

The univocal element here appears to be "sustaining basis" or some equivalent.

(3) "A steamship is like a canoe" (an explanation a missionary might give to a tribesman in the Upper Amazon)

The univocal element in this analogy appears to be "force-propelled conveyance for water transport."

(4) "The boiler is to the engine as the muscle is to the body."

The univocal element here appears to be "source of motive power."

Notice, then, that an analogy is a comparison between two things sharing at least one area of meaning. This area of meaning common to both is the univocal element. If there is no univocal element, then a proposed analogy becomes an equivocation.

If no name, no attribute, no characteristic, no term can be predicated univocally of both God and man, then significant predication about God becomes impossible! Then God has no name, and we should cease speaking about Him (or Her, or It)!

2. Synthesis of data and considerations

In connection with the question of the knowability of God we should admit at the outset that there are crucial differences between God and human beings. God is infinite, man is finite. God is eternal, man is temporal. God is the Creator, man is the creature. God is holy, man is a sinner. God is in the light, man is in darkness until he is illuminated by the Light of life.

And yet God created human beings in His own image, with the potential for knowing God truly, but in accordance with man's creaturely limitations.

Of course, without God's revelation of Himself, Christ's atonement, and the new birth, man could never discover or know God.

But God has made provision, and man can know God. And the believer does know God.

How, then, does this all work out in connection with the distinctions made earlier with respect to apprehension and comprehension?

We can say that knowledge of God (both cognitive and personal), although never exhaustive and perfect, is possible and true even though it is imperfect and incomplete. God is both apprehensible and incomprehensible, both factually and personally.