THE METAPHYSICAL REALISM OF E. L. MASCALL AND ANGLICAN DOCTRINE

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

AIMS

The twentieth century Anglican theologian, E. L. Mascall, made an important contribution to Anglican theology by incorporating into it the philosophical doctrine of metaphysical realism, developed by Thomas Aquinas. The Thesis asks about the relationship of Mascall's theology to Anglicanism and how it may be of benefit to Anglican theology, particularly since he represented an increasingly marginalized party within the Church, that is, Anglo-Catholicism, and also since his writings seem somewhat neglected today.

SCOPE

In order to assess the significance of Mascall's approach within the world of contemporary Anglican theology, this Thesis examines the question of whether the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion – which are salient representative texts of official Anglicanism and a significant exemplar of the so-called Anglican method – intentionally incorporate an ontological understanding into such fundamental accounts as those of the doctrine of God and of Christ. The provisional conclusion is that the Articles include an ontological presumption only, which, within the distinctive Anglican approach to ecclesiology and theological method, puts in jeopardy an ongoing and settled place for such fundamental doctrines. In order to do this, the Thesis examines the distinctive nature of essential Anglicanism, noting its balanced, dialectical, and provisional nature.

Such a settled placement of these fundamental and other doctrines is, however, a necessary aspect of the fulfilment of a distinctive Anglican ecclesiology as professed by historic Anglicanism. The doctrines of God and of Christ are part of a fundamental set which necessarily enable the distinctive nature of Anglicanism to achieve its goal of attaining catholicity through apostolicity. At the heart of this goal is a distinction of things deemed necessary for salvation and those not necessary. The Anglican method, therefore, encapsulates what is distinctive about Anglicanism, and so, the identity of the church is created and maintained. Its primary outcome and concern is with a balanced synthesis/symbiosis of scripture, tradition, and reason.

In times of cultural change, such fundamental doctrines may be radically questioned in the name of contemporary accounts of reason. Alternative interpretations may in turn place such accounts outside the ambit of catholic faith as it has been traditionally conceived, and

so introduce into Anglicanism irreconcilable pluralities of belief. The balanced synthesis may be ignored and so Anglican comprehensiveness is strained to breaking-point.

The question of the benefit of an incorporation of metaphysical realism into Anglican theology is not only discussed with reference to these fundamental doctrines, but also with reference to three contentious doctrines, namely, the doctrines of justification, the Blessed Sacrament, and of Apostolic Succession. The latter three doctrines represent points of contention within historic Anglicanism, but above all they illustrate a lack of an intentional ontological and creational thinking to be found throughout the Articles.

The Thesis explores the intellectual integrity of Mascall's natural theology. It concludes that Mascall is correct to believe in the fundamental character of being and of our knowledge of it. To support the conclusion, the Thesis presents and answers a major contemporary challenge to this approach in the form of a charge of the historical relativism of natural theology by the Protestant theologian, J. B. Cobb. Taking up the relative nature of personal evaluations as the basis for philosophy, it nevertheless concludes with Mascall that natural theology may be learned by anyone willing and able to do so, and that such people may find that their faith commitments may be realigned as a result. The Thesis concludes with an account of the range of Mascall's ontological thinking and how such thinking allows us to appreciate a creational approach to doctrine in general. Finally, there is an attempt to re-state the three contentious doctrines by intentionally incorporating into their expression ontological thinking. The theme is that *Grace perfects, but does not destroy or ignore, nature*.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion is that Anglican theology and ecclesiology may significantly benefit from an intentional and intelligent incorporation of metaphysical realism. Such an incorporation fulfils the distinctive Anglican method, and wards off misappropriations of scripture, tradition and reason that may unbalance the synthesis.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

REVISITING THE THEOLOGY OF E. L. MASCALL

INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the theology of E. L. Mascall in order to ask how we may determine its relationship to Anglicanism. To facilitate this principle question, two sub-questions are asked, namely:-

- what is Mascall's most significant contribution to Anglican theology?, and,
- how may Anglican theology benefit from such a contribution?

Why would the principle question be asked? A significant answer is that, at first sight, Mascall's theology appears to offer a rational and traditional account of doctrine, but that it does so from the perspective of only one aspect of Anglicanism, namely, Anglo-Catholicism.

A way to answer these questions is to compare and contrast Mascall's approach with some official and representative statements of Anglican doctrine, that is, the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion. By exploring Mascall's theological approach, and, by adopting a method of comparison and contrast, it might be possible to see how Mascall's theology may positively contribute to Anglican dogmatic theology. Arguably, the Articles encapsulate an essentially Anglican approach to doctrine.[1] Since the Articles represent a defensive gesture in a specific time of contention and uncertainty, some may deem it unsuitable to examine the relationship of Mascall's theological approach to that of the Articles. Why not compare Mascall's theology to that of Richard Hooker, for example?

[1] That the Articles represent an authoritative statement of doctrine is accepted by writers such as O. O'Donovan, *Thirty Nine Articles: A Conversation with Tudor Christianity*, (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1986), 12.

In support of the approach adopted here, it may be said that not only have the Articles attained a significant level of authority and reputation within Anglicanism – positively or negatively – but, as we shall argue, they exhibit an inner structural coherence which illustrates a distinctive methodological intention and that they are an apt account of the way this intention defines and helps to create what the church is for Anglicans. And so, they may be deemed to be of continuing relevance. The choice of the Articles as a partner in a dialogue with Mascall's approach need not imply, however, that Mascall's approach necessarily conflicts with the principle structures of an Anglican methodological intention. As we shall argue, a dialogue primarily shows a material contrast between the two which may, in turn, not only illustrate Mascall's own interpretation of Anglicanism, but also show where such an interpretation could possibly be of benefit to Anglicanism. In any case, they are chosen because of the heuristic possibilities present in such a comparison and contrast: understanding both Anglicanism and Mascall's theology.

