

G O D , A N D A N A L O G Y

God is. A New Order cannot be made without God. To some these things will seem banal; to others, conventionally devout nonsense. Nothing is more important, few things more urgent, than to show they are neither banal nor nonsensical. It needs no showing, once understood the meaning of those first two words, 'God is'; but we are in unprecedented danger of not understanding. Men have attained such control over the natural order and such sufficiency in the artificial (successful war does but further the process) as to have lost nearly all sense of dependency and insufficiency. With that sense goes the natural sense of God. Ideas of God may survive, but too often notional only, conventional; and sometimes, in journalism almost always, useful. As long as we are not as serious and at as great pains at knowing and realising God for Who He Is as are secular investigators at planning and reorganising, we have only ourselves to blame that the public be interested in plans and not in churches. Nor should we too glibly prophesy the ruin of the godless order; planning is not a whit the less efficient and administrable in the short run for being without God; it is merely soulless; only in the very long run is it doomed. But its spiritual poverty as long as it lasts, and its final ruin would be imputable not to the planners, but to ourselves who failed to plan divinely; who failed to sift the dross of religious sentimentality and convention from the gold of God, and left God to be abandoned.

In an opposite endeavour holiness comes first; but the theology of God is a part of corporate holiness. For these reasons we cannot but welcome Mr. Mascall's recent book, 'He Who Is,'¹ the more so as he appears impressed by the same need; 'It has only too often been assumed that . . . English people . . . inherit, as by a kind of birthright, at least the essential elements of the Christian doctrine of God . . . There may have been some excuse for making this assumption in the last century . . . there is very little excuse for making it to-day.' The author (well known as an Anglican theologian) claims to re-state and re-assess traditional theism, by which he means the theism that found 'coherent formulation in the works of St. Thomas Aquinas.' The success of his re-statement is very considerable and all the more remarkable for his having had

¹ *He Who Is. A Study in Traditional Theism.* By E. L. Mascall. (Longmans; 15s.).

to find his own way to Thomism. It is however a pity that he appears to have found his way to contemporary Thomists rather than to St. Thomas or the classical commentators. Certainly Mr. Mascall has studied parts of St. Thomas at first hand, but we cannot avoid the impression that his approach is in general through others, with the result that there are certain minor inaccuracies in the book that might mislead a searcher after Thomistic teaching. Whether the approach has had a more comprehensive and inevitable result may be judged at the end of the present article.

After a general introduction the author establishes as the best form of words that will apply to God and to God alone, i.e. as the formal constituent of deity, 'self-subsistent being,' preferring this to the Anselmian description with its greater emphasis on infinity. He next shows the need of proof from reason for God's existence, rules out the ontological proof and gives an account and evaluation of the classical *Quinque Viae* together with some remarks on their epistemological presuppositions. He has so far only mentioned from time to time the analogy of being, but he now devotes a chapter under the sub-title of *Analogia entis* to the relationship between God and creation. Henceforth the doctrine of analogy becomes the touchstone to which are referred in successive chapters the problem of the divine attributes, the reconciliation of God's transcendence and immanence, and the theistic systems first of Professor Whitehead, then of Dr. F. R. Tennant. This account gives but a slight idea of the extent to which the theory of analogy is laid under contribution in the book. Mr. Mascall has an almost uncanny knack of introducing it at just the right moment. It is his great achievement for which we are profoundly grateful; he 'places' the doctrine in its crucial relevance to our knowledge of God. But here we touch at once upon the book's main weakness. There is no account of analogy. *Non omnia possumus omnes*, pleads the author, as persuasively as honestly. But analogy is pivotal in his book; everything is solved by appeal to it; and we are not told what it is. Nor is it as if his readers might be expected to know all about it. Such works as those of Ramirez, Penido, Przywara and others are to many not accessible; and even where they are we should agree with Mr. Mascall's own requiring 'a more thorough investigation of analogy than it has yet received.' Cajetan stands still the master *par excellence*, but his idiom is scarcely contemporary; and we fear that it is the contemporary who is led by such treatment of analogy as has just been described to suspect that analysis is not given because analogy will not bear analysis but is the final hey-presto of the whole hocus-pocus of scholasticism.

