

THE HYPOTHESIS OF INTELLIGIBLE EMANATIONS IN GOD

PHILIP McSHANE, S.J.

Milltown Park, Dublin

Ad secundum dicendum quod ad aliquam rem dupliciter inducitur ratio. Uno modo ad probandum sufficienter aliquam radicem; sicut in scientia naturali inducitur ratio sufficiens ad probandum quod motus coeli semper sit uniformis velocitatis. Alio modo inducitur ratio non quae sufficienter probet radicem, sed quae radici iam positae ostendat congruere consequentes effectus. Sicut in astrologia ponitur ratio excentricorum et epicyclorum ex hoc quod, hac positione facta, possunt salvari apparentia sensibilia circa motus coelestes; non tamen ratio haec est sufficienter probans, quia etiam forte alia positione facta salvari possent. Primo ergo modo potest induci ratio ad probandum Deum esse unum, et similia: sed secundo modo se habet ratio quae inducitur ad manifestationem Trinitatis; quia scilicet Trinitate posita congruunt hujusmodi rationes; non tamen ita quod per has rationes sufficienter probetur trinitas personarum.¹

OUR present concern is with the *ratio quae inducitur ad manifestationem Trinitatis*, with the equivalent in Trinitarian theology of the Ptolemaic hypothesis of epicycles. The citation from St. Thomas both sets the tone of, and provides a center for, the discussion. It sets the tone of the discussion, for implicit in it is a notion of the science of theology, and an awareness of a parallel between it and natural science, which not all his followers have shared. That notion and that awareness, if sufficiently evolved in the light of modern developments, would seem to promise an advance in theological method universally acknowledged to be necessary, and while method is not our present concern, still what is under consideration happens to be the crowning example of the method of Aquinas and so provides an unparalleled illustration of what the *vetera* of Pope Leo were—no small help towards an appreciation of what the *nova* might be.

The citation from St. Thomas stands at the center of the discussion, for it is our hope to throw light on its meaning by examining the presuppositions, point of introduction, consequences, and significance of the hypothesis in question. It thus gives the discussion the unity of a single objective, all the more necessary since our presentation will

¹ *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 32, a. 1, ad 2m.

lack the unity of either a speculative or a historical treatment.³ Neither will it carry us in any systematic fashion into the various disputes about the psychological analogy. Our single aim will be to give some answer to the questions raised by the title and the initial citation: What is this hypothesis of intelligible emanations in God? What is this *manifestatio Trinitatis*? Some answer only, for our treatment, as will appear, is more descriptive than explanatory, and related points that are not immediately relevant are treated briefly if at all. It is hoped in this way to pass round the phalanx of disputed questions in Trinitarian theology, in order to convey some notion of an approach which differs to some extent, both in itself and in its presuppositions, from that which is current. The peculiarities of presentation are thus related to a problem in communication which systematic presentation might fail to meet.

The normal manner of proceeding to an understanding of faith would seem to be that advocated by the Vatican Council when it speaks of a most fruitful understanding of mysteries both from the analogy of nature and from the inner coherence of the mysteries themselves. If, in fact, one lacks a naturally known term of comparison, one can still advance to some notion of the relation of mysteries by availing himself of what might be called a specifically theological category. Such would seem to be the case, for example, in the use of quasi-formal causality in bringing out the coherence of the mysteries involving supernatural elevation. Still, there are disadvantages in the use of specifically theological categories, for while their verbal expression may ring familiar, they are not genuinely reached by analogy. One does not begin, so to speak, with one's feet on the ground. Because of the absence of an analogy of nature, there can obviously be no point, in the application to the mystery, at which such an analogy is transcended, and therefore the darkness of mystery, instead of being concentrated beyond that point, is indefinitely distributed. The focus of the mystery is lost, and a penumbra may be generated in meta-

³The present discussion is, it is hoped, faithful to the position of Bernard Lonergan, S.J., who has treated the matter historically in "The Concept of *Verbum* in the Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 7 (1946) 349-92; 8 (1947) 35-79, 404-44; 10 (1949) 3-40, 359-93; speculatively in *Conceptio analogica divinarum personarum* (Rome, 1957); and philosophically in *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (New York, 1957). Cf. also *infra* n. 5.

physics or psychology. Briefly, then, in the process of coming to theological understanding there is in turn the necessity of locating a naturally known term of comparison, of conceiving it adequately, of applying it exactly, of exploiting it fully, and of clearly transcending it. It is this order which governs our discussion of the *manifestatio Trinitatis*, and the discussion in turn will throw light on the process in general.

While the principle of theological understanding enunciated above was not unknown to St. Thomas, he did not always make explicit his basis in nature. Thus, in his discussion of grace in the *Summa theologica*, he does not expose thesiswise the metaphysical theorem of the proportion of potency to habit, habit to act, etc.; yet, as a basis of explanation it is always in the background. Again, in his single *quaestio disputata de Verbo incarnato* he makes implicit use of the thesis of natural theology requiring a contingent term if there be a contingent truth about God, to conclude to the secondary *esse*. When he comes to deal with Trinitarian questions, faith illuminating reason had already led to Augustine's psychology analogy. However, only in the *Summa theologica* does he seem to have come to a clear grasp of what was essential to that analogy.³ Hence, while he is explicit in placing the naturally known term of comparison in the minds of rational creatures, he does not systematically elaborate the point. But clearly, if he places that term in the minds of rational creatures, one should expect to find it intimately related to their rationality, and if so, one would be well advised to proceed to some type of analysis of rationality. But what type? On the present position, the relevant analysis is not a general metaphysical analysis of cognitional acts: to grasp what is essential to the term of comparison, one must practice introspective rational psychology. Now this notion of introspective rational psychology raises a variety of difficulties that undoubtedly ought to be met. But before facing them, it seems best to describe briefly what might be called the requisite for a minimal appreciation of the *imago Trinitatis*. For this, neither discussion nor analysis is necessary, but only some personal reflections. There are four instances which we take in what, perhaps, for many readers will be the order of increasing obscurity.