The salient issue concerns what contribution, if any, we may consider Mascall's theology might offer contemporary Anglicanism. In Chapters I and II, we shall begin an exploration of Mascall's theology while asking about its Anglican context and how the two may be related. In Chapter III, we shall explore in greater depth a significant aspect of Mascall's approach. In Chapter IV, we shall answer an objection to this approach, and in Chapter V, we shall explore further and develop Mascall's approach by offering an example of how Anglican doctrine may benefit from it before concluding with a statement determining the relationship of Mascall's theology to Anglican doctrine.

The material in Chapter I will be presented under the following four headings:-

1. Introducing E. L. Mascall;
2. The Anglican Context: Past and Present;
3. The Problematic: Mascall and an Anglican Search for Catholicism; and,
4. Mascall's Relevance to the Present Anglican Situation.

1. INTRODUCING E. L. MASCALL

Eric Lionel Mascall (1905 to 1993) was a priest and a theologian of the Anglican Church.[2] Mascall's theological writings on God and creation incorporate a metaphysical and

[2] The term *Anglican* was not in common usage until the middle of the nineteenth century. Then, it began to be used to describe a discrete tradition believed to be encapsulated in a group of churches deriving from the Church of England – what now may be called the Anglican Communion. The term refers to a distinct

ontological concern evident in his treatment of Christ, Christian life, the church, the apostolic ministry, the sacraments, humanity, social responsibility and secularity. The range of his interests has a kind of systematic structure that Anglican theology has somewhat neglected.[3] Clearly, he was widely read in theology, including continental Roman Catholic theology.[4] Mascall's writings also exhibit an expert knowledge of contemporary science,[5] mathematics,[6] and continental existentialism.[7] Throughout his life he continued his interest in the social and moral implications of Christianity.[8] But, as we will argue, his most distinctive contribution to Anglican theology lies in his metaphysical and ontological thinking. His metaphysical realism gave his theology cogency and coherence in his response to the troubled era of the twentieth century.

After his mathematical studies in the 1920s at Pembroke College, Cambridge,[9] Mascall graduated with distinction and thereafter showed a life-long interest in the relationship of science to theology. He became Senior Mathematics Master at Bablake School in Coventry from 1928 to 1931.[10] He was ordained in the Church of England in 1933,[11] and worked as a priest in London. He was appointed a lecturer at Lincoln Theological College from 1937 to 1945,[12] and then was "Senior Student" of Christ Church, Oxford, and University

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ecclesiological identity and practice without implying that the various ecclesial structures of member churches are identical. In the text, *Church* with a capitalized first letter refers to the Anglican Church; *church* refers to the church in general; *Catholic* refers to the church in communion with the Pope; and, *catholic* refers to an ecclesiological view associated with the Oxford Movement, Anglo-Catholicism, or with Roman Catholicism.

[3] *Cf* S. W. Sykes, *The Integrity of Anglicanism*, (New York: The Seabury Press, 1978), 57-60 *et al*.

[4] E. L. Mascall, *The Openness of Being: Natural Theology Today*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971), and E. L. Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel of Christ: An Essay in Reorientation*, Second Edition, (London: SPCK, 1977-1984).

[5] E. L. Mascall¸ *Christian Theology and Natural Science: Some Questions in their Relations*, Second Impression (with minor corrections), (London: Longman, Green and Co., 1956-1957).

[6] E. L. Mascall, *Saraband: The Memoirs of E. L. Mascall*, (Leominster: Gracewing, Fowler Wright Books, 1992).

[7] *Existentialism* here means the philosophy of personalist existentialism, and at this point is to be distinguished from *existentialism* which is used in this thesis to denote an ontological philosophy such as espoused by Mascall. Regarding the former, see E. L Mascall, *The Christian Universe*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966), 34, where Mascall writes: "The doctrine of the absurdity of existence is the natural climax of the process of secularisation which has increasingly characterised the thought and activity of the modern world".

[8] See for example, "Foreword" in J. H. Channer, Abortion *and the Sanctity of Human Life*, (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1985), 7-12. An early example is "The Person and the Family" in M. B. Reckitt, (ed.), *Prospect for Christendom: Essays in Catholic Social Reconstruction*, (London: Faber & Faber Limited, 1945). See especially E. L. Mascall, *The Importance of Being Human: Some Aspects of the Christian Doctrine of Man*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1959).

[9] Mascall, *Saraband*, Chapter 3.

[10] Mascall, *Saraband*, Chapter 5.

[11] Mascall, *Saraband*, 111.

[12] Mascall, *Saraband*, Chapter 6.

Lecturer in the Philosophy of Religion between 1946 and 1962.[13] He became Professor of Historical Theology at London University from 1962, and was Dean of the Faculty of Theology from 1968 to 1971. Mascall retired from the University in 1973.[14] In 1974, he became an honorary canon of Truro with the function of Canon Theologian.[15] He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1974.[16]

Three of Mascall's special ecclesiological interests included ecumenical relations with the Orthodox Churches,[17] issues relating to unifications proposals between Anglicans and national churches in Asia and America,[18] and the ecumenical implications of the doctrine of the Blessed Virgin Mary.[19] But within Anglicanism, he worked for a broader appreciation of the resources within the whole tradition, and so to "get behind" the mistakes of late medieval thinking which he believed distorted the Reformers' understanding of theology.[20] Mascall's knowledge of continental sacramental theology allowed him to re-assess aspects of Anglican practice and belief. Noteworthy is his re-assessment of the notion of sacrifice and its relation to the Blessed Sacrament.[21] Other aspects of his writing include his interest in the different understandings of grace in East and West, and in the mystical theology of St John of the Cross.[22] In drawing attention to continental Thomist and other Catholic writers, he also commented on the writings of Bernard Lonergan which at the time were not well-known to Anglicans. Overseas teaching engagements included lectures given in the United States, Canada, Africa and Rome on a number of occasions. One such engagement was the St Michael's lectures at Gonzaga University, Spokane, and it included a public discussion of Lonergan's basic approach and

