



1951

Exemplarism in Saint Thomas Aquinas

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Recommended Citation

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EXEMPLARISM IN SAINT
THOMAS AQUINAS

by

Frederick Charles Herx

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

February

1951

LIFE

Frederick Charles Herx was born in Chicago, Illinois, August 4th, 1927.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The task which we have set for ourselves is to understand the doctrine of exemplarism in general, and, in particular, this doctrine as expounded by St. Thomas Aquinas. In this undertaking we are handicapped by several factors which have arisen in modern times. First, exemplarism is looked on in these times as an obscure and complex point of medieval doctrine. This complexity, which tends to discourage any serious effort by the majority of minds, has led to further obscurity, so that today there is a general unawareness even of the existence of such a doctrine. There are few contemporary texts on the subject of exemplarism, and these, though invaluable, are in themselves summary. These modern attitudes are the exact reverse of those which existed in the thirteenth century. The doctrine of exemplarism suffered from no obscurity then. Indeed, it was a basic part of the vital tradition which permeated the age. Such names as St. Augustine, Dionysius, Beethius, St. Anselm, Peter Lombard, and St. Albert are linked

with its developement.¹ Thus there were strong traditional reasons why St. Thomas treated this question of exemplarism. However we, who are so far removed from this tradition, too often fail to realize the significance and importance which it held in the time of St. Thomas.

And this leads us to a second difficulty prevalent in recent times. For the past several years much stress has been laid upon the existential interpretation of St. Thomas as opposed to the essential interpretation of him. It has been insisted upon to such an extent that one cannot help wondering: How could St. Thomas have ever accepted such a thoroughly essentialistic doctrine? One possible answer has already been indicated. He accepted it because he could not throw off the weight of tradition. However, there is a much more obvious answer which in this case is also the best answer. St. Thomas accepted the doctrine of exemplarism because it is true. And once the truth of exemplarism is grasped its importance in the Thomistic system cannot be overlooked. Therefore we must try to realize the truth which is contained in this doctrine of exemplarism.

In our attempt to do this, there are three primary considerations which we must examine. The first is the consideration of the existence and nature of the exemplary idea.

¹ T.M. Sparks, O.P., De Divisione Causae Exemplaris Apud S. Thomam, Somerset, Ohio, 1936, 9.

Such a consideration is naturally prior to any other. The second is the problem of the causality of the exemplary idea. There have been numerous interpretations of exemplary causality. My own is based primarily on my study of St. Thomas. While he never treated this question formally, St. Thomas has enough material on it to warrant an interpretation which may be called Thomistic. The last consideration is of God as the model of all things. Here we will meet with a twofold difficulty: the possibility of God being the proper model of all things, and the kind of likeness existing between things and God. As a conclusion we will consider the position of exemplarism in relation to providence and human knowledge.

But in order to appreciate St. Thomas' doctrine more fully, we should give a brief historical introduction to it. Such an introduction, because it is brief, will necessarily be inadequate, and to a certain degree inaccurate. However we must realize that our main problem lies in the doctrine of St. Thomas itself, and that the chief merit of an introduction is its brevity.

Historically speaking the first man to hold a doctrine of exemplarism was Plato. In considering reality Plato had found that all the things he saw around him were constantly changing. However he also found that there were certain things which did not change, and these were the things

he knew: the Ideas. For, while any white thing can become black, whiteness can never become blackness. Since these Ideas are eternal, immutable, and necessary, they cannot exist in things which are mutable, temporal, and contingent. Plato therefore held that the Ideas were intelligible substances existing by themselves apart from all these changing things.² However there is certainly a relationship between these two elements of reality. For these things which are constantly changing at least appear to be the Ideas. No two things are ever exactly equal, but they may at times have the appearances of equality. It is in this likeness to the Ideas that material, changing things find their highest reality. For in so far as they are constantly changing, they are as if they were not. But in so far as they imitate the Ideas which really are and never change, to that extent they participate in that which really is.³ But let us look more closely at this relationship of the Ideas and their copies.

In the Timaeus Plato tells us that the Ideas are the eternal models of all things. These models, since they are eternal and unchangeable, exist above the influence of any cause.

2 Frederick Copleston, S.J., A History of Philosophy, vol. I, Westminster Maryland, 1946, 142 - 162.

3 Ibid., 163 - 206.

The copies, however, are temporal and changeable; and therefore they must depend upon some cause. This cause is the Demiurge, the supreme artist who fashions all the things in this universe in the likeness of the eternal models. According to Plato's description, the Demiurge, looking to the models which exist independently of him, works upon a pre-existing matter which he forms to the likeness of the models.⁴ And this, Plato thought, was the ultimate origin of things.

However there are two points of criticism which we can level against such a conception of exemplarism. The first is that ideas cannot exist apart from mind. For an idea is a mental conception. It must then exist in the mind that conceives it. Thus either these Ideas are really ideas, and exist in the mind of the Demiurge; or they are not ideas at all, but separate and subsisting models of all things. And it is this latter position which Plato seems to hold.⁵ But even if we were to say that these models were really ideas existing in the mind of the Demiurge, we would be faced with a second difficulty. A being which is dependent upon a pre-existing matter in order to produce something cannot sufficiently explain the ultimate origin

4 Plato, Timaeus, trans. B. Jowett, vol 2, New York, 1937, 12 - 14.

5 Etienne Gilson, The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy, New York, 1940, 154.

of all things. For at least it cannot explain the matter which exists independently of it. The action of the Demiurge is then exactly the same as the action of a man who is guided by an external model in forming the material at his disposal. In positing this action of beings higher and nobler than man, Plato has not changed the nature of this action in the least. And therefore the Demiurge is no more able to explain the ultimate origin of things than man. What Plato has done here is to confuse the Divine Art with human art. This confusion was eliminated by St. Augustine; for he denied the limitations of human art before positing Art of God. Let us look to St. Augustine, for in him we will find a complete synthesis of the Christian concept of exemplarism.

For St. Augustine the ideas subsist in the intellect of God. Since they are in God, they necessarily participate in his essential attributes. They are then eternal, immutable, and necessary. And because they are eternal, they cannot be created forms. Rather they are the forms of all created things.

For the ideas are certain original forms, or the stable and incommunicable concepts of things, which are not themselves formed and therefore are eternal and exist always in the same way, and which are contained in the divine intelligence.⁶

⁶ De Div. Quaest. 83, q.46, Patrologia Latina, Migne ed., vol. 40, Paris, 1861, 108. - I am entirely responsible for this and all subsequent translations, except those from the Summa Theologica. For these passages I have used Dr. Anton

Coeternal with God, and therefore essentially the same as God, the ideas then are the Word of God. The Word, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, is the expression of God in all that He is and can do. And therefore it is according to His Word that He makes all things. But in so far as all things are according to the Word, they will resemble the Word which is God. Therefore to be made by God and to resemble God are one and the same thing.⁷ But let us consider what it means to be made by God.

