mean that a purely equivocal term ranges over things which can share a univocal name with things similar to themselves, it is true. But when it is taken to mean that non-univocal agents must be reduced to a first univocal agent, it is rejected. In part, this response depends on the distinction between pure and controlled equivocation.

NB: In commenting on Boethius’s *De trinitate*, Thomas had distinguished, in question 5, article 4, between the way things have principles in common according to predication and according to causality. There he restricted his use of analogy to the behavior of the most common predicates. He did not apply it to the order of causality. But he does here. So it is, that those who wish to speak of the hierarchy of causes and effects which makes up the universe as the analogy of being can find support in this passage of Ia, q. 13, a.5, ad 1m.

The answer to the third objection makes clear that the application of *proportio* to the relation of God to creature, is not to be taken in the first sense, as a determinate measure. God is not proportioned to his effects as four is to two when the former is called double and the latter half.

Articulus 6

Ad sextum sic proceditur. Videtur quod nomina per prius dicantur de creaturis quam de Deo.

1. Secundum enim quod cognoscimus aliquid, secundum hoc illud nominamus; cum nomina, secundum philosophum, sint signa intellectuum. Sed per prius cognoscimus creaturam quam Deum. Ergo nomina a nobis imposita, per prius conveniunt creaturis quam Deo.

2. Praeterea, secundum Dionysium, in libro de Div. Nom., Deum ex creaturis nominamus. Sed nomina a creaturis translata in Deum, per prius dicuntur de creaturis quam de Deo; sicut leo, lapis, et huiusmodi. Ergo omnia nomina quae de Deo et de creaturis dicuntur, per prius de creaturis quam de Deo dicuntur.

3. Praeterea, omnia nomina quae communiter de Deo et creaturis dicuntur, dicuntur de Deo sicut de causa omnium, ut dicit Dionysius. Sed quod dicitur de aliquo per causam, per posterius de illo dicitur, per prius enim dicitur animal sanum quam medicina, quae est causa sanitatis. Ergo huiusmodi nomina per prius dicuntur de creaturis quam de Deo

Sed contra est quod dicitur Ephes. III, *flecto genua mea ad patrem domini nostri Iesu, ex quo omnis paternitas in caelo et in terra nominatur*. Et eadem ratio videtur de nominibus aliis quae de Deo et creaturis dicuntur. Ergo huiusmodi nomina per prius de Deo quam de creaturis dicuntur.

Respondeo dicendum quod in omnibus nominibus quae de pluribus analogice dicuntur, necesse est quod omnia dicantur per respectum ad unum, et ideo illud unum oportet quod ponatur in definitione omnium. Et quia ratio quam significat nomen, est definitio, ut dicitur in IV Metaphys., necesse est quod illud nomen per prius dicatur de eo quod ponitur in definitione aliorum, et per posterius de aliis, secundum ordinem quo appropinquant ad illud primum vel magis vel minus, sicut sanum quod dicitur de animali, cadit in definitione sani quod dicitur de medicina, quae dicitur sana in quantum causat sanitatem in animali; et in definitione sani quod dicitur de urina, quae dicitur sana in quantum est signum sanitatis animalis.

Sic ergo omnia nomina quae metaphorice de Deo dicuntur, per prius de creaturis dicuntur quam de Deo, quia dicta de Deo, nihil aliud significant quam similitudines ad tales creaturas. Sicut enim ridere, dictum de prato, nihil aliud significat quam quod pratum similiter se habet in decore cum floret, sicut homo cum ridet, secundum similitudinem proportionis; sic nomen leonis, dictum de Deo, nihil aliud significat quam quod Deus similiter se habet ut fortiter operetur in suis operibus, sicut leo in suis. Et sic patet quod, secundum quod dicuntur de Deo, eorum significatio definiri non potest, nisi per illud quod de creaturis dicitur.

De aliis autem nominibus, quae non metaphorice dicuntur de Deo, esset etiam eadem ratio, si dicerentur de Deo causaliter tantum, ut quidam posuerunt. Sic enim. Cum dicitur Deus est bonus, nihil aliud esset quam Deus est causa bonitatis creaturae, et sic hoc nomen bonum, dictum de Deo, clauderet in suo intellectu bonitatem creaturae. Unde bonum per prius diceretur de creatura quam de Deo. Sed supra ostensum est quod huiusmodi nomina non solum dicuntur de Deo causaliter, sed etiam essentialiter. Cum enim dicitur Deus est bonus, vel sapiens, non solum significatur quod ipse sit causa sapientiae vel bonitatis, sed quod haec in eo eminentius praeexistunt. Unde, secundum hoc, dicendum est quod, quantum ad rem significatam per nomen, per prius dicuntur de Deo quam de creaturis, quia a Deo huiusmodi perfectiones in creaturas manant. Sed quantum ad impositionem nominis, per prius a nobis imponuntur creaturis, quas prius cognoscimus. Unde et modum significandi habent qui competit creaturis, ut supra dictum est.

Ad primum ergo dicendum quod obiectio illa procedit quantum ad impositionem nominis.

Ad secundum dicendum quod non est eadem ratio de nominibus quae metaphorice de Deo dicuntur, et de aliis, ut dictum est.

Ad tertium dicendum quod obiectio illa procederet, si huiusmodi nomina solum de Deo causaliter dicerentur et non essentialiter, sicut sanum de medicina.

Comments

First, consider the *sed contra*. St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (3, 14-15) is cited: "I bend my knee to the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ from whom all paternity is named both in heaven and on earth." This is followed by a ringing assertion: The affirmative attributes involve names common to God and creature and such names are said first (per prius) of God.

In arguing for this, Thomas begins with a universal statement about analogous names

...in omnibus nominibus quae de pluribus analogie dicuntur, necesse est quod omnia dicantur per respectum ad unum: et ideo illud unum oportet ponatur in definitione omnium.

Thomas goes on to repeat what he has said several times before, the notion or ratio signified by the name is a definition. On that basis, he continues, an analogous name will be said first of all of that which first saves the ratio of the name and that first, call it, the primary analogate, enters into the other definitions insofar as they mean things which approach more or less closely to the first. So it is that what “healthy” means as said of an animal will enter into the definition of medicine insofar as it is called healthy and into the definition of urine insofar as it is called healthy. Later, in q. 16, a. 6, Thomas will call the notion that enters into the others the ratio propria of the term.

In the case of names said metaphorically of God, it is clear that they are first said of creatures and secondarily of God since they signify a certain likeness to creatures. When God is called a lion, the metaphor tells us that He acts bravely in what He does as the lion does when he acts. God does not come under the meaning of “lion,” suppose for it, nor does the word have an extended meaning thanks to which it might be said properly of God. The metaphor could be expressed as a proportionality: as the lion’s acts are to him, so too are God’s to Him. The term “brave” qualifies the acts in each proportion and It is clear that the term is transferred to God, not on the basis of what “lion” means, but because of an incidental characteristic of things which save the proper notion of the term. In any case, the metaphorical use of the term can only be grasped by an overt reference to things properly meant by the term.

The same would have to be said if the divine attributes are taken to apply to God causaliter tantum, that is, only insofar as He causes creatured perfections. Thomas spells this out. “God is good” would then be understood to mean “God is the cause of the creature’s goodness.” Then, obviously, the term as applied to God would include the goodness of the creature in its meaning. Thomas has already rejected this interpretation in his discussion of substantialiter, but the way he states the rejection here should be noted. “Ostensum est quod hujusmodi nomina non solum dicuntur de Deo causaliter, sed etiam essentialiter.” This suggests, and the suggestion will be borne out, that a first causaliter interpretation is presupposed by the essentialiter account.

Cum enim dicitur “Deus est bonus” vel “sapiens,” non solum dicuntur de Deo causaliter; non solum significatur quod ipse sit causa sapientiae vel bonitatis, sed quod haec in eo eminentius praeexistunt.

So now we are ready for the answer to the question: when names are common to God and creature, which of them has first claim on the name? The answer is somewhat surprising.

...dicendum est quod, quantum ad rem significatam per nomen, per prius dicuntur de Deo quam de creaturis, quia a Deo hujusmodi perfectiones in creaturas manant. Sed quantum ad impositionem nominis, per prius imponuntur creaturis, quas prius cognoscimus. Unde et modum significandi habent qui competit creaturis.

The primary meaning of such a term as “good” as common to God and creatures would thus seem to be one thing if we are thinking of how the name has been imposed to signify; what has first claim on the common term in that perspective is the first and controlling meaning. God is known from creatures as from His effects, and names are transferred or extended to Him from those effects. Unless we know what goodness means as found in creatures, we do not have a basis for talking of God as good. But this causaliter interpretation of the divine attributes has been rejected again and again as sufficient. Remember Thomas’s analysis of “God is good” in article 2. Having rejected the alternatives according to which this would mean “God is the cause of goodness” or “God is

not evil,” he went on to give the correct understanding: That which we call goodness in creatures, preexists in God, and this indeed in a higher mode. That makes it clear that created goodness enters into the account of how God is called good even while the apparent implications of this are overcome by saying that the perfection grasped in creatures “*praexistit in Deo, et hoc quidem secundum modum altiore.*” Is that the way the rule for analogous names is saved in this instance?