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[13] Mascall, *Saraband*, Chapters 9 &10.
[14] Mascall, *Saraband*, 299.
[15] Mascall, *Saraband*, 299.
[16] Mascall, *Saraband*, 300.
[17] Mascall, *Saraband*, Chapters 8, 12 & 13.
[18] Seen for example in E. L. Mascall, *Lambeth 1958 and Christian Unity*, (London: The Faith Press, 1958).
[19] Seen for example in E. L. Mascall, "The Mother of God" in A. Stacpoole (ed.), *Mary's Place in Christian Dialogue: Occasional Papers of the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 1970-1980*, (Middlegreen: St Paul Publications, 1982), 89-97 and E. L. Mascall, "Theotokos: The Place of Mary in the Work of Salvation" in E. L. Mascall & H. S. Box, *The Blessed Virgin Mary: Essays by Anglicans*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 1963).
[20] This is the program outlined in E. L. Mascall, *The Recovery of Unity: A Theological Approach*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1958).
[21] See especially E. L. Mascall, *Corpus Christi: Essays on the Church and the Eucharist*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1953).
[22] Aside from chapters in his books on grace and in E. L. Mascall, *A Guide to Mount Carmel: Being a Summary and an Analysis of The Ascent of Mount Carmel by St. John of the Cross, with Some Introductory otes*, (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1939), the following articles are relevant:- "Nature, Grace and Mysticism" in *Theology: A Monthly Review* 45 (1942): 102-107, and "The Message of Carmel" in *Theology* 46 (1943): 271-274. See also, E. L. Mascall, *Grace and Glory*, (London: SPCK, 1975).

theological method.[23] Significantly, Mascall was the Bampton Lecturer in 1956, and the Gifford lecturer in 1970 to 1971.[24] His Christological writings attempt to uphold traditional Chalcedonian categories within a supernaturalist view of Christianity and of the world. These are in marked contrast to the prevailing secularist theologies of the time.[25] Mascall wrote and thought as an Anglo-Catholic. He was a member of the Oratory of the Good Shepherd, an order of Anglican priests.[26] Although neglected today, some important Anglican thinkers read his writings with profit. For example, Paul Avis recently drew the reader's attention to Mascall's Christological and ecclesiological contribution in *Christ, the Christian and the Church*,[27] and Alister McGrath has expressed his regret that Mascall's Bampton lectures are "unjustly neglected".[28] In John Macquarrie's assessment, Mascall "remains as a witness to whatever is enduring in the conception of a Catholic Anglicanism".[29]

2. THE ANGLICAN CONTEXT: PAST AND PRESENT

Mascall's writings form part of the heritage of Anglican theology. In this section, three aspects of the Anglican context in which Mascall wrote will be discussed. The nature of Mascall's response to each will be raised. These three aspects are:-

- the broad theological context before the Second World War in which Mascall began his theological work;
- the nature of Anglo-Catholicism with which he identified; and
- the Anglicanism which he inherited and questioned.

[23] *Saraband*, Chapter 12, dealing with 1958 to 1981; see especially, 293.
[24] See Mascall, *Openness.*
[25] E. L. Mascall, *The Secularization of Christianity: An Analysis and a Critique*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1965): see especially Chapter 4, 191: "By 'supernatural'…I shall mean the whole body of thought and activity which is concerned with man's life as a member of 'another world', which sees his life in 'this world' as deriving ultimately from that 'other world'…".
[26] Mascall, *Saraband,* 138 *et al*.
[27] P. Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials of Anglican Ecclesiology*, (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 177; E. L. Mascall, *Christ, the Christian and the Church: A Study of the Incarnation and its Consequences*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1946).
[28] *Cf* A. E. McGrath, *A Scientific Theology*, Volume I, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2001), 222.
[29] J. Macquarrie in A. E. McGrath, *The SPCK Handbook of Anglican Theologians*, (London; SPCK, 1998), 72.

BEFORE THE WAR

The aim of this section is to raise the question of the relationship between Anglicanism and Mascall's approach to theology. A final note is a conclusion concerning the question of Mascall's relationship to Anglicanism and Anglicanism's relationship to catholicism.

The first contextual aspect of the overall environment of Mascall's work as a theologian concerns the broad theological context in England before the War. In this period, liberal influences in Anglican theology were present while Karl Barth's ideas were also beginning to be noticed by some Anglicans. This was a time of theological conflict inside and outside the Anglican Church. That there was much theological conflict within the Anglican Church during the 1920s and 1930s is indicated by an official inquiry into this situation. In response to what appeared to be variant ways of being an Anglican, the Archbishop of Canterbury appointed a commission in 1922 to investigate ways unity may be restored. The Report of the Archbishops' Doctrinal Commission was presented in 1938 and recognized variant but "admissible [theologies] in the Church of England…".[30]

Within the Anglican Church, the so-called English Modernists continued to be influential.[31] They were bound together in an organized association led by H. D. A. Major. He explained that "Modernism consists in the claim of the modern mind to determine what is true, right, and beautiful in the light of its own experience, even though its conclusions be in contradiction to those of tradition".[32] Major's attitude to theology is illustrated further in the following passage that captures something of the spirit of this influential movement.

> We must have a theology, but a theology which will win the modern mind: a theology, too, which in its profounder doctrines must be proved experimentally: a theology which is plastic and always open to reformation: a theology which, if possible, shall be so simple and lucid that plain men can understand it. We must have a modern theology.[33]

As Major's proposal may suggest to us, theological conflict of one kind or another would continue throughout Mascall's life in Anglicanism.

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[30] G. W. H. Lampe, "Introduction" added to the Report, *Doctrine in the Church of England, (1938)*, (London: SPCK, 1938-1982), 171.
[31] H. D. A. Major, *English Modernism: Its Origin, Methods, Aims* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927).
[32] Major, *English Modernism*, 8. See also A. M. G. Stephenson, *The Rise and Decline of English Modernism*, (London: SPCK, 1984), 48.
[33] Major, *English Modernism*, 95.