³ Lonergan, *art. cit.*, THEOLOGICAL STUDIES 10 (1949) 372-76.

There should be little difficulty in appreciating in our own experience the difference between sound and rash judgment. A judgment is rash when one judges either without evidence or without weighing the evidence for it. On the other hand, one has judged soundly when one was intelligently satisfied with the evidence, and indeed precisely because one was thus intelligently satisfied. Now what is absent in a rash judgment and present in a sound judgment we call an intelligible emanation.

The second instance of intelligible emanation is that feature which distinguishes intelligent definition from mere repetition by rote. Intelligent definition is possible precisely if, and because, one understands; unintelligent repetition of a definition is possible if one has sufficient talent to memorize the words. In the first case there is ability to explain in varying ways, in the second there is inability to depart from the set words. The difference can be noted within one's own experience, and insofar as it is grasped one has an appreciation of the words of St. Thomas: "Quicumque enim intelligit, ex hoc ipso quod intelligit, procedit aliquid intra ipsum, quod est conceptio rei intellectae, ex vi intellectiva proveniens, et ex eius notitia procedens."⁴

The third instance of intelligible emanation is present in reasonable choice, distinguishing such choice from choices in which we fail to be reasonable. It is what is present when the good intelligently approved of is clearly elected by us, and what is absent when we chose to act against the demands of reason. The first case is followed by the approval of a good conscience, the second by recourse to rationalization.

The fourth instance of intelligible emanation is that affective response of will which follows on any judgment of being.⁵ Like any act of the will, it occurs within rational consciousness, yet it is not differentiated without labor. It is most availably exemplified in that imperfect beatitude constituted by the contemplation of acquired truth. It is complacency in, or correspondence with, or, to use Fr. Crowe's borrowed expression, *consent to being*, where the consent is prior to any concern, for this act of the will is not free, nor is it in itself a principle of process.

⁴ *Sum. theol.*, 1, q. 27, a. 1.

⁵ This further refinement in the question of the will and of the second procession is due to the historical work of Frederick Crowe, S.J., "Complacency and Concern in the Thought of St. Thomas," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 20 (1959) 1-39, 198-230, 343-95.

This essential quality of intelligible emanation is lacking insofar as the will has ceased to be good, and so is out of harmony with being as it is.

Before becoming involved in further investigations, let us remark that it is in what we have called intelligible emanations in these four instances that we find the created image of the eternal processions of the Son and Holy Spirit. In the first instance there is involved the highest point of rational reflection, and through it, together with the second instance, we seek an imperfect understanding of the procession of the divine Word.⁶ In the fourth instance there is present the basic form of love, complacency, a purely passive term in will in clear dependence on the word, and in it, together with the third instance, we have the created image of the *spiratio passiva*.⁷ In accordance with our programme, we will not have the occasion to go deeply into these; we can only refer the reader to the sources cited.

The four processes so briefly described are everyday occurrences. We have merely drawn attention to them, heightened our awareness of them; what little scientific discussion there is of them is still to come. But prior to that we must face the difficulties already mentioned connected with the nature of that discussion, difficulties indeed related not only to the nature of that discussion, but, as we shall see, to its subject matter.

The difficulties center on the notion of introspection. For some, introspection is a matter of becoming conscious of oneself and one's acts, consciousness being different from other types of knowing in that it is oneself that is its object. For us, consciousness is a presupposition of introspection, and besides it is of oneself not as object but as subject. The difference is radical, as radical indeed as the Aristotelian theory of knowledge by identity is opposed to the Platonic notion of knowledge by confrontation. The treatment here will not reach these roots but will, it is hoped, be sufficient for our purpose.

Above we described four processes. The purpose of the description was to draw the reader's attention to these processes. Were the reader to stop at the description and not advert to these processes in his own experience, our purpose would have been defeated. In such a case the description of understanding and definition, for example, would be

⁶ Cf. Lonergan, *art. cit.*, THEOLOGICAL STUDIES 8 (1947) 52-73, *passim*.

⁷ Cf. Crowe, *art. cit.*, THEOLOGICAL STUDIES 20 (1959) esp. 35-38, 222-24, 345-47.

merely a source of debate between us: instead of the reader following the indication and adverting to his own experience of understanding, he returns with a request for a definition of understanding. The point is that the processes were indicated not in order that they might be understood or debated, but that they might first be experienced. If the reader has done this, then he has had experience of himself and his acts. Such experience is prior to inquiry about it. In our indications we raised no question as to what exactly an intelligible emanation was; we merely drew attention to certain experiences and called them intelligible emanations. Nor have we yet raised the question of what intelligible emanations are. Our efforts are directed to clearing the ground, in order to raise it successfully, for the four experimental instances provide some of the data essential to the inquiry, and if without more ado we claimed that the data is conscious experience and the inquiry is by introspection, confusion is avoided only if the reader is already familiar with the present view. Let us, then, face the central difficulty, the nature of consciousness.

We have already rejected the notion of consciousness as anything like an inward look at oneself as object. By consciousness we mean an awareness immanent in cognitional acts. Every cognitional act has, of course, its content, and the awareness of which we speak can be heightened by a shift of attention from the content of the act to the act. Yet, consciousness is not constituted by that shift of attention; for it is a quality of the act, making acts such as seeing, hearing, and understanding so altogether different from the process of growing a beard. Its most striking instance is in the suffering of physical pain: one would not advert to a pain in the tooth unless one was already aware of it. The suffering is not constituted as conscious by advertence to it, for unconscious suffering would simply not be adverted to. Now, as cognitional acts differ in kind, so does the immanent awareness. There is a consciousness, which we name empirical, that is characteristic of sensing, imagining, sense appetite, etc. On a higher level, there is the intelligent consciousness of inquiry, direct understanding, and defining. One is rationally conscious when one raises the question of truth, weighs the evidence, grasps its sufficiency, and assents. So one moves up from the alertness of intelligent quest to the conscious joy of success.

