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The Analogical Intuition of St. Bonaventure

Shiro Kohyama

It goes without saying that there is nothing commensurable substantially between God and His creatures in the same genus. But, since creatures exist actually in participating with God, there is something to make possible to be commensurate both terms at least analogically. In order to remind us its possibility most positively, St. Bonaventure asserted such a doctrine of divine expressionism as God expresses Himself in His totality and perfection in the results of His creation—by this expressionism he believed to be able to make his own theocentrism perfect. Thus the creatures impressed God's image by God Himself should be similar to the totality of Him even to the personal relation, but not in the substantial participation, but in the expressed similitude. As the relation between the creatures and the Creator has the similar relation between a sign and its meaning, we can recognize God through the creatures as well as the meaning through the sign. St. Bonaventure explained us such a recognition by the term "contuitio," analogical intuition, that is, a particular conception which has epistemological foundation on the theory of illumination of the Plato-Augustinism. According to the Pseudo-Dionysius' formula the creatures are disposed on the hierarchy which is diffusively emanated from a divine source. Analogical conception seemed to be situated in it—the material world that is far from the origin is "vestigium," the spiritual world, nearer to the origin, is "imago," and sanctified spirit is "similitudo." "Ex tantis indiciis" we can see (contueri) God, and travel to God Himself following these vestiges—he said this travel "Itinerarium mentis in Deum." But we cannot use these analogical conceptions as the method for the purpose of getting a conception of "being." It is because by these analogical concep-

tions he intended not to define the term "being," but merely to research a vestige of God "Fabricator" impressed upon the creatures. So in a word it is a symbolical conception. Therefore, the intuition of St. Bonaventure contributed far less to the formation of the analogical conceptions in the scholastic logic, than to the foundation of christian humanism as a symbolical mysticism which conserved firmly and made us conscious the principles of the primacy of spirituality, solemnity of person and sanctification of body.