In response to ideas such as these, Mascall expressed his rejection of non-traditionalist approaches, as we may see in the following statement: "They [attempted to] insert Christianity into an intellectual framework derived from some contemporary understanding of reality which is secular…in origin".[34] However, in rejecting the stance of the English Modernists and liberals, he also rejected the combination of modern attitudes and catholicism exemplified by the so-called *liberal catholics* within Anglicanism.[35] We may see this in a significant assessment of this movement taken from quite late in his life. Looking back on the period between the Wars, Mascall noted that

> A later generation of liberal catholics, such as A. E. J. Rawlinson, Wilfred Knox and E. G. Selwyn…. [were unready]…to admit that…there was in fact any inconsistency between what were described as the 'assured results of modern criticism' and their rather minimized versions of the essentials of catholic faith, it was inherent in their position that if (which might God avert!) there should be head-on collision between faith and reason, it would be faith that would have to give way. Hardly ever was it admitted that perhaps the assured results of modern criticism might turn out not to be so assured after all, or that a deeper study of the matters at issue might show that the problem had been wrongly formulated at the start…. All the answers were now available…. they confidently held.[36]

In the period before the War, Mascall's incorporation of a metaphysical and ontological concern in theology was evident in a major article entitled "Three Approaches to God", published in 1935.[37] In this article he made clear his appreciation for Thomism, and that his theological views were at variance with a number of contemporary approaches, namely,[38] those exemplified by the liberal, modernist, and Barthian approaches. However, his theological choices reflected changing times. From the late 1930s until the mid-1980s, he upheld catholic and traditional emphases in his criticism of non-traditional and radical theologies, emphases deriving from medieval philosophy that were somewhat unusual within Anglicanism.

Mascall rejected theologies that denied the priority of revelation over reason,[39] as well as those that denied a significant place for natural theology.[40] His response was to find

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[34] Mascall, *Christ*, 245.
[35] E. L. Mascall, "Wither Anglican Theology*"* in A. A. C. Kilmister (ed.), *When Will Ye Be Wise? The State of the Church of England*, (London: Blond & Briggs, 1983), 35.
[36] Mascall, "Wither", 34.
[37] E. L. Mascall, "Three Modern Approaches to God: A Discussion of the Theism of A. N. Whitehead, Dr. F. R Tennant and Professor A. E. Taylor" in *Theology* 30, (1935): 18-35, 70-86.
[38] Mascall, "Three Modern Approaches", 22.
[39] Mascall, "Three Modern Approaches", 78.

inspiration in a "traditional" approach based on the thinking of Thomas Aquinas as it was interpreted especially by Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson.[41] In *Saraband*, he describes a link he made between his interest in the philosophy of science, the philosophy of Whitehead, and his adoption and re-examination of "traditional natural theology" from the Thomist perspective.[42] And so, his studies of the Thomist tradition and his "reading of modern philosophers, especially those who, like [himself], had some acquaintance with the cosmological theories of contemporary physics and astronomy" culminated in his "first substantial work" in 1943, which is concerned with natural theology, *He Who Is*.[43] In this work, Mascall affirms the priority of revelation in theology as he incorporates a metaphysical and ontological concern.

At this time, Mascall was aware that his interest in Thomism was questioned by significant figures in the Church as he was also aware of the establishment's somewhat negative reaction to his Anglo-Catholic practices. However, he knew that some leaders in the Church were willing to listen, as the following quotation shows. The first sentence refers to his Anglo-Catholic practices:

> I had become identified with almost everything that appeared disloyal and rebellious to the ecclesiastical establishment of the time…. Worse than all…was the dreadful stigma of 'Thomism'. With Archbishop Temple I was indeed on good terms. While he never quite shook off the idealist philosophy of his early Oxonian years, he had recently shown himself increasingly ready to meet and listen to the rebellious 'younger theologians' of whom I was one.[44]

As we have noted, the 1930s was a time of transition. A. P. F. Sell describes a change of mood and changing approaches in theology that occurred during this period:[45]

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[40] E. L. Mascall, *He Who Is: A Study in Traditional Theism*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1943), 14-29.
[41] Mascall, *He Who Is*, ix *et al.* See J. Maritain, *Distinguish to Unite or The Degrees of Knowledge*, G. B. Phelan (tr.) from the Fourth French Edition, (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1959), 100, who advises that we must choose between realism and idealism since there is no higher position to reconcile them.
[42] Mascall, *Saraband*, 118 & 123.
[43] Mascall, *Saraband*, 123.
[44] Mascall, *Saraband*, 147.
[45] A. P. F. Sell, *Theology in Turmoil: The Roots, Course and Significance of the Conservative-Liberal Debate in Modern Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986), 143. See 189-190 for the demise of liberalism. The quotation is from W. M. Horton, *Realistic Theology* (New York and London: Harper, 1934), 2.

> Many came to feel that undue confidence in progress and in man was no longer to be indulged in. As well as the War there were the depressions, and the rise of modern totalitarianism. Who was sufficient? Theologians began to rehabilitate transcendence. Among the leading figures in this reappraisal were Reinhold Niebuhr….[46]

And as Mascall indicates, William Temple also understood the changing attitudes to theology and the transitional mood. In his response to such a period of change, Temple had suggested that the Church needed to concentrate more on conversion, and less on an apologetic and immanental approach to theism.[47] In 1939, and in a somewhat famous declaration, he wrote,

> Our task with this world is not to explain it, but to convert it. Its needs can be met, not by the discovery of its own immanent principle in signal manifestation through Jesus Christ, but only by the shattering impact upon its self-sufficiency and arrogance of the Son of God crucified, risen and ascended, pouring forth the explosive and disruptive energy which is the Holy Ghost.[48]

Temple had caught the mood and the needs of a changing time: he shared in it and encouraged it. He also showed he understood there was a movement towards an emphasis on transcendence.[49]

