

Such propositions or truths, however, fall into two classes. Some are per se nota quoad nos; others are per se nota not quoad nos but only quoad se. For a proposition or truth to be per se notum quoad nos two conditions must be fulfilled: (1) the predicate must be de ratione subiecti and (2) we must know de praedicato et subiecto quid sit.

Now both the propositions, Deus est, Verbum est, are per se nota. For in both the predicate is de ratione subiecti. As God is identical with his esse, so also the divine Word is identical with the same esse.

However, in this life we do not know quid sit Deus, for that would be to know God by his essence, and to know God by his essence is to enjoy the vision of the blessed in heaven.¹¹ But the divine Word is God. Hence, as we do not know quid sit Deus, so also we do not know quid sit Verbum.

Accordingly, for St. Thomas, just as Deus est, so also Verbum est, is indeed per se notum but only quoad se and not quoad nos. Moreover, as all pure perfections are identical with God, so there can be no valid ontological arguments based upon any pure perfection: we can have analogical knowledge of pure perfections but, in this life, we cannot know quid sit perfectio pura.

~~There can be, I believe, no doubt that the foregoing answer is authentically Thomist. At the same time ^a it invites a few reflections that take us beyond comparison with the Prosligion to a comparison with the Monologion.~~

~~First, there are operative in the Thomist text propositions that are per se nota not only quoad nos but ^{only} also quoad se. Aquinas was a theologian and he wrote not anthropocentrically~~

There can be no doubt, I think, that the foregoing answer is authentically Thomist. The interesting fact is that it reveals the difference not only between Thomist thought and the ontological argument of the Proslogion but also between Thomist thought and the trinitarian speculation of the Monologion. St. Anselm and, it would seem, Dom Vagaggini did not advert to the distinction between quidditative and analogous conception or knowledge. For Aquinas a truth is per se nota quoad nos only if two conditions are fulfilled and, moreover, the second condition is never fulfilled once one moves beyond the range of the proper object of human intellect in this life, the quidditas seu natura in materia corporali existens.¹² Neither in our natural knowledge of God nor in our theological knowledge do we know quid sit; all we have is (1) analogous concepts, (2) the prima principia intellectus, (3) demonstrations from effects, and (4) congruent suppositions that are demonstrable neither on the basis of natural knowledge nor on the basis of revealed knowledge. Because all our knowledge of God in this life is limited by its use of analogy, it follows rigorously that "tanto in hac vita Deum $\downarrow$ perfectius cognoscimus, quanto magis intelligimus eum excedere quidquid intellectu comprehenditur."¹³ Because trinitarian speculation is entirely a matter of advancing congruent hypotheses, it is demonstrable neither on the basis of ~~any~~ natural knowledge nor on the basis of revealed knowledge; for a demonstration argues: if P then Q; but P; therefore Q; but a congruent hypothesis cannot do better than: if P then Q; but Q; so perhaps P.¹⁴

It is true, of course, that one has to be a technically ~~competent~~ competent Aristotelian to understand what Aquinas means by quid sit.