And on the level on which one faces responsible decision, one may be said to be morally conscious.

Obviously, this brief description is not itself consciousness, for while description involves some type of formulation and judgment, consciousness as given is neither formulated nor affirmed. It is a presupposition of formulation and judgment. If one were not already conscious, the question "what is consciousness?" which leads to formulation would not be asked. And unless one has some formulated notion, one cannot judge.

Furthermore, by consciousness the subject has knowledge of himself, but that knowledge is knowledge of himself as subject, not as object. Clearly, when he is seeing color, he is not seeing himself. He is not the object but the empirically conscious subject of the seeing. It is he that sees, and he does not see unconsciously. That knowledge of himself is not knowledge under the formality of being, *sub ratione entis*, nor under the formality of quiddity, *sub ratione quidditatis*. It is merely experiential knowledge, knowledge *sub ratione experti*. One knows *sub ratione quidditatis*, if one raises the question "what is it?" and having understood, formulates that understanding. Knowing *sub ratione entis* presupposes some grasp of quiddity and is had only in true judgment. But the subject as merely seeing is prior to asking any questions about himself. Just as in seeing color he is seeing being, not nonbeing, so in being empirically conscious he is conscious indeed of a being and of what has a quiddity, but not under these formalities. Furthermore, he knows himself *sub ratione experti* when he is intelligently and rationally conscious, and since one can obviously be in a state of inquiry and reflection without being in a state of inquiry and reflection about oneself, he can know himself merely *sub ratione experti* in that state.

We began with an insistence on the need of engaging in introspective rational psychology, and we indicated four processes which we considered part of the data of that inquiry. From our interjected discussion of consciousness we are now in a better position to appreciate the nature both of the investigation itself and of its data.

Understanding can operate in two modes which differ only materially, for in both cases the formal object is *ens, quidditas, verum*.

The direct mode begins from the data of sense, moving through insights and formulations to a third level of reflection and judgment. Such is the pattern of empirical science. The introspective or reflexive mode, on the other hand, has as its data the data of consciousness: seeing, hearing, imagining, judging, and so forth. In other words, the introspective mode has as its data all three levels of the direct mode, and it in turn has three levels, since it proceeds from the data of consciousness to an understanding of it which can be verified in that data as given. Clearly, then, consciousness is a presupposition of both prescientific introspection, which detects the data, and scientific introspection, which moves through understanding to theory and verification. Again, it is worth noting that whereas in the direct mode of understanding the subject is known only once, and that as subject, in the reflexive mode the subject is known twice, once as subject, and once as object insofar as a theory of consciousness is verified in the data of consciousness.⁸

Finally, a point of importance to our later discussion. We have denied the need of some further act apart from sensing, understanding, etc., to make a person conscious. A person is conscious, and thus a subject, by being the *principium quod* of cognitional acts. Furthermore, consciousness, being immanent in cognitional acts, pertains to their ontological perfection, and so to the ontological perfection of the being whose acts they are. Consciousness is not something added to being; it is something which belongs to beings of a higher order of perfection.

We return, then, to our inquiry into the nature of intelligible emanations, being able now to state more meaningfully that that

⁸ How much of the above is to be found in St. Thomas is not our concern here. It is helpful to note, however, that St. Thomas wrote: "Species igitur rei intellectae in actu est species ipsius intellectus, et sic per eam se ipsum intelligere potest" (*In 3 De anima*, lect. 9, 724). The course of that process of the intellect's understanding of itself was governed by the Aristotelian principle of knowing the potency by the act and the act by the object. So, although orientation to the phantasm is necessary for understanding anything, still a linkage is provided by the fact that the object of insight is the quiddity of material things and the act of insight is into phantasm. Because of this linkage one can affirm that "anima humana intelligit se ipsam per suum intelligere, quod est actus proprius eius, perfecte demonstrans virtutem eius et naturam" (*Sum. theol.* 1, q. 88, a. 2, ad 3m). Again, regarding the question of consciousness, however difficult it is to gauge Aquinas' grasp of psychological presence, the basic principle is there: "unumquodque cognoscitur secundum quod est actu" (*Sum. theol.* 1, q. 87, aa. 1, 2, 3): if there is an *intellectus actu* or a *sensus actu*, the subject and his act are known.

inquiry is in the introspective mode. What follows, of course, can be no more than an indication of procedure and an outline of results. In the light of the foregoing the indication can be brief. The objective is a true understanding of the processes of understanding, judging, and loving. One must begin, for example, from one's own experience of understanding and failure to understand—preferably in the realm of mathematics. Then one must direct one's energy to introspective understanding of these experiences and their differentiating element, and gradually move to a differentiation of one's successful and unsuccessful attempts at introspective understanding. The task is as formidable as the indication is brief. So, if we pass immediately to an account of results, it must easily be granted that the account will have meaning only insofar as that indication has been seriously followed.

With regard to the term "emanation," it is perhaps sufficient to recall the thesis which occurs in St. Thomas' treatment of the Blessed Trinity in the *Contra gentiles*: "Secundum diversitatem naturarum diversus emanationis modus invenitur in rebus: et quanto aliqua natura est altior, tanto id quod ex ea emanat, magis ei est intimum."⁹ Our task here consists in specifying as clearly as possible the emanation relevant to Trinitarian theology. For that reason the outline of results centers on the meaning of the adjective "intelligible."