A. M. Ramsey describes the period before the Second World War as a movement to dogma and scholasticism, as well as to a transcendental approach. As Temple's comment shows, there was a reaction to theologies which incorporated the spirit of the age. Ramsey wrote that "the categories of experience and piety, of evolution and apologetics, gave place to the categories of theology in its classic forms".[50] He notes that in this period of transition, liberal Catholicism shifted from an emphasis on the coherence of the Christian faith based on secularist categories of thought to a greater emphasis on the synthesis of doctrine and experience. In the 1930s, there was also a growing interest in the Biblical Theology Movement. Ramsey explains that this meant a "rediscovery of the Bible": it was a move away from the apologetic emphasis found in liberal catholicism to theology based on categories of thought derived from the supposedly unique thought forms of the Bible. As he said, it concerned "the shift of interest in form criticism to theological exposition".[51]

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[46] Sell, *Theology in Turmoil*, 143.
[47] A. Louth, "The Christian Doctrine of God" in Morgan (ed.), *The Religion of the Incarnation*, 34.
[48] W. Temple, "Archbishop of York: Theology Today" in *Theology* 39 (1939): 330.
[49] *Cf* Louth, "Christian Doctrine", 34: "How much Temple's analysis has been heeded is a…question…".
[50] Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple*, 110.
[51] Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple*, 143.

Nevertheless, Ramsey believes the most significant change between 1920 and 1943 occurred in the doctrine of the church. As Mascall's ecclesiological interests indicate, he too was aware of this development and shared in it.

Some other relevant later reflections on this period may help us to better appreciate the changes that occurred around the time of the War. They also point to fundamental alterations of perspective that occurred at that time in English society. The first is from Brian Hebblethwaite who notes the unease some Anglicans felt concerning contemporary logical positivism. He suggests that an intentional adoption of Thomism by some writers represented a negative "response to positivism".[52] Certainly, Mascall reacted negatively to the positivist idea that theological discourse was not strictly possible. For example, he wrote against the work of A. J. Ayer and his positivist account which was set out in "his famous little book *Language, Truth and Logic*", published in 1936.[53] He also negatively criticized "the subsequent development of this debate…[as it is in] the volume *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*" of 1955.[54] His answer to the question of such positivism is found in a case for epistemological and ontological realism, encapsulated by the philosophy of metaphysical realism, which begins with a doctrine of perception.[55]

The second reflection is from John Macquarrie. He expressed the idea that Thomism had philosophical advantages which could be applied "anew to the problems of our own time".[56] In this assessment, he points out that Austin Farrer, who also adopted Thomism, "undertakes his philosophizing in an environment dominated by Oxford analytical philosophy, and thus much of his endeavour is directed towards demonstrating the possibility of metaphysical thinking, and toward explaining the logic of our talk about God and the supernatural".[57] As we have seen, Mascall shared with Farrer in such a concern. Mascall found in Thomism a way to respond to the dominating analytical philosophy of

[52] B. Hebblethwaite, "The Anglican Tradition" in P. L. Quinn and C. Taliaferro (eds.), *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1999), 173-174.
[53] E. L. Mascall, *Words and Images: A Study in Theological Discourse*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1957), 2.
[54] Mascall, *Words*, 14.
[55] For example, Mascall, *Words*, Chapter 3.
[56] J. Macquarrie, *Twentieth Century Religious Thought: The Frontiers of Philosophy and Theology, 1900-1970*, Revised Edition, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1963-1971), 279.
[57] Macquarrie, *Twentieth Century*, 289.

the period.[58] And so, secularist trends in society and in the Church helped to provide a background against which Mascall and others reacted.

In concluding our discussion of Mascall's earlier theological environment, it appears that his interest in Thomism was broader, however, than his concern to criticize positivism and to reject secularism. Rather, as his memoirs and his writings indicate, his interest in Thomism is more significantly connected to his interests in Anglo-Catholicism, science, his rejection of liberal and modernist theologies, and, his reservations about Barth's approach.[59] Perhaps, as he himself said of this time in his life, it derives chiefly from his broadly based studies of the Western tradition of the philosophy of religion. This included "delving into the Thomist tradition…and [his] reading of modern philosophers…".[60] It suggests he found in Thomism an inherent cogency and coherence that impressed the younger Mascall. We may note, therefore, that since it appears that he was a serious student and teacher of the history of Christian thought, perhaps his interest in Thomism is largely the result of his life as a scholar, teacher, and thinker wherein he believed Thomism to adequately present its own intellectual credentials.[61]

ANGLO-CATHOLICISM

The second contextual aspect of Mascall's overall environment as a theologian, especially in the mid-century situation, concerns the presence of Anglo-Catholicism within the Church of England. The catholic party within the Church was arguably the most important and certainly the most influential in the century. Across the Anglican world, there is plain visual evidence in most Anglican Church buildings of the catholic influence. While external symbols, tone and style may not indicate that a catholic theology has been imbibed by present-day practitioners,[62] Anglo-Catholics have had a wide influence. On this point, R. Cant notes that Anglo-Catholics

[58] Mascall, *Words*, 39: "It will be obvious to some readers that the doctrine of perception which I have put forward is, broadly speaking, that of the Thomist-Aristotelian tradition."
[59] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 23-29.
[60] Mascall, *Saraband*, 123.
[61] Mascall, *He Who Is*, xii: "This book is put forward as a small contribution to the reconstruction of Anglican theology".
[62] F. Penhale, *The Anglican Church Today: Catholics in Crisis*, (London: Mowbray, 1986), Chapter 4.