If, in this article, we venture a few notes on analogy, it is certainly with no idea of filling this gap in the contemporary literature, but only to make available to our readers (and perhaps to Mr. Mascall's readers) in the simplest possible terms, and in the hopes of stimulating them to further enquiry, the elementary notions of analogy such as we believe it to be found underlying the whole of St. Thomas's theology; and to scotch the vagueness that here more than in other contexts masquerades as profundity. It is only right to say at the outset that the very attempt to put the matter in our own words induces us to give our own interpretation even where we recognise that it is, to say the least, controversial. Thus for instance in dividing analogy we follow Ferrariensis where the Abbé Penido expressly rejects him (*Le Rôle de l'Analogie en Théologie Dogmatique*, p. 34, n.1); and we give an account of the relation between the analogies of attribution and proportionality that we are not aware of being explicitly worked out elsewhere.

The scholastic doctrine of analogy, let us say at once, has nothing, or very little, to do with the analogies of Bishop Butler; not that we need delay on this point, since anyone inclined by familiarity with Butler's Analogy to be in this confusion will avoid it best by acquaintance with the scholastic doctrine.

In general likeness of analogy for the scholastic does not consist in the possession by two things of a common quality. It is 'proportion,' its name is simply the Greek for proportion (*De Ver.* ii. 11); it consists precisely in the 'towardness,' the congruity of two different things each to the other, towardness which as in each is different since it is to the other, but which does by its exclusive community to the two of them unite them; the likeness is founded not so much *in* them as *between* them. This proportion (the word must be taken in the merely quantitative sense—*De Ver.*viii,1ad6; I12.1ad4; *In Boet. de Trin.*i,2ad3, etc—usual to it in English, which is why we have described it by the general term 'towardness') may exist between two things either directly (analogy *unius ad alterum*) insofar as the towardness be found between each, or indirectly (*duorum vel plurium ad tertium*) when the towardness is not immediately from one to the other but from one to a third towards which the other also is proportioned (*De Pot.*vii,7; I 13.5; I C.G.34, etc.). The classical example is of healthiness (I 13.5; 16.6 *et passim*), where healthiness of medicine is analogous to healthiness of the body by analogy *unius ad alterum* (since the former is towards the latter as cause to effect) but to the healthiness of urine (a symptom) by analogy *duorum ad tertium* (since they are analogous only by their reference

to, their towardness a third, viz., healthiness of body in relation to which one is cause, the other sign.²

Analogy *duorum ad tertium* has little application to God. We do not find God and creatures analogous by reference to a third, since any such third would be constituted greater than God (IC.G.34; *De Pot.vii*7). This is an assertion that needs certain qualifications, but it must be sufficient, given the limitations of our space, to make it in a general way.

Analogy *unius ad alterum* may be of two kinds, according to whether the terms of the proportion are simple (analogy strictly *unius ad alterum*, called analogy of attribution) or are themselves proportioned within themselves (analogy *plurium ad plura*, called analogy of proportionality) (*De Ver.ii,ii*). The example we have given above is of where the terms are simple. In such a case, clearly, knowledge of one of the two things gives very little information as to the other, for though we should know that the other is 'towards the known thing' it may be at any stage, at what stage we should not know, of removal in the line away of the towardness. To assert that such simply was the style of our knowledge of God would not be to get beyond the pure relativism of Maimonides that St. Thomas rejects (I 13.2; *De Pot.vii,5*). It would be to know God by analogy of attribution only, a refined form of agnosticism. It is different if the terms of the proportion are themselves proportional. By this we mean that the terms are towards each other (by the relation that we shall henceforth describe as the central proportion) not as in themselves simply, but in consideration of a relation or proportion that they already sustain with something that has to do with them; x as towards X is towards (the central proportion) y as towards Y ; calmness in its congruity to the sea is congruous to gentleness in its congruity to air (*In Metaph.v,lect.8,no.879*). In such analogy, if we know one composite term then the remote term, the unknown term, whilst being, *absolutely*, no more known than in the case of simple analogy of attribution, is yet *within its unknownness* known, for at any stage (what stage we know not) of removal from the known term, it will be true that the proportion within the near term is proportionally verified in the further term; verified in what proportion we do not know since that depends upon the undetermined central proportion, but nevertheless truly verified. Thus within and