In its normal use "intelligible" means what is or can be understood. It is used here, however, in a profounder sense, and to grasp this sense is the central problem of conceiving the image in us of the Blessed Trinity. All causation, all natural process, is intelligible in the normal sense, but the procession of inner word and the procession of love are intelligible in the profounder sense. Let us seek clarity by contrast. Any natural process is intelligible in the sense that it is or can be understood: its intelligibility is passive or potential. Again, any natural process, like gravitation, is intelligible in the sense that it yields to understanding a specific law. Furthermore, that specific law governing the natural process is an imposed law, for natures act intelligibly not because they are intelligent, but because of an ordering Intelligence. Now the intelligibility of a procession within intellectual consciousness differs all along the line. In the first place, it is an active

⁹ C. *gent.* 4, 11.

and actual intelligibility, for it is the activity of intelligence in act, intelligible then not as an object of understanding, but as understanding itself. The law by which it is intelligible is not a specific law but the law whose formulation is in terms of first principles, the presuppositions of any law. Lastly, the laws of intelligence in act are not imposed laws, they are as it were from within, from self-possessed and as such self-expressive understanding; for intelligence is to law as cause to effect. Hence, in contrast to the passive, specific, imposed intelligibility of natural process, the process within rational consciousness has an intelligibility that is active, autonomous intelligence. Its effect, like the effect of natural process, has a sufficient ground in its cause; but unlike that of natural process, the sufficiency in intelligible procession is an intelligently appreciated sufficiency, and the procession is, in a special sense, *because of* that appreciation of sufficiency. Finally, we may contrast the two meanings of intelligible by considering the problem of understanding either of them. The intelligible in the ordinary sense may be understood without understanding what it is to understand: one may engage in a sufficient process, for example, by doing physics. But intelligible in the profounder sense is identical with the understanding, and so to understand it one must seek some understanding of understanding itself: one must engage oneself in that process which we have called introspective rational psychology.

Our contrasting of causal and intelligible emanation leads plainly to the conclusion that the perfection of the latter transcends altogether that of natural process. Yet, while intelligible procession is undoubtedly a perfection, that it is a pure perfection is not demonstrable by natural reason. This appears clearly if we inquire into its necessity in us. In particular, we investigate the essential necessity of inner words in us. Here we are not merely concerned with the necessity of an object for a cognitional act: obviously, both *intelligens* and *intellectum* are necessary if there is to be an *intelligere*. But the mental word is not only *intellectum*, it is also *ab alio expressum*, and it is our purpose to examine what exactly it is about our knowledge that makes inner words necessary. Of course, whenever we understand or grasp sufficiency of evidence, there necessarily occurs an inner word in our mind. But in raising the question of essential necessity we go beyond such

necessity of occurrence. In answering that question it is not enough to have recourse to metaphysics; an exact grasp of the psychology of the inner word is required. Firstly, one must appreciate, not just as a theorem but as a personal experience, through a process of introspection, that the proper object of human understanding in this life is the intelligible-in-the-sensible, *quidditas rei materialis*. It is by experiment, not by deduction, that this theorem is established: "Hoc quilibet in se experiri potest, quod quando aliquis conatur aliquid intelligere, format sibi aliqua phantasmata per modum exemplorum, in quibus quasi inspiciat quod intelligere studet. Et inde est etiam quod quando aliquem volumus facere aliquid intelligere, proponimus ei exempla ex quibus sibi phantasmata formare possit ad intelligendum."¹⁰ This point is stressed because, while one might be tempted to consider it obvious, its obviousness does not seem to be generally put to philosophic account. At a basic level one may recall that it was insight into phantasm that gave Aristotle cognitional reasons for affirming the ontological causes of form and matter.¹¹ At another level one may remember that geometry cuts are not solved without diagrams, and geometry cuts are not the exception but the rule.

Besides the object proper to the human intellect as human, there is the object which pertains to it as intellect, its formal object, being, everything. Psychologically this is manifested, not by the fact that man understands everything, but because he desires to understand everything about everything. And it is precisely this difference between the object which moves our understanding and the goal of our understanding that leads to a fourfold necessity for the formation in us of inner words.

There is a first necessity of moving from grasp of the quiddity of the material thing by insight into phantasm, to conception of the thing, in which intelligible form and common matter are combined. Without this conceptualization the thing is not known as thing but only its form by insight and its matter by sense, and so there is simply no defining the thing.¹² The further transition from object of thought to knowledge

¹⁰ *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 84, a. 7.

¹¹ *Metaphysics* Z, 11.

¹² Some refined introspection is required here; cf. *Insight*, chap. 8, par. 1 and 2, where the notion of the thing and its necessity are discussed.

of the existing thing makes necessary a *verbum* that is not definition but judgment, proceeding from grasped sufficiency of evidence, and through which one knows concrete reality. It is distinct from understanding as grasp of sufficient evidence and affirmation of truth are distinct. But besides the twofold necessity manifested by any particular case of full human knowing, there is the necessity of more all-embracing mental words for the advance of human science. Clearly, in our present discussion we are not bound to our immediate phantasm, for we are concerned with a philosophical theory. *Intelligere multa per unum*, besides being a frequent statement of Aquinas, is the implicit goal of modern science. Lastly, mental words are necessary if we are to move intelligently beyond the limits of the visible world. This point is concretely illustrated all through what follows. Certainly, we have no experience of God; but we can form a concept of Him and, grasping the sufficiency of the evidence for judgment, affirm that He exists. Our knowledge of the existence of God is thus the knowledge of the truth of the proposition that God is.¹³

We turn, then, to the question of the possibility of natural reason demonstrating the existence of a divine Word. We find that in the case of God's knowledge the basis of our previous demonstrations of the necessity of *verba* in us is removed. For the proper object of the divine intellect is identical with its formal object: the natural act of understanding of God is an act of understanding everything about everything. In the case of the divine self-knowledge, the knowing is pure understanding and the known is simply intelligible, and one can arrive at duality only by an unfounded denial of knowledge by identity. Moreover, to require anything further that God might have knowledge of the other is to deny that divine understanding is an act of understanding everything about everything. Put otherwise, God, being an unrestricted act of self-understanding, grasps secondarily, but not by a second act, the perfections eminently contained in the divine essence and virtually in divine omnipotence. Hence, though a *verbum mentis* is clearly necessary for human understanding, this cannot be demonstrated of divine understanding.