A thing which is made by God is created. And this concept of creation is certainly different from Plato's description of the formation of things by the Demiurge. For outside of God there was nothing, not even the raw material out of which He could fashion things. Hence if God is to make anything, He must make it entirely, that is create it. There is nothing then in the effect which does not owe its existence to God. Therefore both matter and the forms which matter assumes have been created by God. And since God has drawn all things into being from nothingness, He does in His divine goodness guide them to their proper end. For to create is to govern. There-

Pegis' translation as contained in the Random House edition of the Basic Writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

7 Charles Boyer, S.J., L'Idée de Vérité dans la Philosophie de Saint Augustin, Paris, 1920, 119, 123.

fore the God Who creates is also a provident God.⁸

This fundamentally is the position which all Christian philosophers hold with regard to the doctrine of exemplarism. But it is our task to consider the intricacies of this doctrine as proposed by St. Thomas Aquinas. Therefore let us look to St. Thomas' treatment of exemplarism.

⁸ Ibid., 132 - 139.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF THE EXEMPLAR

Creation was for St. Thomas, as for any Christian philosopher, the production of something from nothing. Of course "nothing" does not signify the matter out of which something is made, but is only meant to convey that the thing produced was not made from anything. It is a denial of any material cause. But the thing which is of interest here is that creation is a production, an action which results in some product. And action can be of two kinds: either necessary or free, i.e, voluntary. However into which class does creation fall? Is it necessary or voluntary action?

In his analysis of action St. Thomas finds that every action tends towards some definite end. But since action follows upon the nature of the agent, both action and end will depend upon the specific nature of the agent. Upon an examination of agents we observe that action proceeds from them either according to the freedom of their will or according to the necessity of their nature. Thus in the latter case the sun will rise every morning, to state this astronomical occurrence naively. But on the other hand a man need not rise in the

morning, or even in the afternoon for that matter. He will arise only when he so chooses.

It is evident that will and nature act in different ways. For nature does not know either the end or the means to the end, and therefore it can neither set an end for itself nor direct and order itself to the end. The voluntary agent however knows all that is denied to the natural agent. And therefore he can determine an end for himself, and direct himself to that end by ordering his actions to it.

Nature indeed tends to an end as moved and directed by another being who possesses understanding and will. And this is clear from the example of the arrow, which tends to a determinate mark on account of the direction of the archer, and in this way it is said by the philosophers, that the work of nature is a work of intelligence.¹

This reduction of the "work of nature" to "the work of intelligence" is of great importance. For understanding is the necessary condition of volition. If we did not know that there were several possibilities of action, we could not be said to choose. Choice presupposes the selection of one from several. Since a free will is the only appetitive faculty which is proportionate to the intellect, in placing intelligence at the summit of all "works", St. Thomas holds that the first of all actions is vol-

¹ De Pot., q.3, a.15, Quaestiones Disputatae, Marietti ed., vol. 2, Rome, 1949, 231: This is highly reminiscent of the fifth proof for the existence of God; cf. S.T., I, q.2, a.3.

untary.

St. Thomas goes on to say that God is intelligence, and therefore all the things which He is able to accomplish will pre-exist in Him in an intelligible mode. For the effect pre-exists in its cause according to the manner of cause. Thus whatever is produced by God is brought into existence by His free choice, i.e., by the voluntary action of God.²

The important thing is hereby established: that God acts not by the necessity of His nature but according to His intelligence and His will. Therefore the action which God performs in creation is voluntary and not necessary action. Having settled this issue we may inquire as to whether God is the exemplary cause of all things. And St. Thomas tells most assuredly that He is.

If for the production of anything an exemplar is necessary it is in order that the effect may receive a determinate form. For an artificer produces a determinate form in matter by reason of the exemplar before him... Now it is manifest that things made by nature receive determinate forms. This determination of forms must be reduced to the divine wisdom as its first principle... And therefore we must say that in the divine wisdom are the models of all things, which we have called ideas - i.e. exemplary forms existing in the divine mind.³

2 Ibid.

3 S.T. q.44, a.3, Basic Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, ed. Anton C. Pegis, vol. 1, New York, 1945, 430.

Here we find that God is likened to the artist (artifex); and it will be to our advantage if we consider more closely this likeness to the artifex.⁴ The distinction, as in the example of the archer and the arrow, is again based upon the intelligence of the agent. The artificer or artist produces things according to his intelligence and will. But why is the exemplar a necessary condition of his action? We need only examine the nature of the exemplar to find the answer. The exemplar is the form of the thing to be produced as it is preconceived in the mind of the artist. The intelligent agent proceeds only according to his knowledge. Therefore he must be able in some way to know what is to be produced before he produces it. If this condition were not fulfilled there could be no artist. It is the exemplar which fulfills this condition. And therefore the exemplar must be considered as a necessary element in artistic production. Consequently the exemplar is necessary for all intelligent production.

We may be assured that creation is an intelligent production. And since creation is an activity proper only to God, He must be an intelligent producer or artist. It was for this reason that many mediaeval writers referred to creation as the Divine Art. And rightly so. For this is the greatest

4 cf. Jacques Maritain, Art and Scholasticism, trans. F.J. Scanlan, London, 1930. This is the most complete modern analysis of art and the artist.

work of intelligence ever produced. But since this is so, there must be in God, as artist, the ideas or exemplars according to which He produces His effects. Therefore St. Thomas in considering God takes up the question De Ideis.

St. Thomas says the effect to be produced must pre-exist in the agent, and this may happen in either of two ways.⁵ First, the form of the effect may pre-exist in its natural being, as fire generates a fire. And this, as we have seen, is action by the necessity of nature. Second, the form of the effect may pre-exist in its intelligible being, as the likeness of a building pre-exists in the mind of the architect. And this is action by intellect. But since this is the manner of action by which God creates, the forms to the likeness of which He produces things must exist in His divine mind. And this is the notion of the idea.

Therefore this seems to be the concept of idea, that idea is the form which something imitates according to the intention of an agent who determines the end for himself.⁶

The idea is therefore a form. However it is not the intrinsic form which, dwelling in the composite, determines the being to its particular nature and constitutes it in a definite grade of being. It is rather an extrinsic form, a form which

⁵ S.T., I, q. 15, a.1.

⁶ De Ver., q.3, a.1, Quaestiones Disputatae Marietti ed., vol.I, Rome, 1949, 63.

exists apart from the thing itself. And this is the common acceptance of idea. For the idea of man is not the form of man in so far as this form constitutes any particular composite, but it is the form of man as it exists apart from all men in the mind of the knower. However the idea is not merely the extrinsic form, but it is the extrinsic form "which something imitates according to the intention of an agent who determines the end for himself." There is therefore a likeness which exists between the idea and the thing which is produced. And this likeness is intended by an intelligent agent. Thus the definition of idea contains three principal elements: idea is (1) an extrinsic form, (2) to the likeness of which something is constituted, (3) by the intention of a free and intelligent agent.