² It may remove a source of confusion to remark that in the phrases *unius ad alterum* and *duorum ad tertium*, the 'ad' does not necessarily refer to the analogy-proportion being named, but may refer to a previous proportion upon which this may be founded; in the analogy *duorum ad tertium* the analogy is not as between the two and the third, but between the two themselves.

ruled by the negation of finally absolute knowledge, and upon as it were a sliding scale, we do have positive, intrinsic knowledge (more than merely relative) of the remote term. Moreover if we happen to know one of the terms of the remote proportion independently of the central proposition, this to some extent determines the central proportion, and correspondingly determines our knowledge of both the remote proportion and its remaining unknown term. This is, then, knowledge by analogy of proportionality; it will be seen how, on our account of the matter, this analogy is dominated by the quasi-analogy of attribution at its heart (the central proportion), yet not so dominated as not to be something very different.

It is by this analogy of proportionality that we are said to know the divine attributes. In the *Quinque Viae* it is proved 'that there is God,' i.e. a *primum movens non motum*, etc. We would suggest that what, immediately, is thus proved to be is known so far only by analogy of attribution; from various facts of experience it is shown that there must be behind them, under pain of their not being what they are, Another, Cause-of-them, Not-them. This other is so far known only in relation to and by removal from them. (It seems to us that the many difficulties brought against the *viae*, of which a fair selection may be found in Mr. Mascall's book, arise mostly from an attempt to read more into their immediate conclusions than this.) From this position, however, we go on at once to another—which is what St. Thomas does in the remaining questions *de Deo Uno*. For not only must there be God, but He must somehow be being and be everything else that is pure perfection, since the 'from-Him' effects are being and are variously perfect (however such perfection may be, in them, conditioned) so that, under pain of their being 'greater' produced by a lesser, the element at least of perfection that is theirs, as distinct from its conditioning, must be in God (I C.G.28-29). That it is true, then, that being is in God we know, but what it is for being, that we conceive, to be in that Other, that we conceive by analogy of attribution, we cannot know. As far as *our conceiving* can, and must, go, we know that being must *be in* God and must be *itself*, be being, in God; but what it is *for it* to be itself there in God depends on *what* God is (or not-is), and as we cannot know the latter but only *that* He is, so we do not know the former but only *that* it is. On the other hand we have now at the further end of our hitherto analogy of attribution no longer merely a simple term (that there is . . . God) but a term containing within itself a proportion that corresponds to a proportion in the near term, being (divine) congruous to God congruously with being (creaturally) congruous to creatures. (It is important to

realise that in this proportional formula we do not presume to make an assertion about *what is* in God but about *our conception*—cf. *In Dion. de div. nom.*i,4; *De Pot.*i,1ad10; vii,2ad1; vii,5—of something that it is in God, and *our conception* that He is.) We have therefore knowledge by analogy of proportionality; within unknowing we know; and attain to positive, intrinsic attributes of God, realised as themselves (formally) in Him; only we do not know *what* absolutely to be themselves in Him is; the analogy of proportionality is dominated by the quasi-analogy of attribution at its heart; moreover we cannot in the case of God determine that central proportion by independent knowledge of one of the terms of the remote proportion that is its own term; for God to whom divine being is proportioned is known previously only by analogy of pure attribution, by the conclusion of the *quinque viae* ‘that He is.’ It is for this reason that our knowledge is in the last analysis negative (*In Sent.* I 8.1ad3,4; III *C.G.*49; *In Dion.div.nom.*i,3).