If, on the other hand, we look to the *res significata* of such names, the perfection, e.g. goodness, this preexists in God and it is because He is goodness that He causes good things. Can the rule for analogous names be differently applied here, with the divine goodness playing the role of the primary analogate that saves the *ratio propria* and creatures denominated good from God’s goodness? Is the recognition that because God is goodness He causes created good, the created good includes in its definition the divine goodness?

These questions are of the highest importance in understanding the trajectory and term of our knowing and naming God. It is clear that we arrive at knowledge of God by coming to see that He is the cause of created perfections. The history of the use of the name, the *ordo impositionis nominis*, gives pride of place to creatures and, given our mode of knowing this could scarcely be otherwise. Philosophically speaking, knowledge of God is difficult of achievement, it presupposes and depends upon almost everything that has gone before in the various philosophical sciences. It is because our terms are extended to God on the basis of the fact that He is the cause of the perfections we first know and name, that a further question arises. At this point, we might be said to be relying on the causaliter interpretation of “God is good.” But that is now seen to be insufficient. “Good” is said *substantialiter* and *proprie* of God. Consider again the three *viae* we employed before.

God is wise.

God is not wise.

God is wise in a more eminent way than creatures.

We suggested that the *via affirmationis* is based on the *res significata*, that is what the term “good” properly means and is what is affirmed. The *via negationis*, the denial that God is good is based on the creaturely *modus significandi* of the term. If that is set aside, the perfection can then be said to exist in God in a more eminent way than it does in creatures. And what is the, so to say, divine *modus significandi*? It is expressed in comparatives that refer to the mode of signifying that is being denied. The application of our language to God cannot be severed from its origins. Thus, if we call God wisdom, the abstract term appeals because it suggests simplicity, but its mode of signifying counts against its standing for a subsistent thing.

The answer to the third objection is important. In the privileged example of “healthy,” medicine is called healthy in a secondary sense even though it is the cause of the health in the animal. Thus, the fact that God is the cause of created goodness is no argument for his receiving the term *per prius*. In response, Thomas denies the parallel because, unlike medicine called healthy as the cause of health in the animal, God is named *essentialiter*, and not just *causaliter*.

When it comes to knowledge and talk about God, the order of discovery and naming, the logical ordering of the different meanings of terms extended from creatures to God, is reversed. What is first in the order of knowing is, in this case, always ontologically last, and what is last and derivatively known is ontologically first. This is what Thomas is saying when he tells us that *secundum rem significatam*, the common term is said *per prius* of God, not of creatures.

Article 12 of Question 12 seems to underwrite the interpretation that the path to an adequate understanding of the meaning of attributes said of God properly and substantially, goes through the causal and negative understandings. Recalling that our intellectual knowledge begins with the senses, Thomas remarks that our natural knowledge can be extended beyond only if we are led by the hand (*manuductio*) from knowledge of sensible things. Knowledge of sensible things can never

lead on to knowledge of the divine nature as it is in itself because sensible things as effects are inadequate representatives of their cause.

Sed quia sunt effectus a causa dependentes, ex eis in hoc perducere possimus, ut cognoscamus de Deo *an est*; et ut cognoscamus de ipso ea quae necesse est ei convenire secundum quod est prima omnium causa, excedens omnia sua causata. Unde cognoscimus de ipso *habitudinem ipsius ad creaturas*, et differentiam creaturarum ab ipso, quod scilicet ipse non est aliquid eorum quae ab ipso causatur; et quod haec non *removetur* ab eo propter eius defectum, sed quia *supereccedit*. (Italics added)

All the *viae* come into play. And, in the end, we can apply the rule for analogous names and say that the *res significata* of the name as applied to God enters into the accounts of creatures, since they have or participate in the perfection that God is.

Articulus 7

Ad septimum sic proceditur. Videtur quod nomina quae important relationem ad creaturas, non dicantur de Deo ex tempore.

1. Omnia enim huiusmodi nomina significant divinam substantiam, ut communiter dicitur. Unde et Ambrosius dicit quod hoc nomen dominus est nomen potestatis, quae est divina substantia, et creator significat Dei actionem, quae est eius essentia. Sed divina substantia non est temporalis, sed aeterna. Ergo huiusmodi nomina non dicuntur de Deo ex tempore, sed ab aeterno.
2. Praeterea, cuicumque convenit aliquid ex tempore, potest dici factum, quod enim ex tempore est album, fit album. Sed Deo non convenit esse factum. Ergo de Deo nihil praedicatur ex tempore.
3. Praeterea, si aliqua nomina dicuntur de Deo ex tempore propter hoc quod important relationem ad creaturas, eadem ratio videtur de omnibus quae relationem ad creaturas important. Sed quaedam nomina importantia relationem ad creaturas, dicuntur de Deo ab aeterno, ab aeterno enim scivit creaturam et dilexit, secundum illud Ierem. XXXI, *in caritate perpetua dilexi te*. Ergo et alia nomina quae important relationem ad creaturas, ut dominus et creator, dicuntur de Deo ab aeterno.
4. Praeterea, huiusmodi nomina relationem significant. Oportet igitur quod relatio illa vel sit aliquid in Deo, vel in creatura tantum. Sed non potest esse quod sit in creatura tantum, quia sic Deus denominaretur dominus a relatione opposita, quae est in creaturis; nihil autem denominatur a suo opposito. Relinquitur ergo quod relatio est etiam aliquid in Deo. Sed in Deo nihil potest esse ex tempore, cum ipse sit supra tempus. Ergo videtur quod huiusmodi nomina non dicantur de Deo ex tempore.
5. Praeterea, secundum relationem dicitur aliquid relative, puta secundum dominium dominus, sicut secundum albedinem albus. Si igitur relatio domini non est in Deo secundum rem, sed solum secundum rationem, sequitur quod Deus non sit realiter dominus, quod patet esse falsum.

6. Praeterea, in relativis quae non sunt simul natura, unum potest esse, altero non existente, sicut scibile existit, non existente scientia, ut dicitur in praedicamentis. Sed relativa quae dicuntur de Deo et creaturis, non sunt simul natura. Ergo potest aliquid dici relative de Deo ad creaturam, etiam creatura non existente. Et sic huiusmodi nomina, dominus et creator, dicuntur de Deo ab aeterno, et non ex tempore.

Sed contra est quod dicit Augustinus, V de Trin., quod haec relativa appellatio dominus Deo convenit ex tempore.

Respondeo dicendum quod quaedam nomina importantia relationem ad creaturam, ex tempore de Deo dicuntur, et non ab aeterno. Ad cuius evidentiam, sciendum est quod quidam posuerunt relationem non esse rem naturae, sed rationis tantum. Quod quidem apparet esse falsum, ex hoc quod ipsae res naturalem ordinem et habitudinem habent ad invicem. Veruntamen sciendum est quod, cum relatio requirat duo extrema, tripliciter se habere potest ad hoc quod sit res naturae et rationis.

Quandoque enim ex utraque parte est res rationis tantum, quando scilicet ordo vel habitudo non potest esse inter aliqua, nisi secundum apprehensionem rationis tantum, utpote cum dicimus idem eidem idem. Nam secundum quod ratio apprehendit bis aliquod unum, statuit illud ut duo; et sic apprehendit quandam habitudinem ipsius ad seipsum. Et similiter est de omnibus relationibus quae sunt inter ens et non ens; quas format ratio, inquantum apprehendit non ens ut quoddam extremum. Et idem est de omnibus relationibus quae consequuntur actum rationis, ut genus et species, et huiusmodi.

Quaedam vero relationes sunt, quantum ad utrumque extremum, res naturae, quando scilicet est habitudo inter aliqua duo secundum aliquid realiter conveniens utrique. Sicut patet de omnibus relationibus quae consequuntur quantitatem, ut magnum et parvum, duplum et dimidium, et huiusmodi, nam quantitas est in utroque extremorum. Et simile est de relationibus quae consequuntur actionem et passionem, ut motivum et mobile, pater et filius, et similia.

Quandoque vero relatio in uno extremorum est res naturae, et in altero est res rationis tantum. Et hoc contingit quandocumque duo extrema non sunt unius ordinis. Sicut sensus et scientia referuntur ad sensibile et scibile, quae quidem, inquantum sunt res quaedam in esse naturali existentes, sunt extra ordinem esse sensibilis et intelligibilis, et ideo in scientia quidem et sensu est relatio realis, secundum quod ordinantur ad sciendum vel sentiendum res; sed res ipsae in se consideratae, sunt extra ordinem huiusmodi. Unde in eis non est aliqua relatio realiter ad scientiam et sensum; sed secundum rationem tantum, inquantum intellectus apprehendit ea ut terminos relationum scientiae et sensus. Unde philosophus dicit, in V Metaphys., quod non dicuntur relative eo quod ipsa referantur ad alia, sed quia alia referuntur ad ipsa. Et similiter dextrum non dicitur de columna, nisi inquantum ponitur animali ad dextram, unde huiusmodi relatio non est realiter in columna, sed in animali.

