

## Introduction to Modern Philosophy

## Lecture §7

### I. Medit. IV: God, Truth and Error

—prove: that God is not a deceiver

—the "overproduction" problem

—WHY we make errors: finitude + free will (indifference vs. choice)+privation of the intellect

—HOW we make errors: the will exceeds the scope of the intellect when making judgments

—How to avoid errors: suspension of judgment + CM

—Objection: divine (epistemic) negligence? D's response: God's ok, we're ok.

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### I. Meditation IV

#### A. Proof that God is not a Deceiver:

One form of argument: God is perfect, deception is a defect, hence God cannot be a deceiver.

    nazi case: is deception a bad thing always? JP: no, but what RD is claiming is that on the whole is it better to deceive than not to deceive—answer: no.

#### Proof that God is not a deceiver:

1) From the supreme being only being may flow (non-being – nothingness – neither needs nor can have a cause).

2) As finite and limited, creatures (created beings) consist of non-being as well as being.

3) Only the being of creatures can derive from God, not their non-being.

4) Truth is the being of knowledge, falsity (ignorance) its non-being.

5) Falsity can never flow from God, never be caused by God.

6) As the cause both of my essence and my existence, God cannot be the cause of my errors.

7) Therefore, God does not deceive me; and by similar reasoning, we may clearly and distinctly perceive that no being is ever deceived by God.

#### B. Problem of Error arising from (A)

The proof that God is not a Deceiver leads to an "overproduction problem": I never make mistakes. So RD must explain how we can be capable of error if God made us, and God is not a deceiver. RD's offering:

1) our minds are finite

2) we have free will so we can make errors. Free will involves two capacities:

a) freedom to resist external causes (neg. freedom)

b) freedom to choose (pos. freedom)

Now, isn't this mind of ours, made by God, then defective? RD: no, our minds are perfect when used as intended. But various privations (misuses) of the intellect produce errors (exceeding the proper use of the intellect).

How we make errors: the will exceeds the scope of the intellect when making judgments.

Note that RD thinks both will & intellect are perfect on their own. Neither is a problem, therefore, on its own. Notice you cannot get T/F ideas until you combine will & intellect to make judgments. "I think F is P."

JP: is this plausible? Do propositions require a will? RD seems to think ideas are

not T/F, but are all propositions judgments? Weird restriction on what counts as ideas.

Idea=image of cognitive parts.

Objection: why didn't God make me smarter? (divine epistemic negligence)

Hence, while not directly responsible for my errors, indirectly God is responsible for them. RD's answer: God has a suff. reason for all He does.  $\therefore$  We are as smart as we should be.