This however seems to present a problem. For God has not only a practical knowledge but also a speculative knowledge. But ideas taken strictly in the sense of exemplars insure God only a practical knowledge of all His effects and in no way indicate that He has any speculative knowledge. This would be a very grave limitation of the term ideas. For ideas are commonly considered not merely to be principle of operation in the sense of exemplars, but they are also held to be principle of knowledge.⁷ St. Thomas was certainly not unaware of this problem,

⁷ "By the term ideas we understand the forms of things existing outside of things themselves, that is to say, whose existence is extrinsic to things, and these we call ideas or forms.

for he asks, "Utrum ad practicum vel speculativam cognitionem spectent ipsae ideas"⁸

Speculative and practical knowledge differ according to their respective ends. The end of speculative knowledge is truth absolutely considered, while the end of practical knowledge is operation. Thus knowledge is called practical by its relation to some work (ex ordine ad opus). Now there are two relations which can exist between knowledge and work. Knowledge can be actually ordered to work, as when the artist proceeds to realize the preconceived form of his work of art. This is actual practical knowledge. There is also knowledge which is capable of being ordered to work but is not actually so ordered, as when an artist preconceives a work of art but does not intend to produce it. This is habitual or virtual practical knowledge. However speculative knowledge is never ordered to operation. Sometimes this is because the thing known does not lie within the power of the knower, as when man knows natural or divine things. Sometimes however the thing known is operable

However, the form of a thing existing outside of itself can be ordered in two ways: either as it is the exemplar of the thing to the likeness of which the thing itself is constituted; or as it is the principle of the knowledge of the thing in so far as the form or idea of the thing known is said to be in the knower." Thomas Maria Zigliara, Summa Philosophica, q.48, a.2, vol.2, Paris, 1891, 509.

⁸ De Ver., q.3, a.3; cf. S.T., I, q.14, a.16.

by the knower but it is not considered as operable. And thus the intellect considers separately that which is not separate in the thing itself. For an architect may consider a building with respect to its genus and differences. This would be speculative knowledge.

Now God's knowledge is the cause of things. Therefore He will contain both manners of practical knowledge. He must know those things which He has made or will make, and also those things which He is able to make but never will make. Furthermore God has speculative knowledge. For He knows Himself and He is not able to be made in any way. Moreover all other things can be considered not only practically but also speculatively. And we cannot deny this perfection of a God Who is Perfectior

And thus it is that St. Thomas recognizes a certain ambiguity in the word idea. For it not only implies the form by which something is made but also the concept or likeness of the thing known.

Therefore if we speak of the idea according to the proper concept of the name, thus it extends only to that science according to which something is formed; and this is either actual practical knowledge, or only virtual practical knowledge, which in a certain way is speculative. But if we refer to the idea as is commonly used to mean likeness or concept, thus idea can pertain purely to speculative knowledge.⁹

Having disposed of the shackles of terminology, let

⁹ Ibid.

us consider whether there are many ideas.¹⁰ And it appears that there are, for there are many things which God has created. Since God has created many things, He has properly intended to constitute them in existence. But He could not properly intend to make each of them unless there were present in His mind the ideas or exemplars according to which each of them is made.

Whence it is necessary to say, that the complete distinction of things is pre-defined by Him. And therefore it is necessary to hold in God the proper concepts of singular things, and thus many ideas.¹¹

But can God have the idea of all things known by Him? Idea in its primary sense, we must remember, refers to the exemplar according to which the artist produces the effect. But since God is in no way the cause of evil, it is apparent that God cannot have the idea of evil in this sense. However there is a secondary meaning of idea in so far as it refers to the concept or similitude as a principle of knowledge. But there can be no idea of evil in this sense either, because evil lacks a form. For evil is a denial of good and therefore of being. And since similitude is a likeness with respect to form, evil, lacking form, can have no idea in God.¹²

10 S.T., I, q.15, a.2.

11 De. Ver., q.3, a.2.

12 Ibid., a.3, a.4.

However God does know evil. For God knows good perfectly.

Whoever knows a thing perfectly must know all that can occur to it. Now there are some good things to which corruption by evil may occur. Hence God would not know good things perfectly, unless He also know evil things. Now a thing is knowable in the degree in which it is; hence, since this is the essence of evil that it is the privation of good, by the very fact that God knows good things, He also knows evil things; as by light darkness is known.¹³

Nor is this an imperfection in God's knowledge that He knows evil only as a privation of good. For, as it is brought out in this article, a thing can be known only in so far as it is. But evil has no other existence except as a privation of good. And therefore it is only in this way that evil is knowable.

But can there be an idea of prime matter? Not in so far as idea signifies the exemplar. For the exemplar regards a thing according as it is capable of production. But since matter cannot be produced without some form, there must be a single exemplar of the whole composite; for this alone is what is produced. Therefore there can be no exemplary idea of prime matter. But if we take the idea as a principle of knowledge, there can be an idea of prime matter. For in this sense there are distinct ideas of those things which can be considered distinctly even though these things cannot exist separately. And therefore there

13 S.T., I, q.14, a.10

can be an idea of prime matter in this sense.¹⁴

How can it be possible though to have any knowledge of prime matter? For we can only know a thing in so far as it is. However prime matter in itself is not. It is true prime matter in itself is not, and therefore we cannot, strictly speaking, know it in itself. But even though prime matter does not actually exist, it is that which is related to existence in so far as it is that which is capable of existence. And it is this relation to existence which we are able to know.

Although prime matter is unformed, yet there is in it an imitation of the first form; for howsoever much it has insufficient being (debile esse habeat), still it is an imitation of the first being; and in this way it can have a likeness to God.¹⁵

Now let us consider the idea of the possibles. The exemplary idea, we must remember, considers both actual and virtual practical knowledge. God has virtual practical knowledge concerning all things which He can make but never has or ever will make. Therefore He has the ideas of all possible things. For the ideas of actual things, in so far as they are produced or ordered to production, are determined by a degree of the divine will. Thus it is determined that a thing is here, and now, in this way. But the ideas of those things which neither

14 De Ver., q.3, a.5.

15 Ibid., q.3, a.5, ad.1.

are nor have been, nor will be have no such determination. Therefore they are called undetermined ideas.¹⁶

And lastly we must inquire whether God has ideas of singular things. And it can be answered very simply that He must have the ideas of singular things, for this is precisely what He created. It would be foolish, however, to deny to the artist the knowledge of that which he principally intended.

Since God is the cause of things by His knowledge, as was stated above, His knowledge extends as far as His causality extends. Hence, as the active power of God extends not only to forms, which are the source of universality, but also to matter [which is the source of singularity] ... the knowledge of God must extend to singular things, which are individuated by matter.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ibid., q.3, a.6: cf. Etienne Gilson, The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure, trans. Dom Illtyd Trethowan and F.J. Sheed, New York, 1938, 159.