Cum igitur Deus sit extra totum ordinem creaturae, et omnes creaturae ordinentur ad ipsum, et non e converso, manifestum est quod creaturae realiter referuntur ad ipsum Deum; sed in Deo non est aliqua realis relatio eius ad creaturas, sed secundum rationem tantum, inquantum creaturae referuntur ad ipsum. Et sic nihil prohibet huiusmodi nomina importantia relationem ad creaturam, praedicari de Deo ex tempore, non propter aliquam mutationem ipsius, sed propter creaturae mutationem; sicut columna fit dextera animali, nulla mutatione circa ipsam existente, sed animali translato.

Ad primum ergo dicendum quod relativa quaedam sunt imposita ad significandum ipsas habitudines relativas, ut dominus, servus, pater et filius, et huiusmodi, et haec dicuntur relativa secundum esse. Quaedam vero sunt imposita ad significandas res quas consequuntur quaedam habitudines, sicut movens et motum, caput et capitatum, et alia huiusmodi, quae dicuntur relativa secundum dici. Sic igitur et circa nomina divina haec differentia est consideranda. Nam quaedam significant ipsam habitudinem ad creaturam, ut dominus. Et huiusmodi non significant substantiam divinam directe, sed indirecte, inquantum praesupponunt ipsam, sicut dominium praesupponit potestatem, quae est divina substantia. Quaedam vero significant directe essentiam divinam, et ex consequenti important habitudinem; sicut salvator, creator, et huiusmodi, significant actionem Dei, quae est eius essentia. Utraque tamen nomina ex tempore de Deo dicuntur quantum ad habitudinem quam important, vel principaliter vel consequenter, non autem quantum ad hoc quod significant essentiam, vel directe vel indirecte.

Ad secundum dicendum quod, sicut relationes quae de Deo dicuntur ex tempore, non sunt in Deo nisi secundum rationem, ita nec fieri nec factum esse dicitur de Deo, nisi secundum rationem, nulla mutatione circa ipsum existente, sicut est id, “domine refugium factus es nobis.”

Ad tertium dicendum quod operatio intellectus et voluntatis est in operante, et ideo nomina quae significant relationes consequentes actionem intellectus vel voluntatis, dicuntur de Deo ab aeterno. Quae vero consequuntur actiones procedentes, secundum modum intelligendi, ad exteriores effectus, dicuntur de Deo ex tempore, ut salvator, creator, et huiusmodi.

Ad quartum dicendum quod relationes significatae per huiusmodi nomina quae dicuntur de Deo ex tempore, sunt in Deo secundum rationem tantum, oppositae autem relationes in creaturis sunt secundum rem. Nec est inconveniens quod a relationibus realiter existentibus in re, Deus denominetur, tamen secundum quod cointelliguntur per intellectum nostrum oppositae relationes in Deo. Ut sic Deus dicatur relative ad creaturam, quia creatura refertur ad ipsum, sicut philosophus dicit, in V Metaphys., quod scibile dicitur relative, quia scientia refertur ad ipsum.

Ad quintum dicendum quod, cum ea ratione referatur Deus ad creaturam, qua creatura refertur ad ipsum; cum relatio subiectionis realiter sit in creatura, sequitur quod Deus non secundum rationem tantum, sed realiter sit dominus. Eo enim modo dicitur dominus, quo creatura ei subiecta est.

Ad sextum dicendum quod, ad cognoscendum utrum relativa sint simul natura vel non, non oportet considerare ordinem rerum de quibus relativa dicuntur, sed significationes ipsorum relativorum. Si enim unum in sui intellectu claudat aliud et e converso, tunc sunt simul natura, sicut duplum et dimidium, pater et filius, et similia. Si autem unum in sui intellectu claudat aliud, et non e converso, tunc non sunt simul natura. Et hoc modo se habent scientia et scibile. Nam scibile dicitur secundum potentiam, scientia autem secundum habitum, vel secundum actum. Unde scibile, secundum modum suae significationis, praeexistit scientiae. Sed si accipiatur scibile secundum actum, tunc est simul cum scientia secundum actum, nam scitum non est aliquid nisi sit eius scientia. Licet igitur Deus sit prior creaturis, quia tamen in significatione domini clauditur quod habeat servum, et e converso, ista duo relativa, dominus et servus, sunt simul natura. Unde Deus non fuit dominus, antequam haberet creaturam sibi subiectam..

Comments

To this point, Thomas has been concentrating on positive divine attributes, those said of God substantialiter and proprie, although the discussion has necessarily included the comparison of these with negative and relative attributes. Now Thomas turns to a question bearing on attributes which relate God to creatures, asking if all of these involve time. That is, are not said of Him *ab aeterno*.

He prefaces the discussion with a little treatise on relation. Some, he notes, have denied that relations are real, seeking to explain them simply in terms of the way we in thinking about them relate things to one another. This is set aside as manifestly false. There is a natural order of things, quite independent of our thinking about it, in which things are really related to one another, for example as effects to causes. Nonetheless, the denial raises an important issue which must be addressed.

Any relation involves at least two terms, and there are three ways in which a relation may be something real or a result of our way of thinking about things.

1. There are relations in which both terms are related by reason alone. The things are only related because of the way we think about them. For example, when a thing is said to be the same as itself: “Socrates is Socrates.” It is only because we think of a thing twice, as two, that it can be related to itself and called the same. Call these relations of reason alone. There are other examples given, the way being is related to non-being, where we think of nothing as something. “Et idem est de omnibus relationibus quae consequuntur actum rationis, ut genus, species, et hujusmodi.” All logical relations, that is.

2. There are relations which are real with respect to both terms, as when the relation depends on something in both. These are exemplified by relations which follow on quantity: large and small, double and half, since quantity is in both terms. So too with relations which follow on action and passion, such as moved and mover, father and son, and the like.

3. Finally there are relations which are really in one term and in the other are only of reason. This happens when the terms belong to different orders. Sense is related to sensibilia, knowledge to known things, but perception and thought are of a different order than existent things. That is why, although sense is really related to the things sensed, and knowledge to the things known, the reverse is not true: material things are not really related to sensation anymore than they are to knowledge. So we have a relation that is real with respect to one term—the knower is really related to what he knows—and merely of reason when the known is related to the knower.

It is this third kind of relation that is pertinent to the present discussion. God exists outside of and apart from the whole created order; creatures are really related to Him, but God is not really related to them. Of course we do relate God to creatures, but this is a relation of reason which is the reverse of the real relation of creatures to Him. It is these relations of reason attributed to God that involve time, not because He is measured by time, but because creatures are. Thomas illustrates with what Peter Geach called a “Cambridge change.” A tree comes to be to the right of Fido, not because the tree moved, but because Fido did.

Et sic nihil prohibet hujusmodi nomina importantia relationem ad creaturam, praedicari de Deo ex tempore: non propter aliquam mutationem ipsius, sed propter creaturae mutationem; sicut columna fit dextera animali, nulla mutatione circa ipsam existente, sed animali translato.

Relativa secundum esse, relativa secundum dici

Some names are imposed to signify the relation itself, as for example “Master,” “servant,” “father” and “son,” and the like, These are called *relativa secundum esse*. But sometimes names are imposed to signify the things in which relations are founded, not the relations as such, as with “mover” and “moved.” These are called *relativa secundum dici*.

This distinction enables us to distinguish the divine names which signify the very relation to creatures, such as “Lord” from those which directly signify the divine essence and only consequently imply a relation to creatures, such as “Savior,” “Creator” and the like. Relative attributes of the first kind only indirectly signify the divine substance insofar as the relations presuppose it. The second kind of relative attribute signifies the activity of God, but that is identical with His essence. Both kinds of relative attribute involve time with respect to the relation involved, whether it is principally signified or implied in what is signified. That they signify the divine essence directly or indirectly is not relevant to the question of temporality.

But what of the divine knowledge of creatures? Is this not eternal? Surely He is not to be thought of as knowing creatures only when He actually creates them. Thomas replies (ad 3m), that operations of will and intellect are in the agent, and therefore the names which signify relations consequent on the acts of His will or intellect are said of Him from all eternity. Those consequent relations relate God to creatures, as when He is called “Savior” or “Creator” and they are temporal, not eternal, but involve of course only relations of reason on His part.

The answer to the 6th objection provides a test for determining whether one is confronted with an example of type 2 or 3 above. If one of the relata is included in the definition of the other, but the reverse is not true, then we have an example of the third type of relation. One sees the relevance of this for saying that God is the per prius of names said analogously of Him and creatures.

Articulus 8

Ad octavum sic proceditur. Videtur quod hoc nomen Deus non sit nomen naturae.

1. Dicit enim Damascenus, in I libro, quod *Deus dicitur a “thein” quod est currere, et fovere universa; vel ab “aethin,” idest ardere (Deus enim noster ignis consumens est omnem malitiam); vel a “theasthai,” quod est considerare, omnia.* Haec autem omnia ad operationem pertinent. Ergo hoc nomen Deus operationem significat, et non naturam.