> have done much to enrich the devotional life of the Anglican communion through founding religious orders, encouraging retreats, private confession, and the practice of the spiritual life generally as taught in the post-Tridentine Roman Church. Much Anglo-Catholic teaching has permeated the Anglican Communion, and many practices that a century ago were regarded as unusual are now widely acceptable.[63]

The period before the War has been described as a high point in the history and influence of Anglo-Catholicism. It was part of a broader period that lasted until after the War and has become known as the Congress Period of 1920 to 1948. Mascall contributed as a speaker at the sixth and last Anglo-Catholic Congress in 1948.[64]

Aspects of Mascall's Anglo-Catholic environment may be set out in the following four questions which require further investigation:-

- the question of the general nature of Anglican catholicism as it emerged from the Oxford Movement of the 1830s: an apostolic paradigm?
- the question of the relationship of Anglo-Catholicism to the catholic movement: ambiguous catholicism?
- the question of the fate of the Anglo-Catholic Movement after the Second World War which includes Mascall's reaction to some general trends: uncertain catholicism? and,
- the question of the decline in the interest in Anglo-Catholic perspectives and the fate of Mascall's writings: neglected catholicism?

In noting these four questions, we might add a fifth. We may become aware that the fate of Mascall's writings within Anglicanism may be linked to the fate of Anglo-Catholicism. Consequently, the question of Mascall's continuing relationship to Anglicanism from within a movement in decline is raised: a loyal catholic? But first, let us amplify the four points.

An Apostolic Paradigm?

The first point to be noted is that catholics within the Anglican Church aimed to recover a catholic heritage, but without a belief in papal claims. They believed the catholic nature of the Church of England had been suppressed in both ecclesiological theory and in practice.[65] The catholic movement in the nineteenth century had arisen because of the need

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[63] R. Cant "Anglo-Catholicism" in A. Richardson (ed.), *A Dictionary of Christian Theology*, (London; SCM Press Ltd., 1969), 9.
[64] E. L. Mascall, "The Sacraments" in *Report of the Sixth Anglo-Catholic Congress: The Church*, (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1948), 138-150.
[65] Mascall, *Recovery*, Chapters 9 & 10.

to re-assert the authority of Christianity during a time of societal and cultural change.[66] It was essentially about a creative theology which endeavoured to uncover the catholic nature of the Church within a growing secularist context. The integrity of the national compact of Church and state in England was compromised and the authority of the Church within the compact had become problematic because of social change.[67] The authority of the church, it was believed, had been weakened in an ethos of pervasive moralism and rationalism in the early nineteenth century: an atmosphere that placed in jeopardy the church's catholic status. A divine authority marking out the Church from the state needed to be asserted. It needed to be enunciated within a continuing commitment to the Church as a national body established on the one national soil of England – a *branch* of the catholic church, as many argued. And so the movement endeavoured not only to understand the Church, but also to change it. The aim from the 1830s was to catholicize the Church by pointing to and increasing the inherently catholic status and identity of the Anglican Church, as based especially on the divine authority of the apostolic succession of bishops. The catholic authority of the Church was thus focussed in a structural continuity. The Movement sought to draw attention to this catholic identity and authority, to proclaim and defend it, and to glorify it by uncovering, discovering, magnifying and intensifying it.[68] Key signs of authority also were to be found in the tradition of the mysterious and awe-filled liturgy,[69] and in a continuity of church teaching – especially in line with the Fathers – recovered by the patient application of reason and experience.[70] However, as Geoffrey Rowell says, "It was far from being simply a reactionary movement, suffused with a warm glow of Romanticism. It was more theologically creative than that…because it drew so deeply from the Fathers both in the matter and the manner of its theologizing".[71] And as Colin Podmore says, "Fundamentally…the Catholic Movement rooted in the Oxford Movement is about ecclesiology – about the Church of England's identity as part

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[66] C. Podmore, *Aspects of Anglican Identity*, (London: Church House Publishing, 2005), 20: "What they [the Tactarians] were now beginning to resist was establishment [of the Church of England] on its current terms, whereby a Parliament which now included [after 1828] non-members of the established church could legislate, for example, to alter the church's provincial and diocesan structure".

[67] *Cf* P. Hinchliff, "Church-State Relations" in S. W. Sykes, J. Booty and J. Knight (eds.), *The Study of Anglicanism*, Revised Edition, (London: SPCK, 1998), 392, 397-399.

[68] W. S. F. Pickering, *Anglo-Catholicism: A Study in Religious Ambiguity*, (London: Routlege, 1989), 11-14.

[69] G. Rowell, *The Vision Glorious: Themes and Personalities of the Catholic Revival in Anglicanism*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 45: "The sacramental worship of the Church, its imagery and symbolism, were keys and spells to enable men and women to enter into an awareness of the mystery of God as the source and goal of their lives".

[70] *Cf* Penhale, *Anglican Church*, Chapter 4, especially 59, regarding re-enchantment by ritualism.

[71] Rowell, *The Vision*, 20. See also 10, where Rowell points out that the Tractarians rediscovered "the symbolic and imaginative character of language in the literature of Romanticism".

of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church".[72] We may see that Mascall also stood within this broad concern.

Ambiguous Catholicism?

Secondly, some writers see Anglo-Catholicism as an extreme development of the catholic movement, evident in its later stages. W. S. F. Pickering, for example, lists a number of differences between later Anglo-Catholic emphases and those of the earlier catholic/Oxford Movement. They include the cult of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the service of Benediction, together with a willingness of the latter group to break the laws of the Church in pursuit of catholic aims and ideals. As a result of such developments, Pickering points out how the catholic movement developed internal tensions over ritual and its expression, and also about theological method, as was indicated by the later emergence of liberal catholicism. He makes the point that Anglicanism is inherently more prone to ambiguity than either Calvinism or Catholicism, but that Anglo-Catholicism displays the highest level of ambiguity.[73] The latter tried "to impose a Catholic ethos of worship and religious life on a church which for three hundred years had been perhaps the chief bastion against Roman Catholicism…".[74] Consequently, key doctrines such as apostolic succession, real presence in the Blessed Sacrament, and sacramental confession would not find the clear constitutional approval and a definite dogmatic formulation the Anglican catholics wanted. We may see, however, within such a somewhat ambiguous movement, Mascall desired to provide Anglicans with suitable and cogent statements of these and other doctrines by questioning the nature of the Anglicanism he inherited, and by looking to Anglo-Catholicism as best exemplifying catholicism for Anglicans.