¹⁷ S.T., I, q.14, a.11.

CHAPTER III

EXEMPLARY CAUSALTY

Having seen St. Thomas' treatment of the traditional question De Ideis, it remains for us to determine the precise nature of exemplary causality. The exemplary idea, as we have seen, is that by means of which an intelligent agent produces a determinate effect. In this statement we see that there is some kind of causality implied by the idea. We should also remember that the idea in its primary and proper sense of exemplar always has the nature of practical knowledge. However practical knowledge is always related to work, and therefore it is always related to the concept of causality. There is no way of escaping the causality of the exemplars. But once we ask ourselves what type of causality the exemplar exerts, we are faced with a tremendous problem. However, I believe our solution lies in St. Thomas' treatment of exemplary causality, if we have but the patience to see him through. Let us start then at the basis of this problem.

The exemplar is an idea, and this exemplary idea is in some way cause. For the artist accomplishes his work according to and by means of the exemplar in his mind. And therefore, as

St Thomas says, the exemplar must be a principle of action.¹ However an idea is not a principle of action in so far as it resides in the intellect of the knower unless it receives an inclination to an effect. And such an inclination can only be received from the action of the will.

For since the intelligible form has a relation to contraries (inasmuch as the same knowledge relates to contraries), it would not produce a determinate effect unless it were determined to one thing by the appetite, as the Philosopher says.²

Therefore an idea is inactive outside of a union with the will. Before the idea is united to the will, St. Thomas would call it an undetermined idea, even though it is capable of producing an effect. It must be united to the will in order that its capacity for activity may be actualized. Therefore since an idea cannot be a cause without the influence of the will, we must consider the relationship which exists between the intellect and the will.

The will is an indispensable element in a consideration of exemplary causality. For no matter how well an art is known, we never make anything unless we are moved to do it by the will. And this is because the object of the will is the end and the

1 "Now the knowledge of the artificer is the cause of the things made by his art from the fact that the artificer works through his intellect. Hence the form in the intellect must be the principle of action; as heat is the principle of heating." S.T., I, q.14, a.8.

2 Ibid.; cf. Aristotle, Metaph., IX, 5, (1048a 11), The Basic Works of Aristotle, Richard McKeon ed., New York, 1941, 825.

good. For since the object of the will is the good, which has the nature of end, the will moves the other powers of the soul to act; and we make use of these powers when we so will.

For the ends and perfections of every other power are included under the object of the will as particular goods; and the art or power, to which the universal end belongs, [scil. the will] always moves to their acts the arts or powers to which belong the particular ends included in the universal end.³

However the will cannot act for an end unless the end is known. But to know is the function of the intellect. The will then is incomplete without its complementary faculty, the intellect, just as the intellect is incomplete without the will. Thus the intellect apart from the will would be sterile in the order of action, while the will apart from the intellect would lack direction in action. For we not only act or refrain from acting, but we act in this way or in that. The will looks to the exercise or use of the act, whereas the intellect looks to the determination of the act.⁴ And in this way the intellect is said to move the will.

On the other hand, the object moves by determining the act, after the manner of a formal principle, whereby in natural things actions are specified, as heating by heat. Now the first formal principle is universal being and truth, which is the object of the intellect. And therefore by this kind of motion the intellect moves the will, as presenting its

3 S.T., Ia IIae, q.9, a.1.

4 Ibid.

object to it.⁵

perhaps now we can realize why it is so difficult to treat either of these faculties separately in the order of action. In this way they appear as phantoms always quavering beneath our gaze, for neither of them contains in itself the sufficient reason for the result effected by their interaction. Intelligent action is possible only by the union of the will and the intellect, and to disregard either one is to destroy the integrity of that action.

In this way the essentially mixed character of every intelligent action becomes apparent. And will and intellect are the factors which mutually condition this action. For in all our reasoned acts there must be an act of the will, since the will moves our faculties to their respective operations. Thus I will to eat, to run, to feel, to know; I even will to will. The operations of all the other faculties depend upon the act of the will. It is the will that either moves them to act or keeps them from acting. Yet the will of itself can never determine the nature of the act. It is itself blind and can only act upon that which the reason presents to it as good.

It is the will that causes me to will, but it is the intellect that causes my will to will what I will; and in this sense my intellect acts upon my will as my will acts on my intellect.⁶

5 Ibid.

6 Etienne Gilson, Moral Values and the Moral Life, trans. Leo Richard Ward, C.S.C., St. Louis, 1931, 66.

Now that we have considered the relationship between the intellect and will, we are able to see the intricacies of exemplary causality. The exemplar is first of all a final cause. It is an idea which is presented to the will as a good or an end to be sought. This may easily be seen if we consider the ways in which the four causes, scil. efficient, material, formal, and final, are prior to their effects. The agent and the matter precede the effect according to intrinsic being. The end however precedes it according to intention and not according to being. And the form is prior to the effect in neither of these two ways in so far as it is a form. For the being both of the effect and its form are simultaneous.⁷

However in so far as the form is an end, it precedes the effect in the intention of the agent. And although the form is the end of operation, being the end that terminates the operation of the agent, still every end is not a form. For besides the end of operation there is an end of intention, as in the case of a house.⁸

Using St. Thomas' example we can see clearly that the form of the house is the end of operation. For it was this form that the builder strove to realize, and having realized it he has attained the end of his operation. But while his operation ceases at the realization of the form, his intention is not terminated here. Rather his intention looks to a further end. For

⁷ De Pot., q.3, a.16.

⁸ Ibid.

he intends to live in the house himself, or allow some one else to live there. And this is the end of intention.

This form which is the end of operation precedes the effect in the intention of the agent. From our previous consideration of this matter, we know that this form is identical with the exemplary idea. And since this form is an end to be attained, the exemplary idea will necessarily exercise final causality. Final causality is the first of all causes. For the beginning of any action is the end, since the end is that which is first sought. However, one might object, this form which is the end of operation is not an ultimate end but only a proximate end. But this is not a real difficulty. For the fact that this is a proximate end merely changes its sequence as an end, but in no way destroys its nature of end.

But let us look further at this article. Here we find St. Thomas applying this concept of exemplary causality to God. We know that the power of God is infinite, and therefore He can create anything which can possibly be. Moreover He is intelligent, and will hence act according to the ideas He has. However the end God's intention is the divine goodness. And therefore God is not necessitated to create any certain thing rather than another because of the end of His intention; for the divine goodness gains nothing from the production of the effects. Therefore God is absolutely free in His choice of the ideas which He will realize. But when He has chosen to realize a

certain idea, this idea imposes necessity as to what will be produced.