2. Praeterea, secundum hoc aliquid nominatur a nobis, secundum quod cognoscitur. Sed divina natura est nobis ignota. Ergo hoc nomen Deus non significat naturam divinam.

Sed contra est quod dicit Ambrosius, in libro I de fide, quod Deus est nomen naturae.

Respondeo dicendum quod non est semper idem id a quo imponitur nomen ad significandum, et id ad quod significandum nomen imponitur. Sicut enim substantiam rei ex proprietatibus vel operationibus eius cognoscimus, ita substantiam rei denominamus quandoque ab aliqua eius operatione vel proprietate, sicut substantiam lapidis denominamus ab aliqua actione eius, quia laedit pedem; non tamen hoc nomen impositum est ad significandum hanc actionem, sed substantiam lapidis. Si qua vero sunt quae secundum se sunt nota nobis, ut calor, frigus, albedo, et huiusmodi, non ab aliis denominantur. Unde in talibus idem est quod nomen significat, et id a quo imponitur nomen ad significandum.

Quia igitur Deus non est notus nobis in sui natura, sed innotescit nobis ex operationibus vel effectibus eius, ex his possumus eum nominare, ut supra dictum est. Unde hoc nomen Deus est nomen operationis, quantum ad id a quo imponitur ad significandum. Imponitur enim hoc nomen ab universali rerum providentia, omnes enim loquentes de Deo, hoc intendunt nominare Deum, quod habet providentiam universalem de rebus. Unde dicit Dionysius, XII cap. de Div. Nom., quod “deitas est quae omnia videt providentia et bonitate perfecta.” Ex hac autem operatione hoc nomen Deus assumptum, impositum est ad significandum divinam naturam.

Ad primum ergo dicendum quod omnia quae posuit Damascenus, pertinent ad providentiam, a qua imponitur hoc nomen Deus ad significandum.

Ad secundum dicendum quod, secundum quod naturam alicuius rei ex eius proprietatibus et effectibus cognoscere possumus, sic eam nomine possumus significare. Unde, quia substantiam lapidis ex eius proprietate possumus cognoscere secundum seipsam, sciendo quid est lapis, hoc nomen lapis ipsam lapidis naturam, secundum quod in se est, significat, significat enim definitionem lapidis, per quam scimus quid est lapis. Ratio enim quam significat nomen, est definitio, ut dicitur in IV Metaphys. Sed ex effectibus divinis divinam naturam non possumus cognoscere secundum quod in se est, ut sciamus de ea quid est; sed per modum eminentiae et causalitatis et negationis, ut supra dictum est. Et sic hoc nomen Deus significat naturam divinam. Impositum est enim nomen hoc ad aliquid significandum supra omnia existens, quod est principium omnium, et remotum ab omnibus. Hoc enim intendunt significare nominantes Deum.

Comments

The next three questions are devoted to the name “God” itself, and Thomas first asks if “God” signifies the divine nature. That may seem to be a strange question, until we see the difficulty that a passage in St. John Damascene poses. Theos is derived from Theiein which suggests a universal overseeing, or perhaps from athein, meaning to burn, suggesting the fire that burns away malignancy, or perhaps it comes from theasthai, which is to consider all things. In any case, “God” seems to signify an activity, not the divine nature as such. And this is unsurprising when we think again of the origin of the divine names: we name as we know, but the divine nature is unknown to us.

Despite such difficulties, Thomas will defend the thesis that “God” signifies the divine nature.

He begins by invoking a distinction with which we are now well acquainted, that between the id a quo nomen imponitur, that from which a name is imposed to signify, and the id ad quod nomen imponitur, what the name signifies. We know any substance from its properties and activities, and so it is that a substance is often named from these. The example invoked is equally familiar to us now: lapis, or stone. The term is taken, imposed to signify, from the fact that a stone may injure the foot, prove a stumbling block or impediment; but that is not what the name means—it means the substance, the rock itself.

Thomas now makes clear why he said that quandoque there is that difference between the id a quo, and the id ad quod nomen imponitur ad significandum. These will differ only when that from which we impose the name is more obvious to us than that on which we impose the name. But this is not only the case. The objects of the external senses, cold and heat for the sense of touch, whiteness and other colors for sight, are not designated or named from anything else, since there could scarcely be anything more obvious than they. “Unde in talibus idem est quod nomen significat, et id a quo nomen imponitur ad significandum.”

God of course is not known to us in His very nature, but comes to be known through his activities and effects, and it is through these that we are able to name Him. Now Thomas can pay deference to Damascene even while differing from him. “God” is indeed a name of the divine activity with respect to that from which the name is imposed to signify. It is drawn from God’s universal providence, his overseeing the whole of creation. “Everyone speaking of God intends to name this by ‘God,’ namely that he has universal providence over things.” It is from this activity that “God” is imposed to signify the divine nature.

This article shows the fecundity of the distinction between the *id a quo* and the *id ad quod* of the name. One who has absorbed the preceding articles would doubtless have been able to provide this answer unguided by Thomas.

In the reply to the second objection—that the divine nature is unknown to us and therefore “God” cannot signify it—Thomas employs the same distinction, but first he underscores the vast difference between our knowing such substances as stones and knowing the substance or nature of God. The activities of a natural substance can be a pretty safe route to capturing the kind of thing it is, grounding the definition which in another by now familiar phrase is the *ratio quam significat nomen*. When he turns to the knowledge we can acquire of the divine substance, Thomas gives a succinct summary of the way certain interpretations of the divine attributes—negative, causal, substantial—at first simply contrasted with one another, come to seem moments in our effort to know and name God.

Sed ex effectibus divinis divinam naturam non possimus cognoscere secundum quod in se est, ut sciamus de ea quid est; sed per modum eminentiae et causalitatis et negationis. Et sic nomen Deus significat naturam divinam. Impositum est enim nomen hoc ad aliquid significandum supra omnia existens, quod est principium omnium, et remotum ab omnibus.

This is what those naming God intend the term to signify. “God” signifies the divine nature, not a divine activity.

Articulus 9

Ad nonum sic proceditur. Videtur quod hoc nomen Deus sit communicabile.

1. Cuicumque enim communicatur res significata per nomen, communicatur et nomen ipsum. Sed hoc nomen Deus, ut dictum est, significat divinam naturam, quae est communicabilis aliis, secundum illud II Pet. I, *magna et pretiosa promissa nobis donavit, ut per hoc efficiamur divinae consortes naturae*. Ergo hoc nomen Deus est communicabile.

2. Praeterea, sola nomina propria non sunt communicabilia. Sed hoc nomen Deus non est nomen proprium, sed appellativum, quod patet ex hoc quod habet plurale, secundum illud Psalmi LXXXI, *ego dixi, dii estis*. Ergo hoc nomen Deus est communicabile.

3. Praeterea, hoc nomen Deus imponitur ab operatione, ut dictum est. Sed alia nomina quae imponuntur Deo ab operationibus, sive ab effectibus, sunt communicabilia, ut bonus, sapiens et huiusmodi. Ergo et hoc nomen Deus est communicabile.

Sed contra est quod dicitur Sap. XIV, *incommunicabile nomen lignis et lapidibus imposuerunt; et loquitur de nomine deitatis*. Ergo hoc nomen Deus est nomen incommunicabile.

Respondeo dicendum quod aliquod nomen potest esse communicabile dupliciter, uno modo, proprie; alio modo, per similitudinem. Proprie quidem communicabile est, quod secundum totam significationem nominis, est communicabile multis. Per similitudinem autem communicabile est, quod est communicabile secundum aliquid eorum quae includuntur in nominis significatione. Hoc enim nomen leo proprie communicatur omnibus illis in quibus invenitur natura quam significat hoc nomen leo, per similitudinem vero communicabile est illis qui participant aliquid leoninum, ut puta audaciam vel fortitudinem, qui metaphorice leones dicuntur.

Ad sciendum autem quae nomina proprie sunt communicabilia, considerandum est quod omnis forma in supposito singulari existens, per quod individuatur, communis est multis, vel secundum rem vel secundum rationem saltem, sicut natura humana communis est multis secundum rem et rationem, natura autem solis non est communis multis secundum rem, sed secundum rationem tantum; potest enim natura solis intelligi ut in pluribus suppositis existens. Et hoc ideo, quia intellectus intelligit naturam cuiuslibet speciei per abstractionem a singulari, unde esse in uno supposito singulari vel in pluribus, est praeter intellectum naturae speciei, unde, servato intellectu naturae speciei, potest intelligi ut in pluribus existens. Sed singulare, ex hoc ipso quod est singulare, est divisum ab omnibus aliis. Unde omne nomen impositum ad significandum aliquid singulare, est incommunicabile et re et ratione, non enim potest nec in apprehensione cadere pluralitas huius individui. Unde nullum nomen significans aliquid individuum, est communicabile multis proprie, sed solum secundum similitudinem; sicut aliquis metaphorice potest dici Achilles, inquantum habet aliquid de proprietatibus Achillis, scilicet fortitudinem.