Uncertain Catholicism?

Thirdly, some writers have pointed to the emergence of new social and intellectual contexts for Anglo-Catholicism as society changed after World War II. It appears that Anglo-Catholicism experienced much uncertainty in this period of rapid cultural and social change. Francis Penhale, for example, notes the loss of vitality in Anglo-Catholicism as it

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[72] Podmore, *Aspects*, 161.
[73] *Cf* S. W. Sykes, *Unashamed Anglicanism*, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1995), xiv: "Working to loosen the sense of identity was a far more deeply-laid trait in Anglicanism. This was, strangely enough, the ambivalent role of the Oxford movement itself, as it lost touch with its own historic origins…. The theory of Anglicanism has been a constant preoccupation of successors to the Tractarians".
[74] Pickering, *Anglo-Catholicism*, 10-11.

struggled to find a voice in an increasingly secularist society where views on authority had radically shifted.[75] As we have seen, Mascall too pointed out that some Anglo-Catholics have somewhat accepted such changes and turned to the liberal element in theology because of "the pressure of fashion".[76] He called this general trend – as in the title of his book – "the secularisation Christianity".[77] This concept dear to Mascall includes the idea of a "desupernatualization of Jesus", and a fear that theology may not live up to the "intellectually respectable" standards of "our modern secularized universities". And so, in response to secularist theologies of the 1960s and 1970s, Mascall lamented a situation in Anglicanism which he called, perhaps audaciously, a "trahison des clercs", and which he understood to have occurred by the 1970s.[78] Nevertheless, in changing times, Mascall endeavoured to uphold what he believed were orthodox and traditionalist doctrinal teachings.[79] A reader of Mascall's books may discover that he attempted to escape the dangers of secularisation by attending to a "traditional" orientation of theology and by incorporating in it his interest in ontological thinking, relatively new for Anglicanism in recent times.[80] However, an important question is whether Mascall was out of touch with the times, and whether this is of ultimate concern.

Neglected Catholicism?

Fourthly, in a period of rapid change, in the latter part of the century, it appears that Mascall's theological writings have suffered eclipse. How may this be explained? One answer is to point to the fortunes of Anglo-Catholicism in changing cultural and societal times we have already noted. Perhaps, alternatively, Anglo-Catholicism adversely influenced Mascall's appreciation for the true intention of questions being asked by thinkers after the War. John Macquarrie, for example, points out that Mascall's later writings, that is, those that intentionally and specifically put him in opposition to secularist theologies, "lack the constructive qualities of his earlier work".[81] Concerning Mascall's *Secularisation of Christianity*, which was an attack on the writings of John Robinson in *Honest to God* (1963) and on other contemporary theologians such as Paul M. van Buren

[75] Penhale, *Anglican Church*, Chapter 9. Rowell, *The Vision*, 247: "Yet many of the insights [of] the Catholic movement…have been absorbed [in the Church]".
[76] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 2.
[77] From Mascall, *Secularisation*.
[78] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel of Christ*, 1 *et al*.
[79] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 10, 31, *et al.*
[80] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 30, *et al*.
[81] Macquarrie in McGrath, *SPCK Handbook*, 171.

and John Knox, Macquarrie says that "The writing was brilliant and exposed some of the superficialities of the views criticized. But perhaps it failed to address some of the real concerns which Robinson and his allies had espoused".[82] A significant question concerns the relationship of the so-called radical theologians to essential Anglicanism. Another important question concerns whether Mascall may offer Anglican theology and the catholic movement something more valuable than his apparent failure to address some of the real concerns which Robinson and his allies had espoused, and more valuable than Anglicanism's concern to be relevant. Perhaps it also should be asked if recent Anglicanism has listened more to the voices emerging from its societal context than to its traditional sources of belief, and, whether the nature of Anglicanism has encouraged such a possibility. The question of the fate of Anglo-Catholicism is also bound up with this question.

Our study of Mascall is one way to begin to find some answers to such questions. And so the question arises concerning the ongoing relevance to Anglican theology of Mascall's approach. What difference, for example, may Thomist Realism – a description of the kind of metaphysical realism espoused by Aquinas and followed by Mascall – make to Anglican theology? Perhaps, it retrieves forgotten emphases which will give Mascall's theology an enduring place in Anglicanism, and which may help to counter secularist influences in theology. Would it have an ongoing relevance in present changing times? In the meantime, however, we note Macquarrie's point that together with Austin Farrer, Mascall represented an accomplished and articulate Anglo-Catholicism throughout much of the twentieth century.[83]

A Loyal Catholic?

And so, we may ask if Mascall is a loyal catholic in the way Anglican emphases may define that term. We may observe that Mascall remained loyal to an Anglo-Catholic perspective. As *Saraband* shows us and as his other writings appears also to indicate, Mascall continued a consistent commitment to the approaches he adopted earlier in his life. Clearly, Mascall remained within the "conservative" wing of the catholic movement.[84]

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[82] Macquarrie in McGrath, *SPCK Handbook*, 171. Mascall rejected women priests.
[83] *Cf* P. Avis in McGrath, *SPCK Handbook*, 26, who points out that "It is arguable that each of the great internal traditions of English Anglicanism – Catholic, Evangelical and liberal – has had its distinctive contribution accepted into the mainstream…".
[84] B. Hebblethwaite, "The Anglican tradition" in Quinn and Taliaferro, *A Companion*, 174-175.

From this perspective he doubted whether the inherent ambiguities he believed he saw in Anglicanism, established at the time of the Reformation, should be a permanent feature.[85] Furthermore, he appeared to believe that whatever ambiguities with which others may charge Anglo-Catholicism, a catholic statement of doctrine was entirely possible within Anglicanism, in spite of changing times. However, does such an approach accord with catholic ideals of essential Anglicanism?