Therefore it remains that there can be no necessity in the divine works unless from the form, which is the end of operation. For this form, since it is not infinite, has determined principles without which it is not able to be.⁹

Thus if we suppose that God intends to create man, He must create a rational soul and an organic body. For without these there can be no man. And if God intends to create a certain universe, He will have to create those creatures which are parts of that universe. But since God acts in this way according to His intellect, St. Thomas concludes that the diversity of creatures is a work of the divine wisdom.¹⁰

Thus we can see how the exemplar's causality does not stop at being merely final, but proceeds to take on the role of formal cause. For, as we have seen in our analysis of the relation of intellect and will, "the object moves by determining the act, after the manner of a formal principle." The idea presented to the will as good becomes the formal cause of the act of the will when the idea is united to the will. For the idea determines

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ "Sic igitur dicendum est, quod ab uno primo multitudo et diversitas creaturarum processit, non propter materiae necessitatem, nec propter potentiae limitationem, nec propter bonitatem, nec propter bonitatis obligationem; sed ex ordine sapientiae, ut in diversitate creaturarum perfectio consisteret universi." De Pot., q.3, a.16.

the nature of the act of the will. Thus when the idea of man is united to the will it determines what is to be made to rational animal.

Now it is evident that, in a sense, reason precedes the will and directs its act, namely in so far as the will tends to its object according to the order of reason; for the apprehensive power presents to the appetite its object. Accordingly, the act whereby the will tends to something proposed to it as being good, through being ordained to the end by the reason, is materially an act of the will, but formally an act of the reason.¹¹

The exemplary idea exerts a formal causality, because it informs the will and determines the act of the will to some one thing. Besides the final and formal causality which it exerts, the exemplary idea also exercises efficient causality. For it actively orders and directs the will in its operation. The will of itself is blind, and therefore it can only receive direction and order from some external source. This external source is the exemplary idea. Therefore the idea which is in potency to the production of an effect is not in passive potency, but it is in active potency.¹² And in so far as the idea effects an order, to that extent it is active and efficient. However

¹¹ S.T., Ia IIae, q.13, a.1.

¹² "Sicut formae artificiales habent duplex esse, unum in actu secundum quod sunt in materia, aliud in potentia secundum quod sunt in mente artificis, non quidem in potentia passiva, sed activa; ita etiam formae materiales habent duplex esse, ... unum in actu secundum quod in rebus sunt; et aliud in potentia activa secundum quod sunt... in deo... Et ideo formas rerum in Deo existentes ideas dicimus, quae sunt sicut formae

order is potential and imperfect unless it is imposed upon that which is to be ordered. Therefore the efficient causality of the exemplary idea attains its completion and perfection only when the order and direction caused by the exemplary idea is imposed upon the act of the will.

The efficient causality of the exemplar idea then, is partial and when considered in actu primo consists in the "dirigeant" virtue that it supplies to a will, otherwise blind. In actu secundo, its causality is the actual direction that the will-in-action has where-by the effect, imitative of the idea, is produced.¹³

Now this is precisely the point. The efficient causality of the exemplar is partial outside of its relation to the will, just as its final and formal causality are partial outside of the same relationship. However its relation to the will is a complex one; and if we disregard any element of this complex relationship, we destroy the continuity of action. The causality of the exemplar has a three-fold relationship to the will depending upon the precise moment in the movement of the will. First the exemplar is a final cause in so far as it is the end; then it is a formal cause in so far as it determines the nature of the act; and finally it is an efficient cause in so far as it directs the act. But we see that none of these are complete in

operativae." Sent., Lib. I. dis. 36, q.2, a.1, Scriptum Super Libros Sentiarum, Mandennet ed., vol. 1, Paris, 1929, 342.

¹³ Francis Meehan, Efficient Causality in Aristotle and St. Thomas, Catholic University of America Philosophical Studies, vol. 56, Washington, D.C., 1940, 181.

themselves. Taken separately none contains the sufficient reason for the complete act. All these elements are essential and indispensable to exemplary causality. This is why, taken separately, no one of these characterizes exemplary causality any more than another. It is only through viewing this action as a whole that we can say that it is most properly one type of causality or another. Therefore let us see what St. Thomas considered as the characteristics of this action as a whole.

What stands out most vividly in St. Thomas' treatment of the exemplar is that it is an extrinsic form which determines the likeness of the effect to itself. And therefore the causality of the exemplar will have to include these two aspects of exteriority and likeness.

... this word idea seems to signify a form separated from that of which it is a form. Finally the form of a thing is said to be that after which (ad quod) something is formed; and this is the exemplary form, to the likeness of which something is constituted. And the word idea is commonly used with this meaning, so that the idea is the same as the form which something imitates.¹⁴

This concept of likeness which is included in the exemplary cause is a formal likeness, just as the determination of this likeness which the exemplar expresses is a formal determination. For in so far as the practical intellect causes things it is said to measure them.¹⁵ And that which can most truly be

14 De Ver., q.3, a.1.

15 "Intellectus enim practicus causat res, unde est men-

called a measure is the form, which determines the being¹ to a definite grade of being. And thus it is that a house is determined by the plan of the architect, and words by the truth in the intellect. And all natural things are determined by the divine intellect which contains all creatures as the intellect of an artist contains the works of his art.

The exemplar thus implies, as its main characteristic an extrinsic form which formally determines the likeness of the effect to itself. This means that formal causality is the characteristic causality of the exemplar. As John of St. Thomas so accurately put it:

Nevertheless it must be said that the causality of the ideas can be reduced to efficient and final, but especially and properly to formal in so far as it is an extrinsic form forming, but not informing. This is the common opinion among Thomists.¹⁶

And in this way the causality of the exemplar is most characteristically defined as extrinsic formal causality.

suratio rerum quae per ipsum fiunt." De Ver., q.1, a.2.

¹⁶ John of St. Thomas, Cursus Philosophicus, Lib. 2, q.11, a.3, Torino, 1933, 396.

CHAPTER IV

GOD AS THE MODEL OF ALL THINGS

Now there is but one God. And this God is absolutely simple, for He is absolutely first. God is the First Being, the cause of all other beings; and therefore there is nothing which can be prior to God. For it would be absurd to think that an effect was prior to its cause. But if God were composed in some way, there would be something which was prior to Him: namely, parts of which He was composed. Since, however, there can be nothing prior to God, God must necessarily be simple.¹ To destroy God's simplicity would be to destroy God Himself. Thus, having admitted there is a God, we have no other choice but steadfastly to maintain His simplicity.