Formae vero quae non individuantur per aliquid suppositum, sed per seipsas (quia scilicet sunt formae subsistentes), si intelligerentur secundum quod sunt in seipsis, non possent communicari nec re neque ratione; sed forte per similitudinem, sicut dictum est de individuis. Sed quia formas simplices per se subsistentes non possumus intelligere secundum quod sunt, sed intelligimus eas ad modum rerum compositarum habentium formas in materia; ideo, ut dictum est, imponimus eis nomina concreta significantia naturam in aliquo supposito. Unde, quantum pertinet ad rationem nominum, eadem ratio est de nominibus quae a nobis imponuntur ad significandum naturas rerum compositarum, et de nominibus quae a nobis imponuntur ad significandum naturas simplices subsistentes.

Unde, cum hoc nomen Deus impositum sit ad significandum naturam divinam, ut dictum est; natura autem divina multiplicabilis non est, ut supra ostensum est, sequitur quod hoc nomen Deus incommunicabile quidem sit secundum rem, sed communicabile sit secundum opinionem, quemadmodum hoc nomen sol esset communicabile secundum opinionem ponentium multos soles. Et secundum hoc dicitur Gal. IV, “his qui natura non sunt dii, serviebatis;” Glossa, “non sunt dii natura, sed opinione hominum.” Est nihilominus communicabile hoc nomen Deus, non secundum suam totam significationem, sed secundum aliquid eius, per quandam similitudinem, ut dii dicantur, qui participant aliquid divinum per similitudinem, secundum illud, “ego dixi, dii estis.” Si vero esset aliquid nomen impositum ad significandum Deum non ex parte naturae, sed ex parte suppositi, secundum quod consideratur ut hoc aliquid, illud nomen esset omnibus modis incommunicabile, sicut forte est nomen tetragrammaton apud Hebraeos. Et est simile si quis imponeret nomen soli designans hoc individuum.

Ad primum ergo dicendum quod natura divina non est communicabilis nisi secundum similitudinis participationem.

Ad secundum dicendum quod hoc nomen Deus est nomen appellativum, et non proprium, quia significat naturam divinam ut in habente; licet ipse Deus, secundum rem, non sit nec universalis

nec particularis. Nomina enim non sequuntur modum essendi qui est in rebus, sed modum essendi secundum quod in cognitione nostra est. Et tamen, secundum rei veritatem, est incommunicabile, secundum quod dictum est de hoc nomine sol.

Ad tertium dicendum quod haec nomina bonus, sapiens, et similia, imposita quidem sunt a perfectionibus procedentibus a Deo in creaturas, non tamen sunt imposita ad significandum divinam naturam, sed ad significandum ipsas perfectiones absolute. Et ideo etiam secundum rei veritatem sunt communicabilia multis. Sed hoc nomen Deus impositum est ab operatione propria Deo, quam experimur continue, ad significandum divinam naturam..

Comments

The second question Thomas raises about the name “God” is whether or not it is shareable, that is predicably common to many things. That he will argue that “God” is an incommunicable name will not surprise, nonetheless there are marvelous surprises on the way to defending that thesis.

He begins with a distinction between two ways in which a name can be shared or communicable: properly and by similarity with what is properly named.

A name is shared *proprie* by those of which it is said according to its complete meaning (*secundum totam significationem nominis*). Every member of a pride of lions is called a lion and the term is predicated univocally of each, that is, according to its complete definition or meaning.

A name is shared *per similitudinem*, because of similarity with what it properly names, if something included in the meaning of the name comes into play.

The first sort of predicable sharing is illustrated, as I have anticipated, with “lion.” I don’t have at my fingertips a definition of “lion” but what Thomas would have in mind when he speaks of a definition is locating the definiendum in a genus and then assigning the difference that sets it off from other beasts that share the genus. Thus, when “lion” is said to be shareable according to some part of that meaning, we might think that Thomas means the genus or difference. But that clearly is not what he has in mind.

A synonym for the word shareable because of similarity with what the word properly names is metaphor. What does “lion” means in “The lion of the tribe of Judah?” Thomas now clarifies the account given above of words shareable by similarity as applied to this example and says the name is given to those which participate or share something leonine (*illis qui participant aliquid leoninum*). How so? Because they manifest boldness or courage. Boldness and courage are associated with the beasts of which “lion” is univocally predicated, but these characteristics do not enter into what Thomas would take to be their definition. The metaphorical sharing of the common term is thus based on something outside the meaning, but associated with the things of which the term is properly said. It is in thinking of those characteristics, and not of the definition as such, that we find the metaphor apt.

Proper Names

That Thomas now goes on to ask whether proper names are shareable could suggest to us that he has been caught up in a tangent, has been reminded of odd items of logical lore, and just feeds them into the discussion. If we think this, shame on us. This is the *Summa theologiae*. There are no sideshows, pointless tangents, confusing pile-ups of arcane information of dubious relevance to what is at issue. This will emerge.

Every form that is individuated by matter is common to many, either really or at least according to reason. Human nature, the form thanks to which men are men, is common to many both really

and according to reason. What is the meaning of this double sense of community? Well, Thomas takes the nature of the sun to be found only in the sun: it is not common to many, really, but it can be according to reason. That is, it is signified in the same way as natures which are really common and thus we can think of it as common as they are. Does Thomas take “Sun” to be the proper name of that bright star ninety-three million miles away? Not quite. Although there is but one sun, as he things, the mode of signifying this nature which exists in only one individual is like that in names signifying natures which are common to many. And so we can think of suns. Why?

Et hoc ideo quia intellectus intelligit naturam cuiuslibet speciei per abstractionem a singulari: unde esse in uno supposito singulari vel in pluribus est praeter intellectum naturae speciei: unde, servato intellectu naturae speciei, potest intelligi ut in pluribus existens.

What has this to do with individuals, the bearers of proper names? Well, Thomas needed something to contrast these with. Unlike the common nature of the species, the singular thing is distinguished or divided from all others, and a name imposed to signify something singular is not shareable, whether really or in thought (*re et ratione*). There cannot be either in reality or in thought a plurality of such an individual—it is the opposite of plurality, it involves singularity.

Having said this about proper names, Thomas then goes on to observe that we can make a proper name common through similarity, metaphorically. A man who lives long after Homer has stopped nodding is referred to as an Achilles. On what basis? Well, he has one of the properties of Achilles, in this case bravery, not sulking in his tent.

All of these clarifications are going to contribute to Thomas’s defense of his answer to the question: Is “God” a shareable or common name? Thomas has replied that it is in every way incommunicable.

But he is not ready yet to bring the discussion to that intended point. Having talked about natures which we abstract from material singulars and which are common really and in reason to many, having talked of the proper names of unique singulars, Thomas now introduces the next ontological level of the universe: subsistent forms, angels. Such forms are not individuated by matter but are just as such individual forms. They are incommunicable *re et ratione*. True as that is, it is also true that the only way we can understand such simple forms, subsisting in themselves, is in the manner of composed things having forms in matter. That is why we use concrete nouns which signify a nature in some singular (*in aliquo supposito*).

Unde, quantum pertinet ad rationem nominum, eadem ratio est de nominibus quae a nobis imponuntur ad significandum naturas rerum compositarum, et de nominibus quae a nobis imponuntur ad significandum naturas simplices subsistentes.

We have only the one language, the one devised to speak of the things we know in our distinctive way. When we speak of things we have come to know on the basis of our knowledge of sensible things, and have come to know that they must differ dramatically from sensible substances, the only language we have to say this is one that was fashioned to talk about sensible substances.

And so we come to the name “God.”

“God” is imposed to signify the divine nature; the divine nature is not multipliable; therefore, “God” is incommunicable really, *secundum rem*. However, the name is communicable according to opinion, such as “sun” would be if there weren’t many suns.

The name “God” is communicable, but not according to its complete signification, but because of something of the divine nature, had by way of similtude. Thus Thomas interprets Psalm 81,6 “I have called you gods.” This is said of those who participate something of the divine according to similitude.

It is clear from all this that “God” is not a proper name but rather, as will be said in ad 2, an appellative name—it signifies the nature as had by a subject—and this because our names do not follow the mode of existing things have in nature, but the mode of existing they have insofar as they are known to us. (The is why “sun” despite Thomas’s assumption about its uniqueness is not a proper name.)

Since “God” is not a proper name, Thomas adds that if there were a name, such as perhaps Tetragrammaton is, which is imposed to signify, not the nature of God, but the *hoc aliquid* or single thing God is, such a name would be in every way incommunicable.

The answer to the third objection sheds light on earlier discussions. The objector has said that “God” is imposed from activity but other divine names are imposed from divine activity or from effects and this does not prevent their being communicable. For example, “good,” “wise” and the like. In reply Thomas notes that “good” and “wise,” unlike “God,” are not imposed to signify the divine nature, but to signify this perfection absolutely—*sed ad significandum ipsas perfectiones absolute*. That is why they are in truth communicable to many things. “God” is imposed from divine activity, but it does not signify that activity, but the divine nature.

Articulus 10

Ad decimum sic proceditur. Videtur quod hoc nomen Deus univoce dicatur de Deo per naturam, et per participationem, et secundum opinionem.

