

De Deo Creationis Finem Exsequente. By E. Iglesias, S.J.

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Many have been fascinated by Aquinas' affirmation that God operates in all other operation inasmuch as he creates all finite ~~principles~~ principles of action, conserves them, applies them, and uses them as instruments. On this topic in 1946 Fr. Iglesias published his work, De Deo in Operatione Naturae vel Voluntatis Operante. The thesis was the that Aquinas taught mediated concursus and that he was right in doing so. The same contention remains in the present work, where it becomes the hypothesis of a theory on the nature of divine knowledge and providence, predestination and reprobation, efficacious and sufficient grace.

In substance, the proposal is that, if one accepts mediated concursus, then one moves out of the context of the controversy, De Auxiliis, into the context of the thought of St. Thomas and, though all its difficulties do not vanish at once, still one is incomparably better off. For the context of the controversy was set by Scotus who invented immediate concursus and did so because of his theory of divine knowledge (p. 148 f.). But in the writings of Aquinas, divine omniscience and the efficacy of divine will rest on the

absolute perfection of God. Hence, there is no need to postulate immediate concursus to make God omniscient and to endow his will with efficacy, and so there follows a great mitigation of the problem of reconciling divine dominion with human freedom. For it is immediate concursus that conflicts with contingency and liberty, and not at all divine omniscience and efficacy. Inversely, it is not immediate concursus that ~~makes~~ ^{renders} grace efficacious, but divine omniscience and efficacy (pp. 163, 188, 194, 290).

I believe the foregoing, as a general scheme, to be valid and correct. In my opinion reservations have to be made on the author's contentions for mediated concursus, but these I have expressed on a previous occasion (Theol. Stud., VII(1946), 602 ff.). But I find completely unacceptable the effort to deduce divine knowledge of the far futuribles from divine knowledge of the possibles without any recourse to divine wisdom; and as the author believes that he succeeds, where it seems clear to me that he fails, his whole position becomes, in my judgment, ambiguous.

Quite rightly Fr. Iglesias maintains that God knows the possibles, not as mere assemblages of abstract properties, nor merely as contained virtually in finite causes, but in themselves and in the setting of their circumstances, conditions, and causes. However, he argues that in each such setting there is a knowable, necessary nexus between the possible event, considered concretely, and its circumstances. Because the nexus is knowable, it follows from divine omni-

science that God knows it. Because the nexus is in the field of the possibles, it follows that this divine knowledge is prior to any act of divine will. On the other hand, though the nexus is necessary, it is to be conceived on the analogy of "Socrates, dum sedet, necessario sedet" and so it cannot conflict with contingency or liberty. Hence, the author concludes that God, prior to any act of will, knows what he could produce through the mediation of created free wills. (p. 88 f.)

This conclusion, I find, either is either trivial or contradictory. It is trivial if it means that God knows that under determinate circumstances Peter, since he is free, could either sin or not sin. It is contradictory if it means that God knows that under determinate circumstances Peter would sin. For in the very circumstances in which Peter sins, 1) it is possible for him to sin, for that is what he does, and 2) it is possible for him not to sin, for he is free. Hence, the same possible circumstances must bear two nexus; on the author's showing both must be necessary; but the terms of the two nexus are contradictory, for the one is sinning and the other not sinning; and it is impossible for both of a pair of contradictories to be necessary.

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