However we are immediately faced with the problem of explaining how a plurality of ideas in the divine mind can be reconciled with God's simplicity. And the answer which St. Thomas has given us to this problem will bring us to the very core of his doctrine of exemplarism. To begin with, St. Thomas distinguishes two types of ideas: one the model of the thing

¹ S.T., I, q.3, a.7.

to be made, and the other the likeness of the thing known. Let us examine this latter class of ideas first. Here the idea is the representation of an object by which that object is known. For it is only in so far as the likeness of an object informs our intellect that we are able to pass beyond ourselves to that object. Thus such an idea informing our intellect causes it to be in act.² Now if the mind of God were informed by a plurality of such likenesses, His simplicity would necessarily be destroyed. For in so far as He knew diverse objects He would be informed by a multiplicity of diverse ideas. But this is not the case if we consider God to have ideas which are the models of things. Such ideas are devised by the artist. And therefore they are no longer that by which something is known. They are rather that which is known and by which the artist is able to accomplish his work.³ A plurality of such ideas would in no way compromise God's simplicity. For we are not trying to say

2 "Now it can easily be seen how this is not repugnant to the simplicity of God, if we consider that the idea of the thing to be produced is in the mind of the producer as that which is understood, and not as the likeness whereby he understands, which is a form that makes the intellect in act." S.T., I, q.15

3 "For there are two ways in which form may exist in the intellect... In the second way so that it is the term of the act of understanding, as the artist by his understanding devises the form of a house; and since that form is devised by an act of understanding, and, as it were, is produced by that act, it cannot be the beginning of the act of understanding, as the first thing by which something is understood; but it is rather the thing understood by which the knower accomplishes something."

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that God could not understand many things. What we are saying is that God's understanding could not be informed by a plurality of diverse likenesses.⁴ Now that God understands many things is implied in the knowledge which He has of Himself. For in so far as God knows the divine essence perfectly, He knows every mode in which it is knowable. But God's essence can be known not only as it is in itself, but also as it is imitable by creatures. Since every agent produces its like, every creature in so far as it is a creature is in some way like the divine essence. Thus as God knows His essence as imitable by this creature, God knows it as the model or idea of this creature.⁵ And in this manner God knows all things other than Himself.

If we keep this in mind, we are able to see how God can understand many things without being composed of a plurality of likeness. For in the one simple act by which God knows Himself, God understands all things other than Himself. Thus there is no real diversity in God. The diversity is rather in the things which are understood by God. For all creatures, in so far as

De Ver., q.3, a.2.

4 "Now, it is not repugnant to the simplicity of the divine mind that it understand many things; though it would be repugnant to its simplicity were God's understanding to be informed by a plurality of likenesses." S. T., I, q.15, a.2.

5 "Inasmuch as God knows His own essence perfectly, He knows it according to every mode in which it can be known. Now it can be known not only as it is in itself, but as it can be

they are, imitate God. However no creature can imitate God perfectly, since God is infinite. Each creature then will imitate God in its own particular manner, since each individual creature is distinct from every other creature. And God, by knowing Himself as the model of all things, knows every creature in so far as it approaches to an imitation of Him. Thus it is that God, through unity of His own Being, is able to understand the diversity of things.⁶

The basis of this whole line of argument is that the divine essence is the proper model of all things. And this premise is most certainly true. Nevertheless it is not at all an easy thing to see how the divine essence, which is one simple thing, can be the proper model of diverse things. For in so far as it is proper to one it would seem to be unlike the others.⁷

participated in by creatures according to some kind of likeness. But every creature has its own proper species, according to which it participates in some way in the likeness of the divine essence. Therefore, as God knows His essence as so imitable by such a creature, He knows it as the particular model and idea of that creature; and in like manner as regards other creatures." Ibid.

6 "Dico ergo, quod Deus per intellectum omnia operans, omnia ad similitudinem essentiae suae producit; unde essentia sua est idea rerum; non quidem ut essentia, sed ut est intellecta. Res autem creatae non perfecte imitantur divinam essentiam; unde essentia non accipitur absolute ab intellectu divino ut idea rerum, sed cum proportione creaturae fiendae ad ipsam divinam essentiam, secundum quod deficit ab ea, vel imitatur eam." De. Ver., q.3, a.2.

7 Diverse things may, of course, have something in common. For instance, a man and an ass have this in common: they are both animals. Thus nothing prohibits them from having

This difficulty is not easy to overcome. But the more perfectly we realize how God is the proper model of all things, the more perfectly will we realize the truth of exemplarism. Therefore let us try to clarify the manner in which God is the proper model of all things.

The distinction of diverse things arises from their proper forms.⁸ We may gain an insight into our problem then by realizing what Aristotle meant when he said forms were like numbers.⁹ Forms and numbers agree in this: if one unit is added or subtracted from either, the species is changed. And just as two plus or minus one differs specifically, so does a sensible substance plus or minus rational. With respect to the higher numbers and forms, intellect and nature can act in different ways. For the nature of a thing does not allow the separation

one common likeness. But it would seem to be impossible for them to have one proper likeness. For a man and an ass are two distinct things; and since they are, there must be something which distinguishes them. That which distinguishes them is their proper form. The proper form of a man is specifically different from the proper form of an ass. Therefore, since likeness is a similarity in form, the proper likeness of a man would be different from, and in some way unlike (dissimile), the proper likeness of an ass. For this reason, we ask the question: How is it possible that God, Who is one simple being, can be the proper likeness of diverse things?

8 "... diversarum rerum sit distinctio ratione propriarum formarum ..." Cont. Gent., Lib. I, cap. 54.

9 Metaph., VIII 3, (1043b 35).

of these things which are essential to it. Indeed if something essential is removed, the very nature of the thing is changed. Thus there no longer is an animal if the sensible soul is removed from the body. However the intellect can consider separately those things which are essentially united in the thing. Thus in the number five the intellect may consider three alone, or in a rational animal only that which is sensible. Therefore the intellect is able to consider in the more complex forms the proper notions of the inferior forms, just as it can consider in ten the proper notions of all the lesser numbers contained therein.¹⁰

God, since He is absolutely perfect, contains the perfections of all things, not however by way of composition, but simply. And form, in so far as it is, is a perfection. Nor does it include imperfection except in so far as it falls short of true being.

Therefore the divine intellect is able to comprehend in His essence that which is proper to each thing by understanding in what way a thing imitates His essence, and in what way it falls short [deficit] of His essence; for instance, by understanding His essence as imitable by the mode of life and not of knowledge, He attains the proper form of plant; or again as imitable by the mode of knowledge and not of intellect, He attains the proper form of animal; and thus it is with all other forms.¹¹

10 Cont. Gent., Lib. I, cap. 54.

11 Ibid.

Thus it is clear that God, since He is supremely perfect; can be the proper model of all things, not indeed by His nature, but by His knowledge.

We may conceive God as the divine plenitude, the superabundant source of all perfection, from whom issues the perfections of all things. Inexhaustible in Himself, those things which imitate Him are necessarily many and diverse. And one will be more perfect than another in so far as it more perfectly imitates God Himself. Here we are able to see the foundations of St. Thomas' famed doctrine of the hierarchy of being. St. Thomas has often insisted that minerals are more perfect than elements, and plants than minerals, and animals than plants, and man than all other animals.¹² Nature is ordered according to the various imitations of God from the lowliest likeness of the material elements to the very image of God such as exists in man. The elements and mixed bodies imitate God most fundamentally in that they exist. All else shares not only in existence but life. Lastly animals are perfected by knowledge and man by understanding.¹³

¹² "Hence in natural things species seem to be arranged in a hierarchy: as the mixed things are more perfect than the elements, and plants than minerals, and animals than plants, and men than other animals; and in each of these one species is more perfect than others." S.T., I, q.47, a.2.