1. Ubi enim est diversa significatio, non est contradictio affirmantis et negantis, aequivocatio enim impedit contradictionem sed Catholicus dicens idolum non est Deus, contradicit Pagano dicenti idolum est Deus. Ergo Deus utrobique sumptum univoce dicitur.
2. Praeterea, sicut idolum est Deus secundum opinionem et non secundum veritatem, ita fruitio carnalium delectationum dicitur felicitas secundum opinionem, et non secundum veritatem. Sed hoc nomen beatitudo univoce dicitur de hac beatitudine opinata, et de hac beatitudine vera. Ergo et hoc nomen Deus univoce dicitur de Deo secundum veritatem, et de Deo secundum opinionem.
3. Praeterea, univoca dicuntur quorum est ratio una. Sed Catholicus, cum dicit unum esse Deum, intelligit nomine Dei rem omnipotentem, et super omnia venerandam, et hoc idem intelligit gentilis, cum dicit idolum esse Deum. Ergo hoc nomen Deus univoce dicitur utrobique.

Sed contra, illud quod est in intellectu, est similitudo eius quod est in re, ut dicitur in I Periherm. Sed animal, dictum de animali vero et de animali picto, aequivoce dicitur. Ergo hoc nomen Deus, dictum de Deo vero et de Deo secundum opinionem, aequivoce dicitur.

Praeterea, nullus potest significare id quod non cognoscit, sed gentilis non cognoscit naturam divinam, ergo, cum dicit idolum est Deus, non significat veram deitatem. Hanc autem significat Catholicus dicens unum esse Deum. Ergo hoc nomen Deus non dicitur univoce, sed aequivoce, de Deo vero, et de Deo secundum opinionem.

Respondeo dicendum quod hoc nomen Deus, in praemissis tribus significationibus, non accipitur neque univoce neque aequivoce, sed analogice. Quod ex hoc patet. Quia univocorum est omnino eadem ratio, aequivocorum est omnino ratio diversa, in analogicis vero, oportet quod nomen secundum unam significationem acceptum, ponatur in definitione eiusdem nominis secundum alias significationes accepti. Sicut ens de substantia dictum, ponitur in definitione entis secundum quod

de accidente dicitur; et sanum dictum de animali, ponitur in definitione sani secundum quod dicitur de urina et de medicina; huius enim sani quod est in animali, urina est significativa, et medicina factiva.

Sic accidit in proposito. Nam hoc nomen Deus, secundum quod pro Deo vero sumitur, in ratione Dei sumitur secundum quod dicitur Deus secundum opinionem vel participationem. Cum enim aliquem nominamus Deum secundum participationem, intelligimus nomine Dei aliquid habens similitudinem veri Dei. Similiter cum idolum nominamus Deum, hoc nomine Deus intelligimus significari aliquid, de quo homines opinantur quod sit Deus. Et sic manifestum est quod alia et alia est significatio nominis, sed una illarum significationum clauditur in significationibus aliis. Unde manifestum est quod analogice dicitur.

Ad primum ergo dicendum quod nominum multiplicitas non attenditur secundum nominis praedicationem, sed secundum significationem, hoc enim nomen homo, de quocumque praedicatur, sive vere sive false, dicitur uno modo. Sed tunc multipliciter diceretur, si per hoc nomen homo intenderemus significare diversa, puta, si unus intenderet significare per hoc nomen homo id quod vere est homo, et alius intenderet significare eodem nomine lapidem, vel aliquid aliud. Unde patet quod Catholicus dicens idolum non esse Deum, contradicit Pagano hoc asserenti, quia uterque utitur hoc nomine Deus ad significandum verum Deum. Cum enim Paganus dicit idolum esse Deum, non utitur hoc nomine secundum quod significat Deum opinabilem, sic enim verum diceret, cum etiam Catholici interdum in tali significatione hoc nomine utantur, ut cum dicitur, “omnes dii gentium Daemonia.”

Et similiter dicendum ad secundum et tertium. Nam illae rationes procedunt secundum diversitatem praedicationis nominis, et non secundum diversam significationem.

Ad quartum dicendum quod animal dictum de animali vero et de picto, non dicitur pure aequivocae; sed philosophus largo modo accipit aequivoca, secundum quod includunt in se analogia. Quia et ens, quod analogice dicitur, aliquando dicitur aequivocae praedicari de diversis praedicamentis.

Ad quintum dicendum quod ipsam naturam Dei prout in se est, neque Catholicus neque Paganus cognoscit, sed uterque cognoscit eam secundum aliquam rationem causalitatis vel excellentiae vel remotionis, ut supra dictum est. Et secundum hoc, in eadem significatione accipere potest gentilis hoc nomen Deus, cum dicit idolum est Deus, in qua accipit ipsum Catholicus dicens idolum non est Deus. Si vero aliquis esset qui secundum nullam rationem Deum cognosceret, nec ipsum nominaret, nisi forte sicut proferimus nomina quorum significationem ignoramus.

Comments

“God” has been seen to be a communicable name on the basis of similitude and on the basis of opinion. If the name “God” is common to these three, how is it common? Thomas’s answer is that this is neither univocal nor equivocal community, but rather analogical: the term “God” is being used analogically to cover these different meanings. There is neither the same meaning nor utterly different meanings assigned to the term in the three cases. And that leaves analogy as the only possibility. (Once more, we see that these three—univocity, pure equivocity and analogy—are taken to exhaust the possibilities as to how a name can be common to many.)

Having opted for analogy, Thomas then repeats the famous rule for analogous terms. One meaning of the analogous term will enter into the other, secondary or extended meanings of the

term. This is illustrated both by “being”—substance enters into the definition of accidents and of the other things (or non-things) to which the term is extended—and, of course, by “healthy.” The meaning of the term as applied to the animal enters into the meanings it has as applied to medicine and urine.

Sic accidit in proposito: so it is in the case of “God” applied to the true God, and to what is thought or opined to be God, and what is God by the participation in some similitude of the true God.

Cum enim aliquem nominamus Deum secundum participationem, intelligimus nomine Dei aliquid habens similitudinem veri Dei. Similiter cum idolum nominamus Deum, hoc nomine Deus intelligimus significari aliquid de quo homines opinantur quod sit Deus. Et sic manifestum est quod alia et alia est significatio nominis, sed una illarum significationum clauditur in significationibus aliis. Unde manifestum est quod analogice dicitur.

Here certainly is a case where God is the *per prius* of a common name in the sense of its *ratio propria*. An interesting feature of “God” as an analogously common name is that one of its meanings—*per similitudinem*—has earlier been identified as a metaphorical meaning of the term.

So Thomas gives a straightforward answer to the question posed. In responding to the objections, he is able to introduce further clarifications, but then that is perhaps the chief reason for the objections he chooses in any article. The first objection stated that since the Catholic who says “The idol is not God” utters the contradictory of the pagan’s “This idol is God”, this seems to require that the name bear the same meaning in both, and wouldn’t that make it univocally common?

In reply, Thomas distinguishes the way the predication of a name creates multiplicity from the way in which signification does. “Man” is multiplied in the many affirmations in which it is predicated of different subjects, whether truly or falsely. The multiplicity involved in his answer to the question of this article, on the other hand, involves multiple meanings of the same term. Of course the Catholic and the pagan are in contradiction about the idol because both are using “God” to mean the true God. In his counter assertion, the pagan should not be taken to mean that the idol is, in his opinion, the true God.

This difference between kinds of multiplicity of a name provides the solution of the second and third objections as well. The second objection observes that “happiness” is applied to the delights of the flesh as well as to a life lived according to virtue, and these conflicting views are contradictory (or can easily be stated so). Hence “happiness” applies univocally to true and false happiness. And so it does. The licentious one is not to be taken to be saying that the delights of the flesh are, in his opinion, happiness: he means that they constitute true happiness. The fact that he is wrong does not mean that he has something in mind other than what would truly fulfill human aspirations. So the multiple use of the word, not only does not generate a plurality of meanings, it depends upon the same meaning of the term used.

The third objection comes at the issue differently by insisting that when the pagan says the idol is God he means the same thing as the Catholic who means by the term the omnipotent one whom all ought to revere. Thomas concedes this but rejects the implication that this multiplication of the use of the term is what established a multiplicity of meanings.

The article introduced two *sed contras*, as sometimes happens in an article of the *Summa* (elsewhere, as in *Disputed Questions*, there may be even more). In this case, the two are meant to oppose the view involved in the first three objections but, since they themselves convey views at odds with the resolution in the *corpus articuli*, they are treated as objections four and five.

The Perihermeneias is invoked in the first *sed contra* for the reminder that the concept in the mind is a likeness of what is found in reality. Then, without locating the example in the text of the Categories, the objector notes that a man and his picture are called “man” equivocally. So it would seem that “God” is said equivocally of the true God and something thought to be God. In responding to this, Thomas makes a point to which we have referred earlier. The example of equivocation that the Philosopher, that is, Aristotle gives, is not one of pure equivocation but rather of analogy. So this supports Thomas’s solution. (Thomas goes on to make it clear that while Aristotle says “being” is predicated equivocally of the different categories, the adverb must be taken in a large sense (equivocation by design) and that is the same thing as saying “being” is analogically common.