¹³ *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 3, a. 4, ad 2m. The scientific process of conceiving God and grasping the sufficiency of the evidence for the truth of the proposition "God is," is concretely illustrated by *Insight*, chap. 19, par. 9 and 10.

Since natural reason cannot establish that there are intelligible emanations in God, that there are such emanations in God can only be a hypothesis. But why introduce such a hypothesis? "Alio modo inducitur ratio non quae sufficienter probet radicem, sed quae radicem positae ostendat congruere consequentes effectus." A successful scientific hypothesis is an advance in understanding, and its success is measured by the degree to which its intelligible consequences account for what awaits explanation. As the astronomical hypothesis of Ptolemy yields a unified grasp of the apparent motions of the heavenly bodies, so the theological hypothesis of intelligible emanations in God yields a unified grasp of what faith tells us of the three divine Persons. Ptolemy's hypothesis gave place to Newton's, as Newton's did to Einstein's. The latter is no more than probable but nonetheless wins the scientists' respect, for the ideal of modern science centers, not on certainty, but on coherent account. Likewise, the hypothesis of intelligible emanations in God enjoys its measure of success, but if one's ideal in theology is not coherence but certainty, then that measure may not be sufficient to win the hypothesis respect; for like any good hypothesis, it adds no new data about which one may be certain, it merely adds understanding.

Our immediate problem is the point of insertion of the hypothesis. We say, let there be intelligible emanations in God. To determine the point of insertion, then, would seem to require a clarification of the meaning here of "God." It would seem, in fact, to require a relevant definition of God.¹⁴ Now there is, of course, no denying St. Thomas' repeated assertion that we do not know what God is.¹⁵ Still, unless one seeks St. Thomas' meaning in a clear grasp of the difference between quidditative knowledge and analogical knowledge, that assertion becomes a mystery of human psychology. In discussing the necessity of mental words in us, we have already indicated the basis of that distinction. Plainly, if one admits that only the quiddities of material things lie within the range of the proper object of our intellects, and if one admits further that to know *quid sit Deus* and to know the

¹⁴ This discussion might be considered superfluous if one were to assume that the hypothesis concerned only the divine intellect and the divine will. For St. Thomas, however, the divine nature was both *potentia generandi* and *potentia spirandi*; cf. THEOLOGICAL STUDIES 10 (1949) 383-84.

¹⁵ Cf., e.g., *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 12, a. 12 c; q. 13, a. 8, ad 2m.

divine essence are one and the same, then St. Thomas' assertion is a simple and clear statement of fact. We do not know *quid sit Deus*, but, as we have seen, our knowledge moves *per verba incomplexa et complexa* beyond the limits set by the proper object of our intellects, and so we have genuine knowledge of God which is not quidditative but analogical. Such analogical knowledge of God can be ordered, and when it is, that from which all else in our knowledge of God follows may be taken as nature or essence. In this sense, the nature of God is *ipsum intelligere*. No doubt, the question of priority in the ordering of our knowledge of God is a disputed one, but if we claim here that from the notion of God as unrestricted understanding all other attributes follow, our claim is based on the solid principle *ab esse ad posse*.¹⁶

While there is little danger of our confusing our formulation of unrestricted understanding with unrestricted understanding itself, it is by no means easy to determine what precisely that formulation is. It should be clear, however, that it is by extrapolating from our own restricted acts of understanding that we reach that formulation. Thus, we grasp the properties of the unrestricted act by extrapolating from the properties of a restricted act, and since consciousness is a property intrinsic to the ontological perfection of our acts of understanding, the notion of consciousness will pertain to any adequate formulation of the unrestricted act of understanding. That consciousness, being identical with unrestricted understanding, is neither empirical, nor prior to its investigation, nor in any way multiple as in us. Nor can its inclusion in the notion of God be considered unnecessary in view of the absence of distinction between God as subject and God as object of divine knowledge, for there are secondary objects of divine knowledge, and God consciously knows these as objects and as distinct from the subject.

Conceiving God in this way as rationally conscious, one is led automatically to the notion of God as personal, and it might be asked in what sense this notion is included in the formulation which we take as presupposition for the introduction of the hypothesis of intelligible emanations. Let us answer this question in a manner calculated to throw light on the whole procedure. On the one hand, insofar as one proceeds to a natural knowledge of God in ignorance of

¹⁶ *Insight*, chap. 19, par. 9.

the Blessed Trinity, one proceeds also in ignorance of a genuine definition of person: in such a case one could come to define person as *subsistens in rationali natura* and so, in ignorance both of the Blessed Trinity and of what constitutes a person, could come to know God as a person. On the other hand, we are not in ignorance of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, but are seeking that most fruitful understanding of it which is the goal of theology. What, then, is our procedure here? Some general remarks are called for.