¹³ "Hence, some things are like God first and most commonly because they exist; secondly, because they live; and thirdly because they know or understand." S.T., I, q.93, a.2;

We are able to distinguish two mode in which creatures are like God. They have a likeness first to the divine knowledge and thence to the divine nature itself. Through the knowledge God has of Himself, God understands the models of all possible things. These models themselves are distinct in so far as they mirror the divine nature in distinct ways. Constituted according to their proper models things then become the living expressions of these models. And since these models in themselves are but the expressions of the modes in which the divine nature is imitable, things are likenesses of the divine nature itself. And therefore St. Thomas says when speaking of the image of God in man:

... every creature is an image of the exemplary likeness it has in the divine mind. We are not, however, using the word image in this sense, but as it implies a likeness in nature, that is, inasmuch as all things, as beings, are like to the First Being: as living beings, like to the First Life; and as intelligible beings, like to the Supreme Wisdom.¹⁴

This likeness to the nature of God is intrinsic to all things, and that which is most real in them. However the likeness cannot be one of equality, for the infinite cannot be reproduced. There is in the case of man's reproduction of man a likeness in species. Man in this case may be called a univocal

cf. Sparks, De Divisione Causae Exemplaris, 50 & 51.

14 S. T., I, q.93, a.2, ad 4.

cause. But God is a non-univocal cause transcending all genera and species so that His effects may attain a likeness to Him only by way of analogy. St. Thomas expresses the distance of this likeness by the example of the sun. The thing generated by the sun's power attain a likeness of the sun, not indeed a specific likeness to the sun, but only a generic likeness. Such a likeness is in itself very distant. But the likeness of creature to God is even more distant since there is no generic likeness but only an analogous one.¹⁵

Since every creature falls short of perfect likeness to God, the divine will remains essentially free with respect to all creatures. In itself infinite the divine will can only be necessitated by an infinite object. God must necessarily will Himself; but in so doing He remains free with respect to all else.¹⁶ However things exist only because God freely wills

15 "Therefore if there is an agent not contained in any genus, its effects will still more distantly reproduce the form of the agent, not, that is, so as to participate in the likeness of the agent's form according to the same specific or generic formality, but only according to some sort of analogy; as being itself is common to all. In this way all created things, so far as they are beings, are like God as the first and universal principle of all being." S. T., I, q.4, a.3.

16 "... creatura non procedit a voluntate divina naturaliter neque ex necessitate; licet enim Deus sua voluntate naturaliter et ex necessitate amet suam bonitatem... non tamen naturaliter aut ex necessitate vult creaturas produci, sed gratis. Non enim creaturae sunt ultimus finis voluntatis divinae, neque ab eis dependet bonitas Dei, qui est ultimus finis, cum ex creaturis divinae bonitati nihil accrescat..." De Pot., q.10, a.2 ad 6.

them to be.¹⁷ Thus just as they depend upon the knowledge of God for what they are, they depend upon the will of God for the fact that they are. And this is the prime perfection of the creature: that it be. For it is only through existing that the creature can attain perfection. God bestows this perfection upon creatures by an act of His will. And thus He may be said to love that which He creates. For "love is the first movement of the will and of every appetitive power."¹⁸ How marvelous it is that God out of His goodness would have loved such lowly things. Indeed since it is an absolutely free act we can only conceive it as true after the fact.

17 S. T., I, q.19, a.4.

18 S. T., I, q.20, a.1.

CHAPTER V

DIVINE PROVIDENCE AND HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

The doctrine of exemplarism is of great importance in the philosophy of St. Thomas. Once having formulated this doctrine, St. Thomas could not proceed as if he had never mentioned it. He had to show the relationship which existed between exemplarism and the other doctrines of his philosophy. However it would be impossible for us to consider all the problems that are raised in this way. Therefore in order to limit our inquiry I have chosen two problems which I consider of prime importance: those of divine providence and human knowledge. It is not my intention, however, to become involved in these problems as such, but only to clarify their relation to the doctrine of exemplarism. And I contend that both of these Thomistic doctrines find their ultimate foundation in the doctrine of exemplarism.

God is the first Being Who possesses the full perfection of all beings simply. It is out of the abundance of His perfection and the infinity of His goodness that He has chosen to create all that exists. In this creation He is aided by nothing, neither a pre-existing matter upon which He works, nor intermediate agents through which He works. He has, however, made all

things according to His knowledge and will. By His knowledge He comprehends everything: Himself first¹ and through Himself all other things. And He knows things other than Himself not only in a general way but even according to their individual being. For God knows not only that which is common to things but also the principle of their individuation, i.e. matter. But even such an exhaustive knowledge as this will not be followed by an effect unless it be united to a decree of the will. It is because of His goodness and according to His knowledge that God wills all that He does will. All things are totally subject to the divine will, because it is by the decree of the divine will that they are made ex nihilo. Hence it can be said that God governs all the things made by Him, for we are said to govern those things which are subject to our will.

Therefore it is necessary that God, Who in Himself is perfect in every way, and by His power grants existence to all beings, is the Ruler of all beings, Himself ruled by none: nor is there anything which is exempted from His ruling, as neither there is anything which does not owe its existence to Him. Therefore as He is perfect in being and causing, so is He perfect in ruling.²

Thus we find that the fact of creation forms the basis

1 This is a priority of nature and not of time.

2 Cont. Gent., Lib. III, cap. 1.

of providence.³ For when we come to realize the meaning of creation, we grasp the radical dependence and contingency of creatures on their Creator. All that the creature has, it has received from God. Its form and operations, its goodness and order, and even its individuating differences are all dependent upon the Creator. The order of thing is no less dependent upon God than anything else. But we know that to order a thing is to govern it. Thus God, Who is the supreme cause of things, is their supreme Ruler. He has not only given them their being, but in their being He has given the rule of their being. Individuals are not governed by this rule as by some general law. For in making individuals directly, God will govern them directly. If we have grasped the meaning of creation fully, we can appreciate the truth of the formula that to create is to govern.

However, while the divine government, or providence, is based upon the creative act, the divine knowledge, as we have seen, is at the root of God's creative action. For it is necessary that God's knowledge extends as far as His causality, and, in a certain sense, His knowledge is even presupposed to His

³ cf. Gilson, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, ch. 8, Gilson here brings out the fundamental character of creation in the doctrine of "Christian Providence." He even goes so far as to say that "it is not in the least necessary to introduce any new principles here" in order to explain providence (155).

causality.⁴ Since God's knowledge assumes such a basic position in relation to providence, St. Thomas can give what I shall call an exemplary definition of providence. God has given creatures all that they have, not only their being but also their order.