The second *sed contra* argues that, since one cannot name what he does not know, and the pagan cannot know the divine nature, when he says “This idol is God” the term cannot signify the true God. But when the Catholic speaks of God he means the true God. And doesn’t this suggest equivocity rather than univocity?

In reply Thomas notes that neither the Catholic nor the pagan knows the very nature of God as it is itself; both of them know that nature on the basis of causality, excellence, or negation. So it is that the Catholic and pagan can have in mind the same meaning of God when they contradict one another about the idol. Without some understanding of God expressed in a *ratio*, one could not say anything of Him, save perhaps in the way one pronounces a word whose meaning he does not know, as I, for example, might utter, with difficulty, a Hungarian word without, in the phrase, knowing a word of Hungarian.

Articulus 11

Ad undecimum sic proceditur. Videtur quod hoc nomen qui est non sit maxime proprium nomen Dei.

1. Hoc enim nomen Deus est nomen incommunicabile, ut dictum est. Sed hoc nomen qui est non est nomen incommunicabile. Ergo hoc nomen qui est non est maxime proprium nomen Dei.
2. Praeterea, Dionysius dicit, III cap. de Div. Nom., quod I^{I} boni nominatio est manifestativa omnium Dei processionum I^{I} . Sed hoc maxime Deo convenit, quod sit universale rerum principium. Ergo hoc nomen bonum est maxime proprium Dei, et non hoc nomen qui est.
3. Praeterea, omne nomen divinum videtur importare relationem ad creaturas, cum Deus non cognoscatur a nobis nisi per creaturas. Sed hoc nomen qui est nullam importat habitudinem ad creaturas. Ergo hoc nomen qui est non est maxime proprium nomen Dei.

Sed contra est quod dicitur Exod. III, quod Moysi quaerenti, *si dixerint mihi, quod est nomen eius? Quid dicam eis?* Et respondit ei dominus, *sic dices eis, qui est misit me ad vos.* Ergo hoc nomen qui est est maxime proprium nomen Dei.

Respondeo dicendum quod hoc nomen qui est triplici ratione est maxime proprium nomen Dei. Primo quidem, propter sui significationem. Non enim significat formam aliquam, sed ipsum esse. Unde, cum esse Dei sit ipsa eius essentia, et hoc nulli alii conveniat, ut supra ostensum est, manifestum est quod inter alia nomina hoc maxime proprie nominat Deum, unumquodque enim denominatur a sua forma.

Secundo, propter eius universalitatem. Omnia enim alia nomina vel sunt minus communia; vel, si convertantur cum ipso, tamen addunt aliqua supra ipsum secundum rationem; unde quodammodo informant et determinant ipsum. Intellectus autem noster non potest ipsam Dei essentiam cognoscere in statu viae, secundum quod in se est, sed quemcumque modum determinet circa id quod de Deo intelligit, deficit a modo quo Deus in se est. Et ideo, quanto aliqua nomina sunt minus determinata, et magis communia et absoluta, tanto magis proprie dicuntur de Deo a nobis. Unde et Damascenus dicit quod “principaliter omnibus quae de Deo dicuntur nominibus, est qui est, totum enim in seipso comprehendens, habet ipsum esse velut quoddam pelagus substantiae infinitum et indeterminatum.” Quolibet enim alio nomine determinatur aliquis modus substantiae rei, sed hoc nomen qui est nullum modum essendi determinat, sed se habet indeterminate ad omnes; et ideo nominat ipsum “pelagus substantiae infinitum.”

Tertio vero, ex eius consignificatione. Significat enim esse in praesenti, et hoc maxime proprie de Deo dicitur, cuius esse non novit praeteritum vel futurum, ut dicit Augustinus in V de Trin.

Ad primum ergo dicendum quod hoc nomen qui est est magis proprium nomen Dei quam hoc nomen Deus, quantum ad id a quo imponitur, scilicet ab esse, et quantum ad modum significandi et consignificandi, ut dictum est. Sed quantum ad id ad quod imponitur nomen ad significandum, est magis proprium hoc nomen Deus, quod imponitur ad significandum naturam divinam. Et adhuc magis proprium nomen est tetragrammaton, quod est impositum ad significandam ipsam Dei substantiam incommunicabilem, et, ut sic liceat loqui, singularem.

Ad secundum dicendum quod hoc nomen bonum est principale nomen Dei in quantum est causa, non tamen simpliciter, nam esse absolute praeintelligitur causae.

Ad tertium dicendum quod non est necessarium quod omnia nomina divina importent habitudinem ad creaturas; sed sufficit quod imponantur ab aliquibus perfectionibus procedentibus a Deo in creaturas. Inter quas prima est ipsum esse, a qua sumitur hoc nomen qui est.

Comments

We have seen that “God” is not a proper name, but rather an appellative, signifying the divine nature as in a subject. Thomas’s treatment of the Hebrew tetragrammaton is subjunctive even as he recognizes it as an effort to supply a proper name of God. Now he considers the biblical Qui est and argues that of all the names of God it is closest to being His proper name. “. . . hoc nomen Qui est est maxime proprium nomen Dei.” (Sed contra)

He bases this judgment on three arguments.

First, because of its meaning: propter sui significationem. This name does not signify a form of being, as do such divine attributes as wise and just which can be taken to mean “to be wise” and “to be just,” but rather it signifies existence itself. Now in God, as was shown in Question 3, there is no distinction between essence and existence, so of God we can say that existence is His form. And, since anything is denominated from its form, God is most properly called existence, since this is what He is; it is as it were His form.

Second, because of its very universality: propter eius universalitatem. Every other term is less common than being or, if some are equally common, words like “good” or “one,” they add at least something of reason to being, and thereby inform and make it determinate. When being is called good, a relation to appetite is added to being; when being is called one, its indivision in itself and distinction from others is added. Divine attributes like “just” and “wise” are not only less common than being, they restrict its range. Being just is a kind of being, as is being wise.

The argument may surprise. “Being” or “*Ipsum esse*” is the preferred name of God because it means so little. More informative attributes purchase their added information at the cost of restricting what is said of God to the perfection from which they are imposed to signify, e.g. wisdom, justice, etc. Thomas puts it forth as a rule.

Et ideo, quanto aliqua nomina sunt minus determinata, et magis communia et absoluta, tanta magis proprie dicuntur de Deo a nobis.

In this respect, as he always does, Thomas cites St. John Damascene who commended “He who is” as prior to the other names that are said of God because existence includes everything in itself as “in an infinite ocean of substance.” Thomas goes on to spell out the point that other divine names express some mode or manner of the divine substance, whereas “He who is” provides no way or manner of existing—again, e.g., existing as wise, existing as just, and so on—but is indeterminately related to them all. And Thomas repeats Damascene’s phrase: an infinite ocean of substance.

A passage in the commentary on Boethius’s *De hebdomadibus* (lectio 2), having noted the priority which the axioms devoted to being have over those involving good and one, begins the discussion of *diversum est esse et id quid est* by noting that *esse* is an infinitive, unrestricted to any mode of being. Restrictions are expressed by the subject and predicate of propositions in which *esse*, accordingly altered to *est*, appears as the copula: S is P. Then Thomas takes the subject to express a form of being, substantial being, and the predicate to further modify the substance with incidental characteristics. This analysis is a kind of picture of the way in which the infinitive gets tied down and restricted, even though that tying down and restricting is a gain in information.

Applying this grammatical picture to the divine attributes, we see that they all restrict the divine existence, attempt to describe or define it. From this point of view, *Ipsum esse subsistens* can be seen as the dialectical limit of the other attributes, and we can imagine them coalescing in that infinitive, that infinite ocean of being, and losing the particularity that is at once their gain and loss.

The third argument on behalf of *Qui est*, He who is, as most like a proper name of God is drawn from its consignification: *ex eius consignificatione*. It signifies present existence, and this is appropriate since for God there is neither past nor future.

The answer to the first objection, having recalled the bases of the three arguments on behalf of “He who is” draws attention to the fact that the first is based on the *id a quo nomen imponitur*, namely, *esse*. The word “being” is imposed to signify from is or exists. From that point of view, the name “God” is a more proper name of God because of its *id ad quod*: it signifies the divine substance. And Tetragrammaton would be even more proper that “God” because it is an effort to devise a proper name for him: “ad significandam ipsam Dei substantiam incommunicabilem, et, ut sic liceat loqui, singularem.”

The answer to the third objection reminds us that not all the divine attributes have meanings which relate them to creatures, even though since our naming follows our knowing, all attributes will be derivative from what we know of creatures, “but it is sufficient,” Thomas reminds us, “that they be imposed from perfections proceeding from God to creatures.” And the first of all such perfections is existence itself (“*Prima rerum creaturarum est esse*,” as the *Liber de Causis* puts it in a phrase Thomas often quotes.)

Articulus 12

Ad duodecimum sic proceditur. Videtur quod propositiones affirmativae non possunt formari de Deo.