In any natural science there is the order of discovery, the *via inventionis*, and there is the order of intelligent presentation, the *via doctrinae*. The first order runs from the sensible data to continually more adequate theories, e.g., from the phenomena of magnetic attraction to ever more comprehensive theories of magnetism. The second order begins from basic theoretical elements and moves by them to an explanation of known phenomena: for example, one proceeds from the periodic table to the properties of elements and compounds. One moves in the first order from the *priora quoad nos*, the sensible data, to the *priora quoad se*, some approximation to essence; in the second, this order is reversed. Another distinction relevant to our purpose is that of Aristotle between *causae essendi* and *causae cognoscendi*: the phases of the moon are the *causae cognoscendi* of the moon's sphericity, but the sphericity of the moon is the *causa essendi*, the cause of its phases being what they are. Clearly, the *causa cognoscendi* is also *prior quoad nos*, and so it is first in the *via inventionis*. Similarly, the *causa essendi* is *prior quoad se*, and so it is first in the *via doctrinae*. Now in theology we cannot speak of *causae essendi*, for the object of the science of theology is God, and God has no causes. Still, the two orders of any science can be imported into theology, for we may speak of *causae cognoscendi* which are *priora quoad nos* and of *causae cognoscendi* which are *priora quoad se*. The former are those truths from which the *via inventionis* starts, moving as the Church has moved to a continually growing understanding of the mysteries under the light of faith. The latter are those truths which form the basis of the *via doctrinae*. Just as the scientist can proceed orderly from the understood essence to the properties of the thing, just as natural reason can proceed from the essence of God, analogically conceived, to the attributes, analogically conceived, so the theologian can proceed in the *via*

doctrinae from those truths whose understanding makes possible the understanding of all others related to them. The movement in the two last cases is from *causae cognoscendi priora quoad se* to *causae cognoscendi priora quoad nos*, and while these differ *quoad rem* from the scientist's *causae essendi* and *cognoscendi*, nevertheless as regards our knowledge they are similar.

It is into this order, the *via doctrinae*, that the hypothesis of intelligible emanations is introduced. It is first in this order, not because it is most manifest—for it is most obscure—but because, in seeking ordered understanding, we begin from that which does not presuppose the understanding of other truths, but which leads to an understanding of them. Before going on to discuss more precisely how it does this, it is to be noted that the original question is implicitly answered. Systematically, the question of person arises only later. So, one might sum up by saying that the hypothesis of intelligible emanations in God is introduced precisely where natural theology is moving to its peak in divine personality, and because of that introduction the peak becomes loftier, though also more obscure: more obscure, for there is mystery, yet loftier, for there is imperfect understanding.

Let there be, then, intelligible emanations in God. Following our earlier discussion, by example and contrast, of intelligible emanation, let us now define it as the conscious origin of an act within and because of actually determined intellectual consciousness. In us such an intelligible emanation is real and natural, for we conceive and affirm it as being in our own intellectual consciousness not as a medium of knowledge but as pertaining to our intellectual nature. When we have conceived and affirmed it, there is also present an intentional intelligible emanation, but the real intelligible emanation is prior to such conception, and it is what is affirmed. The hypothesis, therefore, amounts to assuming real and natural intelligible processions within the divine consciousness. What emanates thus in God must be infinite, and so must be God. For if it were not infinite, it would be finite, a creature, outside God therefore and not God, and hence not something which emanates within divine consciousness.

But in thus asserting the identity in principle and term of procession, are we not destroying the reality of the emanation? It is scarcely necessary to recall the imperfection of our understanding: that the

procession in us is of one accidental act from another, that one person and three acts is little more than numerically similar to one act and three consubstantial persons, and in particular that the reality of the emanation and the consubstantiality of what emanates seem so to exclude one another as to prevent us from considering them together. Yet, it is on our grasp of the nature of intelligible emanations that the analogy rests. It was not of any emanation but of intelligible emanation that St. Thomas wrote: "Id quod procedit ad intra processu intelligibili, non oportet esse diversum; imo quanto perfectius procedit, tanto magis est unum cum eo a quo procedit."¹⁷ Diversity, so far from being essential to an intelligible procession, decreases according to the perfection of that procession. We have already noted the intimate intrinsic relatedness in us of inner words to the acts of understanding from which they proceed, and of proceeding love to both these; still, all these are absolute entities really distinct. In God intelligible processions are present with no absolute diversity.

Having brought us to this imperfect conception of the divine processions, the psychological analogy can lead us still further in our understanding of what we know by faith, for through that analogy we find that we can conceive two and only two such intelligible emanations in God. We can conceive two emanations, for *ipsum intelligere* is also *ipsum affirmare* and *ipsum amare*,¹⁸ and as we have seen, our experience of affirmation is of truth proceeding from understanding, our experience of love is as proceeding from truth and understanding. Certainly, then, two processions, *emanatio verbi a dicente* and *emanatio amoris ab utroque*, can be conceived in God. Nor can these two be reduced to one, for of the first it is true that it does not emanate from the word, and of the second it is true that it does emanate from the word, and these are contradictorily opposed. Furthermore, we can conceive of only these two processions in God, for in God one and the same reality is at once unrestricted understanding and perfect affirming, and so we cannot conceive a multiplicity of proceeding words in God. Again, natural theology allows no more than a rational distinction between divine complacency and divine concern, for in God there is but one perfect love, and so we can conceive but one proceeding

¹⁷ *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 27, a. 1, ad 2m.