Now God is the cause of things by His intellect, and therefore it is necessary that the exemplar of every effect should pre-exist in Him ... Hence, the exemplar of the order of things towards their end must necessarily pre-exist in the divine mind; and the exemplar of things ordered towards an end is, properly speaking, providence.⁵

We can see what St. Thomas had in mind when he said that to rule and govern by providence is merely to move things to their end by the intellect.⁶ Thus providence can extend only so far as the knowledge of the intellect extends.

There is, therefore, a plan of divine providence consisting in the exemplary idea of the order which things have. The fact that such a plan is put into effect is entirely dependent upon the divine will. But supposing that it is put into effect,

4 cf. S. T., I, q.14, a.8, Sed contra. Here St. Thomas quotes the Augustinian formula that God does not know things because they are, but things are because God knows them. Thus we can conceive God's knowledge as logically prior to His causality. God is an intelligent agent whose knowledge is presupposed to His action so that His knowledge is a condition of His action. God's action, however, cannot be thought of as the condition of His knowledge; for God would still know all things even if He had made none of them.

5 S. T., I, q.22, a.1.

6 Cont. Gent., Lib. III, cap. 64, Amplius ostensum est.

the direction which the order will take is dependent upon the exemplary idea. It is the exemplary idea which informs the will and directs its action to some determinate effect. In such a doctrine there is no room for the voluntarist assertion, that the only reason why things are as they are is because of the divine will. God cannot make mountains without valleys.⁷ For this would contradict the nature of mountains, and therefore contradict the very intention of God. Just as the will is necessarily related to the intellect, the execution of providence is necessarily related to the exemplary ideas.

There is yet another problem with which we must deal: the problem of human knowledge in relation to the divine exemplars. And this problem is of great importance; for in dealing with it we will discover the first principles of St. Thomas' epistemology. Therefore let us say first that it is according to the divine exemplars that things are said to be true. For a thing is true in so far as it corresponds to its idea in the intellect on which it depends.⁸ Thus, if we are to know the truth of any-

7 "Accordingly a twofold error is refuted ... First, there is the error of those who maintain that all things are the result of God's absolute will without any plan. This is the error of the Moslem theologians ... according to whom the only reason why fire heats rather than chills is because God so wills." Cont. Gent., Lib. III, cap. 97.

8 "... everything is said to be true absolutely, in so far as it is related to the intellect on which it depends; and thus it is that artificial things are said to be true as being related to our intellect ... In the same way natural things are

thing, our intellect must contain some likeness of the divine truth.

Accordingly, just as the soul and other things are said to be true in their nature according as they are likened to that supreme nature, which is truth itself, since it is its own understood being, so too, that which is known by the soul is true so far as it contains a likeness to that divine truth which God knows.⁹

Hence the divine exemplars are the ultimate criterion of truth; and when we attain to some truth, we are said to know it in the divine exemplars.¹⁰

But what does St. Thomas mean when he says that we know all things in the divine exemplars? He does not mean that we know the exemplar in itself and, through the exemplar, the things which imitate it. For this knowledge he reserves for the blessed, who see God "face to face." There is, however, a second way in which one thing is known in another, i.e. as in a principle of knowledge, just as in the sun, which is a principle of sight, we see all that we see.¹¹ And in this way we are said to know all things in the divine exemplars as in a principle of

said to be true in so far as they express the likeness of the species in the divine mind." S. T., I, q.16, a.1.

⁹ Cont. Gent., Lib. III, cap. 47. "It is according to these exemplars that all things are formed as well as that the human soul knows all things." S.T., I, q.84, a.5.

¹⁰ "And thus we must needs say that the human soul knows all things in the divine exemplars..." S.T., I, q.84, a.5.

¹¹ "... one thing is said to be known in another in two ways. First, as in an object itself known; as one may see in a

knowledge.

And thus we must needs say that the human soul knows all things in the eternal exemplars, since by participation in these exemplars we know all things. For the intellectual light itself, which is in us, is nothing else than a participated likeness of the uncreated light, in which are contained the eternal exemplar.¹²

As I said before, in order to know truth, "our intellect must contain some likeness of the divine truth," And we do contain a likeness to the divine truth in the intellectual light, or the agent intellect, which we have. This intellectual light is an indispensable property of all intelligent beings. However the agent intellect alone is not sufficient for knowledge in man. Man is "in the body" and must attain knowledge through the body. Therefore the necessity of the intelligible species, which are abstracted from things, cannot be overlooked.

But besides the intellectual light which is in us, intelligible species which are derived from things, are required in order that we may have knowledge of material things, therefore this knowledge is not due merely to a participation of the eternal exemplars, as the Platonists held, maintaining that the mere participation in the Idea sufficed for knowledge.¹³

mirror the images of the things reflected therein. In this way the soul, in the present state of life, cannot see all things in the eternal exemplars; but thus the blessed, who see God and all things in Him, know all things in the eternal exemplars. Secondly, one thing is said to be known in another as in a principle of knowledge; and thus we might say that we see in the sun what we see by the sun." Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

There is yet another way in which we may be said to contain a likeness of the divine truth: in our possession of the first principles of knowledge.¹⁴ This is also an indispensable element of knowledge. Without this likeness to the divine truth no knowledge is possible. The first principles of knowledge are just as much a property of all intelligent beings as the agent intellect. In so far as we see all things in the light of these principles and judge all things according to them, we are said to see and judge all things according to the divine exemplars.

... yet some truths there are in which all men agree, such as the first principles both of the speculative and of the practical intellect, inasmuch as a kind of image of the divine truth is reflected in the minds of all men. Consequently, when a mind knows with certitude anything at all, and by tracing it back to the principles by which we judge of everything, comes to see it in those principles, it is said to see all such things in the divine truth or in the eternal ideas, and to judge of all things according to them.¹⁵

The relation of the divine exemplars to human knowledge can be summarized in this way. First, the divine exemplars form the ultimate basis of truth and certitude. Second, in no way do we know the divine exemplars in themselves. Third, we attain the divine exemplars only in a mediate manner and in a caused like-

14 "... first principles, the knowledge of which is innate (prima principia quorum cognitio est nobis innata) are certain likenesses of the uncreated truth." De Ver., q. 10, a. 6, ad 6.

15 Cont. Gent., Lib. III, cap. 47.

ness, finite and impressed on our intellect.

We have considered exemplarism in the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. There can be no doubt of the importance of this doctrine in his philosophy. It assumes a basic position in his metaphysics, natural theology, and epistemology. Let no one who calls himself a Thomist forget to take account of this doctrine.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Frederick Charles Herx has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Philosophy.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

10 Jan. 1957

Date

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