Such in outline is the doctrine of analogy in its application to God, at least as we see it. Is it appreciated in its full implications (even when it is proclaimed in principle) by such treatises on God as Mr. Mascall’s and those of his immediate masters, the contemporary interpreters of St. Thomas’s thought? We are more than a little tempted to wonder. If it were fully appreciated would Mr. Mascall write, ‘it is almost amusing to see how much St. Thomas tells us about the First Being after he has informed us that we have really proved nothing about him except that he exists.’ Should we find the curious phrase that has obtained scholastic currency ‘metaphysical essence, formal constituent of Deity’ (even allowing for all the qualifications set to it by its users)? Would Mr. Mascall hold, as he does, that in the proving of God’s existence we are confronted first with a definition of God, then with the proof of the corresponding reality (it is surely one thing to give a meaning, in effect terms, to the name God (I 2.2ad2), another to entertain an idea of God in the mind, previously to the proofs of his being)? Again, if only analogy were more appreciated for what it is, could he not have left a little less unexplained his assertion that God and the world do not ‘add up’? Finally, do not all these things, together with their obscuring of analogy, spring from the commonly accepted idea that we can have imperfect knowledge of the divine quiddity itself, which can only mean knowledge of such essential predicates as God may have in common with others? And is this an idea that would appeal to St. Thomas? (cf. I 4ad2,3; I *C.G.* 22, *Adhuc omne; Comp Theol.* 26-27; *De Ver.*ii,11; *De Pot.*vii,7).

If this appear, as indeed it is, an inconclusive ending, we hope

that our readers may make it a beginning for their own reflections; they could do much worse than start by reading, critically, this book of Mr. Mascall's to which we have done such scant justice.

COLUMBA RYAN, O.P.

RICHES AND POVERTY¹

By ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA (1347-1380).

CONSIDER, dear child, the shame of wretches in love with wealth, who will not follow the lights that nature gives them to win the sovereign and everlasting Good. This was not beyond the pagan philosophers, who for love of knowledge cast riches from them; they saw them to be a hindrance. Yet the men I speak of wish to make riches their god, witness their greater grief to lose temporal wealth and substance than to lose me, the sovereign eternal riches. All manner of evil, if you but think a little, issues from this un-governed will and desire for wealth.

Pride issues from it—the desire to be the greater; injustice to self and others; greed, which in lust for money makes no scruple to rob a brother or steal what belongs to Holy Church, bought though it is with the blood of my Son, my Word, my only-begotten. There issues also the trafficking in time and in neighbours' flesh and blood (so with usurers, who sell like thieves what is not their own). Gluttony issues from it, with excess of foods and ungoverned eating; licentiousness too, for if a man had no wealth to spend, he would often not keep such sorry company. There are murders too; hatred and uncharitableness; cruelty; faithlessness towards me; and self-presumption, as though it were thanks to themselves that men had wealth. Unperceiving that it is through me alone that they either get or keep it, they lose trust in me and trust only in it—idly, for it drops from them unawares, whether lost in this life by my provision and for their good, or whether lost at their death; thus they learn at length the hollowness and the fickleness of wealth.

Riches impoverish and kill the soul; they make a man cruel towards himself; they make him finite and dispossess him of the dignity of the infinite, for his desire, which should be united with me, infinite Good, has been set on a finite thing and lovingly united with that. He loses taste for the savour of virtue and odour of poverty; he loses self-mastery and becomes a thrall to riches. He is not to

¹ Text in *Libro della divina dottrina* (Scrittorio d' Italia, 1938), pp. 348-354. The passage does not occur in the available English Translation of the *Dialogue* by Algar Thorold.