¹⁸ *Insight*, p. 658.

love in God. Considering, further, these two intellectually conscious infinite emanations in God, we are led by the hypothesis to conceive the first as a generation, for in *ipsum intelligere esse intentionale* is identically *esse naturale*, and the second not as a generation but what may be called a spiration. Basically, this specific difference of the two processions rests on the manner in which the *ratio similitudinis* pertains to either of them. Whereas similitude pertains intrinsically to the emanation of mental word because it is orientated towards the formation of a perfect similitude of what is known, it pertains to the procession of love not because love is a similitude but insofar as similitude is the principle of love: love is not generated, it has what is generated as its principle.¹⁹

The intelligible emanations occur in God without absolute diversity of principle and term, yet there is difference. By questioning further—led always by the hypothesis—the reality of such difference, we conclude to the existence in God of four real relations.²⁰ While in us the procession of inner word gives rise to a real relation of the word to its principle, in God that procession is truly a generation, and so the real relation of the Word to Its principle is one of filiation. Similarly, proceeding love in us is really, intrinsically related to its principle, and that relation in God may be named passive spiration. In us, again, the grasp of sufficient evidence constitutes a real necessity of intellect to judge, and that real necessity in intellect is a real relation to judging or, finally, to judgment; and since in God that uttering is a generation, the real relation is one of paternity. Lastly, understanding and judgment in us give rise to either an intellectual or a moral necessity to love, and that real necessity is a real relation of understanding and judgment to love; the equivalent real relation in God we call active spiration. The processions and the relations thus consequently conceived are clearly rationally distinct: “origin of one from another”

¹⁹ *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 27, a. 4, ad 2m. Behind this brief statement regarding the nature of love, true whether love is considered as *impulsio* or as *complacentia*, there are difficulties both of doctrine and of terminology; cf. Crowe, *art. cit.*

²⁰ Here and elsewhere we pass over without discussion the disputed question of real relations. Suffice it to say that on the present position the possibility of the identity of a substance and a relation is not a central element in the mystery: substance and relation are so far from being opposed that in finite being no substance is simply absolute. Cf. *Insight*, pp. 490–97; *Conceptio analogica divinarum personarum*, pp. 110–16, 272–96.

and "order of one to another" are so far from being the same that both are conceived of the Son but not of the Father. Still, processions and relations are no more than rationally distinct, for since there is no *motus*, the processions must in reality be identified with the relations. Insofar as a procession is conceived as origin or as *actio in passo*, that procession is identical with filiation or passive spiration. Only insofar as the procession is considered as *actio in agente* is it to be identified with the principle of that procession.

A further development in our concepts leads from relations to subsistent relations, to the real distinction of three of these relations, and to their identity with the divine essence. However, since we have refrained from any discussion of the nature of real relations,²¹ it seems better to pass over this development without comment. We are brought thus to the conception of three real divine subsistent relations, and now the question of divine personality arises. The last remark, however, should not lead to a misunderstanding of method. We are not proceeding in the manner of an abstract deductive expansion: the psychological analogy does not resemble an axiom system of modern mathematics. No more than the concepts, do the nexus between the varying concepts escape the limitations of our knowledge of mysteries. The quest of the *via doctrinae* is not demonstration but imperfect analogical understanding. Hence, in the present question of divine personality the element of understanding to be gained presupposes not only all that has gone before but the fruits also of the *via inventionis*, of revelation and the illumination of reason by faith. One presupposes, in particular, the development of centuries from the common name of *persona* to St. Thomas' definition of person as *distinctum subsistens in rationali natura*. It is beyond our present purpose to describe the vindication of that definition of person in the face of other theories, Scholastic and non-Scholastic,²² and so it remains only to remark that insofar as the understanding of that definition is added to what has gone before, it is seen to be verified in the case of each of the three divine subsistent relations. These relations, indeed, are not only each a distinct subsistent in a rational nature, but precisely as distinct and

²¹ Cf. *supra* n. 20.

²² Cf. B. J. Lonergan, *De constitutione Christi* (Rome, 1958) pp. 9-41; *Conceptio analogica divinarum personarum*, pp. 131-39 and *passim*.

as subsistent are they in that nature, for they subsist as God and so each is identically *ipsum intelligere*, and the source of their distinction is precisely the rationally conscious emanations. Thus we are led to affirm that the real divine subsistent relations are persons. The definition of person used in that predication is one which we also truly predicate of created persons. Its predication is analogous, for it is truly verified in the two cases, yet differently in each: with us, to be a person is to be a substance, but in God there are three consubstantial Persons.

At this stage we move to a higher level by seeking to conceive person, not as it is common to divine and created persons, but as it is proper to God alone. This is a key transition. Up till now the hypothesis of intelligible emanations has dominated the advance, leading systematically from processions to relations, from relations to divine Persons. Now, in this transition, its dominion comes to an end, it yields place to mystery, for at this higher level the central feebleness of our concepts is made manifest. Thus, one can conceive a divine Person as a subsistent relation, and one can conceive a divine Person as essence distinct by relation, but one cannot go further to determine which of these conceptions might be considered more proper; for to the constitutive notion of divine person belong essence and relation and subsistence alike, and since both the essence and the relation subsist, one conceives a divine Person equally whether one considers a relation subsisting through the simple divine reality or the subsistent essence distinct by a relation. In the first case, the relation is considered *in recto*, the essence *in obliquo*; in the second, it is the subsistent essence that is considered *in recto*, and *in obliquo* the relation. So, for example, one speaks in the first case of the divine Father, in the second of God the Father. Furthermore—and this too is a key point—through either of these conceptions one can conceive the relations as constitutive of the Persons. Firstly, if one conceives a person as a relation *in recto*, then since there can be nothing in God that is not God, to posit a relation in God is equivalent to positing a subsistent relation in God, and so to positing a person. Secondly, if one conceives a divine Person as essence *in recto*, it is still true to say *posita relatione ponitur persona*, for the essence thus conceived is conceived neither abstractly nor philosophically, but concretely and theologically, and so, as it

includes the note distinct, so it includes *in obliquo* relation. Finally, the Persons are distinguished precisely by their constituting relations, for the Persons are really distinct neither substantially nor accidentally and so only by the relations.