1. Dicit enim Dionysius, II cap. Cael. Hier., quod *negationes de Deo sunt verae, affirmationes autem incompactae*.

2. Praeterea, Boetius dicit, in libro de Trin., quod *forma simplex subiectum esse non potest*. Sed Deus maxime est forma simplex, ut supra ostensum est. Ergo non potest esse subiectum. Sed omne illud de quo propositio affirmativa formatur, accipitur ut subiectum. Ergo de Deo propositio affirmativa formari non potest.

3. Praeterea, omnis intellectus intelligens rem aliter quam sit, est falsus. Sed Deus habet esse absque omni compositione, ut supra probatum est. Cum igitur omnis intellectus affirmativus intelligat aliquid cum compositione, videtur quod propositio affirmativa vere de Deo formari non possit.

Sed contra est quod fidei non subest falsum. Sed propositiones quaedam affirmativae subduntur fidei, utpote quod Deus est trinus et unus, et quod est omnipotens. Ergo propositiones affirmativae possunt vere formari de Deo.

Respondeo dicendum quod propositiones affirmativae possunt vere formari de Deo. Ad cuius evidentiam, sciendum est quod in qualibet propositione affirmativa vera, oportet quod praedicatum et subiectum significant idem secundum rem aliquo modo, et diversum secundum rationem. Et hoc patet tam in propositionibus quae sunt de praedicato accidentali, quam in illis quae sunt de praedicato substantiali. Manifestum est enim quod homo et albus sunt idem subiecto, et differunt ratione, alia enim est ratio hominis, et alia ratio albi. Et similiter cum dico homo est animal, illud enim ipsum quod est homo, vere animal est; in eodem enim supposito est et natura sensibilis, a qua dicitur animal, et rationalis, a qua dicitur homo. Unde hic etiam praedicatum et subiectum sunt idem supposito, sed diversa ratione. Sed et in propositionibus in quibus idem praedicatur de seipso, hoc aliquo modo invenitur; inquantum intellectus id quod ponit ex parte subiecti, trahit ad partem suppositi, quod vero ponit ex parte praedicati, trahit ad naturam formae in supposito existentis, secundum quod dicitur quod praedicata tenentur formaliter, et subiecta materialiter. Huic vero diversitati quae est secundum rationem, respondet pluralitas praedicati et subiecti, identitatem vero rei significat intellectus per ipsam compositionem.

Deus autem, in se consideratus, est omnino unus et simplex, sed tamen intellectus noster secundum diversas conceptiones ipsum cognoscit, eo quod non potest ipsum ut in seipso est, videre. Sed tamen, quamvis intelligat ipsum sub diversis conceptionibus, cognoscit tamen quod omnibus suis conceptionibus respondet una et eadem res simpliciter. Hanc ergo pluralitatem quae est secundum rationem, repraesentat per pluralitatem praedicati et subiecti, unitatem vero repraesentat intellectus per compositionem.

Ad primum ergo dicendum quod Dionysius dicit affirmationes de Deo esse incompactas, vel inconvenientes secundum aliam translationem, inquantum nullum nomen Deo competit secundum modum significandi, ut supra dictum est.

Ad secundum dicendum quod intellectus noster non potest formas simplices subsistentes secundum quod in seipsis sunt, apprehendere, sed apprehendit eas secundum modum compositorum, in quibus est aliquid quod subiicitur, et est aliquid quod inest. Et ideo apprehendit formam simplicem in ratione subiecti, et attribuit ei aliquid.

Ad tertium dicendum quod haec propositio, intellectus intelligens rem aliter quam sit, est falsus, est duplex, ex eo quod hoc adverbium aliter potest determinare hoc verbum intelligit ex parte intellecti, vel ex parte intelligentis. Si ex parte intellecti, sic propositio vera est, et est sensus, quicumque intellectus intelligit rem esse aliter quam sit, falsus est. Sed hoc non habet locum in proposito, quia intellectus noster, formans propositionem de Deo, non dicit eum esse compositum, sed simplicem. Si vero ex parte intelligentis, sic propositio falsa est. Alius est enim modus intellectus in intelligendo, quam rei in essendo. Manifestum est enim quod intellectus noster res materiales infra se existentes intelligit immaterialiter; non quod intelligat eas esse immateriales, sed habet modum immaterialem in intelligendo. Et similiter, cum intelligit simplicia quae sunt supra se, intelligit ea secundum modum suum, scilicet composite, non tamen ita quod intelligat ea esse composita. Et sic intellectus noster non est falsus, formans compositionem de Deo.

Comments

The objectors make strong cases against the possibility of forming true affirmative judgments which would have God as their subject. Of course Thomas will argue for the possibility, not only because he himself has been making affirmations about God from the beginning of the *Summa* but more importantly, as the *Sed contra* points out, because articles of the faith are so expressed, e.g. “God is three and one,” “God is omnipotent,” and so on.

He begins with some reminders about what is going on when we form affirmative propositions of a more ordinary kind. Any true affirmation will be such that the subject and predicate of the proposition signify something that is really in some way the same although differing in account (ratione). This is the case both when an accident or incidental characteristic is affirmed of the subject, and when a substantial predicate is. The latter, of course, on the face of it, presents fewer difficulties. But first, the predication of an accident or non-constitutive characteristic of the subject.

When we truly say “Man is white,” it is clear that man and white are the same in subject although the accounts we give of each differ. But the same is the case when we make such an affirmation as “Man is animal.” That which is a man is truly animal, since in the same subject or suppositum there is sensible nature, from which the genus animal is taken, and rationality, from which the species man is taken. The fact that we give different accounts or definitions of the two terms does not prevent their being the same in subject.

Thus affirmations, whether incidental or substantive, involve the unity of that in which what is expressed by the terms are both found, even though we give different accounts of the subject and predicate.

But what of affirmations of identity, as in “Socrates is Socrates?” The question presumably is asked because such a proposition seems to express identity both in subject and in account. But Thomas suggests that what has been said of incidental and substantial predications can also be said, in a way, of affirmations of identity. We have learned to think of such identities as relations of reason (art. 7). We seem to express Socrates’ identity with himself by separating him from himself; how else could his name occupy both the subject and predicate position in the affirmation? Socrates is two for purposes of the affirmation that he is one because there are two thoughts of him. If Socrates is really identical to himself, this means that he is not a crowd, a plurality. The plurality is due to our thinking about him twice. And in the proposition in which the twice-thought of Socrates is predicated of himself, the Socrates in the subject position is taken from the side of the singular supposit and the predicate “Socrates” carries with it the suggestion of a form existing in that subject. There is a rule that Thomas cites, according to which predicates are taken formally and subjects materially. In any case, in affirmations of identity, a diversity generated by our way

of thinking, forming the logical relation of identity, is the basis for the diversity of terms with which we signify their composition. Is this discussion of affirmations of identity the bridge into the discussion of affirmations in which God is the subject? So it would seem. God, we are reminded, considered in Himself, is in every way one and simple, but our intellect knows Him through diverse conceptions, for the obvious reason that we cannot know Him in Himself. Despite the fact that we thus know him through a plurality of conceptions, we know that these conceptions respond to a reality that is absolutely one and the same thing. It is this plurality involved in our way of knowing God, which is *secundum rationem*, that we represent by the plurality of subject and predicate.

The answer to the second objection, which invoked Boethius on the impossibility of a simple form being a subject, reminds us that the way we think of things other than the composed things of our experience will carry along with it the manner of existing of these things and our words will have a corresponding mode of signification. On the face of it, given their way of signifying, our terms are tied down to composite things. What we are learning to do is to acknowledge this and then overcome it by denying that certain perfections, first found in creatures, known and signified as found, need be thought of as involving that mode of being and of signification. So we seek to deny the mode of signification and retain the perfection signified, which represents God who is not only the cause of that perfection but has it in a higher and more perfect way. Affirmations about God, and the complexity they involve, go through our way of knowing and naming. Somewhat as in affirmations of identity, the complex way we express our knowledge of God seems to deny what it would assert. When we say “God is in every way one and simple” the complexity of saying it can seem to undermine our intention in making the affirmation.

No wonder, then, that in discussing the third objection Thomas takes up the general claim that since to understand a thing otherwise than as it is is a definition of falsity, and since we inevitably understand things in a way other than they are, our knowledge inevitably falsifies what we know. Thomas comes back several times to this difficulty (e.g. Ia, q. 85, a. 1, ad 1m) which first arises from the realization that we consider universally things which as they exist are singulars.

Thomas suggests that we ask what “otherwise” modifies in the sentence “We know things otherwise than as they are.” It can modify either our knowing or the things known. As modifying our knowing, it is of course true: we understand material things by means of immaterial concepts. But, if the adverb should be taken to modify the things known, as if we were thinking of material things as if they were themselves immaterial, then of course falsity would result.

Alius est enim modus intellectus in intelligendo, quam rei in essendo. Manifestum est quod intellectus noster res materiales infra se existentes intelligit immaterialiter, non quod intelligit eas esse immateriales, sed habet modum immaterialem in intelligendo.

Something similar happens when we are thinking of things above ourselves, ontologically simple where we are ontologically complex. We understand them according to our way of understanding. How else? But this does not mean that we understand simple things to be complex. And so it is that falsity is not entailed by the fact that we form composite affirmations about God.