In this way we come to recognize the relations as personal properties of the divine Persons, for a personal property in God may be defined as a proper attribute which constitutes and distinguishes a divine Person. But to consider the relations thus is to presuppose the Persons, and so it appears that the order of priority of the development of concepts under the hypothesis is reversed. The reversal is completed when we come to consider the notional acts of the Persons, those proper attributes of the Persons which are expressed by verbs such as *generare*, *spirari*, for these notional acts correspond to the intelligible emanations from which the previous development began. But whereas in the order of our concepts *in fieri*, the intelligible emanations presupposed only the concept of God as *ipsum intelligere*, in this second order in which our concepts are no longer in development but *in facto esse*, the notional acts, presupposing in their predication the Persons as constituted, presuppose in concept almost all else in Trinitarian theory.

Having reached that point of reversal, we have reached too our objective. We have examined the hypothesis of intelligible emanations in God in its presuppositions in human psychology and natural theology, and in its role in the development of our Trinitarian concepts in the *via doctrinae* of theology. The point of reversal is the point where that development comes to its term and we move to the level of what is proper to God, where the priority in concept of the finite term of comparison yields to the priority in concept of the infinite divine Persons, where the order of our concepts *in fieri* yields to the reverse order of our concepts *in facto esse*, where the hypothesis yields dominion to the mystery. All this clearly has to do with the development of our imperfect understanding of God, with the ordering of our analogical concepts of God, for in the Blessed Trinity there is nothing prior or posterior. And so, to answer a question such as whether the Father is Father because He generates, or whether He generates because He is Father, with an immediate appeal to the eternity of the processions, is to miss both its source and its significance; for the question regards

not God but the ordering of our concepts about God, and the question can become a crisis if one fails to distinguish clearly between the two orderings of those concepts. Advertence to these two reveals that what is prior in the order of our concepts *in facto esse* is posterior in the order of our concepts *in fieri*, and so it becomes clear that the relation of paternity as constitutive of the Father is prior to the notional act, *generare*, but the relation of paternity as relation is posterior to the notional act.

Since the introduction of the hypothesis we have not emphasized the question of consciousness, yet it was implicit in the entire discussion, and an adequate development of concepts demanded that it be adverted to at every stage; for the hypothesis was of intelligible emanations within divine consciousness, and so the emanations, the relations, and finally the Persons are conscious. Ultimately, therefore, we arrive at the conception of three subjects within the divine consciousness, and this deserves a further comment, for which we are already prepared by the earlier discussion of consciousness.

For clarity's sake, let us distinguish between divine consciousness insofar as it is had by the essential act, and insofar as it is had by notional act. As we saw already, God, intellectually conscious, consciously understands, knows, and loves. Since each of the divine Persons is God, each as intellectually conscious consciously understands, knows, and loves by that essential act. Furthermore, insofar as we prescind methodically here from the relations, no one Person has a distinct consciousness of the other two Persons. By the essential act the same divine consciousness is had in the same way by each Person. Each Person is conscious of Himself and of His essential act, where subject and act are not distinct. That much being definite, let us move on to consider the notional acts.

Let us proceed by example. By the notional act, *generare*, the Father is conscious of Himself and of His act. There is, however, a further complication, for that notional act is identically a relation which consciously relates Father to Son. Hence, the Father by this act is conscious also of the Son, for it is impossible that the Father be consciously referred to the Son without being conscious of the Son. In general, then, by the consciousness had through notional acts, Father

and Son and Holy Spirit are each conscious of Self and of each of the other Persons. It follows that the divine consciousness through notional acts is not three but one. Still, that one consciousness is differently possessed by each of the Persons, since the notional acts are proper to particular Persons. Thus, for example, the Father is conscious in consciously generating the Son, and the Son is conscious in being consciously generated by the Father, yet to generate and to be generated are really opposed. Only the Father consciously generates, only the Son is consciously generated. Similarly, the Holy Spirit alone is consciously spirated. Clearly, indeed, the one consciousness through notional acts is differently had by each, for one cannot be conscious of others by a single consciousness unless that consciousness is differently possessed by the others. Finally, that what we speak of is genuinely consciousness is perhaps strikingly brought out if we consider that the three divine Persons equally know that the Father consciously generates the Son, that the Son is consciously generated by the Father, that Father and Son consciously spirate the Holy Spirit, that the Holy Spirit is consciously spirated by Father and Son. Furthermore, the theologian enlightened by faith can come to share that objective knowledge. But what is thus known also exists, and it is as it exists that it is genuinely consciousness.

We have discussed all too briefly the *ratio quae inducitur ad manifestationem Trinitatis*, but perhaps sufficiently to display its nature and significance, its power and limitations. That *ratio* has its roots in the New Testament²³ and in tradition, and no other theory has been adequately formulated to challenge it. Still, besides the present treatment of the psychological analogy, there are others in which, for example, the metaphysical analysis of the principles of word and love play a large part. For us, such questions pertain only to the mode of signification; they are, therefore, purely philosophical. But for the theologian, the relevant problem is to distinguish between causal and intelligible emanations, between principle and term of intelligible emanation, between the intelligible emanation of truth and of love. With these we have here concerned ourselves, not however in systematic fashion, but in a way suited to our purpose. That purpose led

²³ B. J. Lonergan, *De Deo trino* (Rome, 1961) pp. 307-15.

us to proceed largely by introspective description, and so we spoke continually of our concepts, their development and their ordering. Thus, while we were concerned with a theory, we concentrated on it as it develops in a mind. Insofar as that theory was in the reader's mind already, the essay has its interest in being a partial, and not perfect, presentation of what was already familiar. But insofar as the theory was not originally in the reader's mind, the essay has its value as giving a heuristic notion of what awaits understanding. It was this latter value that governed our presentation.