It seems difficult to believe that Mascall could accept catholic theology – in such terms as espoused by the Anglo-Catholic movement – as only one form of Anglicanism alongside other forms within a broad Anglican comprehensiveness. Nevertheless, we may note that he believed he stood within the style of Richard Hooker,[86] while his writings have been somewhat neglected.[87] In what sense may Anglican ecclesiology be deemed catholic, and in what sense may Mascall's approach be seen to support it?

ANGLICANISM

The third contextual aspect of Mascall's overall environment as a theologian that helps to shape Mascall's thinking and to which we must relate Mascall concerns the nature of Anglicanism and its contemporary expression. Are there aspects of essential Anglicanism that we need to notice in order to facilitate a dialogue with Mascall's theology? The following discussion examines some significant statements about the identity of Anglicanism and so they raise the question of its distinctive features. We note, however, that any distinctive features of Anglicanism are often associated with Elizabethan attempts to develop an appropriate Anglican ecclesiology by such writers as John Jewel and Richard Hooker and that some contemporary writers find inspiration in this approach.[88]
The first statement is from William Temple and is found in another somewhat famous quotation as follows:

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[85] See for example Mascall, *Recovery*, xi: "One of the great dangers with which Christendom, and more especially the Anglican Communion, is faced today is the danger of contriving shoddy and ramshackle solutions to our immediate problems on the basis of a one-sided and partial theology which we have inherited from the sixteenth century…".
[86] For example, Mascall, *Christ*, 83.
[87] A. Middleton, *Restoring the Anglican Mind*, (Leominster: Gracewing, 2008), 9, quotes Mascall with approval.
[88] For example, P. E. More, "The Spirit of Anglicanism" in P. E. and E. L. Cross (eds.), *Anglicanism: The Thought and Practice of the Church of England, Illustrated from the Religious Literature of the Seventeenth Century*, (London: Society for Promoting Christian knowledge, 1935), xix-xl. See also Sykes, *The Integrity*, and Sykes, *Unashamed*, B. N. Kaye, *A Church Without Walls: Being Anglican in Australia*, (North Blackburn: Dove, 1995), and Sykes, *The Study*.

> There are systems of Catholic theology and of Protestant theology. To them we have, of course, owed much. But there is not, and the majority of us do not desire that there should be, a system of distinctively Anglican theology. The Anglican Churches have received and hold the faith of Catholic Christendom, but they have exhibited a rich variety in methods of approach and interpretation.[89]

Temple wishes to show how a catholic ideal for Anglicanism means that its distinctive features emerge not so much in a material approach to catholic belief, but in an attitudinal approach fostering a variety of interpretation as it seeks the "faith of Catholic Christendom". Connected to Temple's approach is a view that Anglicanism represents historic Christianity and that there are "no special doctrines" of Anglicanism.[90] Nevertheless, that Anglicanism possesses distinctive features is not denied by Temple as he makes claims for catholic Christianity within Anglicanism. Therefore, his statement implies the need of further discussion in an attempt at a conceptual clarification of Anglicanism and the meaning of catholicism.

The second statement by D. W. Hardy is more recent and provides an alternative way of expressing what is believed to be the essential features of Anglicanism. He brings to the fore a distinctive ecclesiological method that also may be called a dialectical interpretation of Anglican practice.[91] Hardy explains that

> In English theology, common practice is seen to mediate the divine authorship, though obviously not as fully as might be. While it is 'natural' and as such divinely authored, at the same time it requires close affinity with its divine author; it has not yet achieved its full nature under God. And this is to be achieved by subjecting it to common scrutiny and judgment, the judgment of those who recognize the laws of reason and their divine author. To undertake study of common practice, which mediates not only Scripture and tradition but also its divine author, and to enable it to achieve its full nature under God, requires the utmost sensitivity to its *character and possibility*, and the development of appropriate methods….The task of theology, then, is to begin from common practice and examine its quality in open trial by the use of natural reason in order to discover the truth of this practice, by a truth-directed reason…[including] practical reason. And the outcome…should be an agreement on the proper organization of common life which would actually promote the practice of society…. The concern is *public*…the use of public reason, open trial of the truth and the achievement of truly social existence.[92]

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[89] See Lampe, *Doctrine in the Church of England*, 25.
[90] Sykes, *Unashamed*, 101-121, rejects the view that there are no special doctrines of Anglicanism on the grounds that we can clearly know what the fundamentals are.
[91] D. W. Hardy, "Theology through Philosophy" in D. F. Ford (ed.), *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology in the Twentieth Century*, Volume II, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 30. *Cf* Sykes, *Unashamed*, 115 & 181, for the use of this term.
[92] Hardy, "Theology", 33.

In this approach, the concept of the distinctiveness of Anglican features becomes more salient: *Anglicanism* connotes a distinctive concept. Some authors see such statements as Hardy's as pointing to the fact that while there may be no special doctrines of Anglicanism such as those belonging to the catholic faith, there is indeed a special doctrine about Anglicanism, namely, the Anglican doctrine of the church.[93] And so, this is a basis for an understanding of Anglican distinctiveness which incorporates the question of continuity, and also forms the basis of any future reform of the church. One such writer is the Australian theologian, Bruce N. Kaye, who intentionally brings to the fore an Anglican distinctiveness – perhaps not so tacitly – as does Temple.[94]

Of significance, Hardy goes on to explain that there are two master concerns in this enterprise, namely, history and philosophy, and that these two are "the presiding 'metadisciplines' of English theology".[95] Concerning the question of non-traditional theologies within Anglicanism, Hardy raises questions about the vulnerability of Anglican approaches. He suggests that reason has been regarded in an abstract, generalized, and supposedly neutral manner in later Anglican thought. He points out how certain accounts of reason could be deemed congruent with common practice, yet may also be confused with "whatever were the practices of the wider community, thereby following the vicissitudes of the development of philosophy and the sciences".[96] In this latter case, reason has been detached from "practically-mediated theology to become autonomous".[97] And so, whatever the account of reason present in the minds of the Reformers and inherent in the principle of *lex orandi-lex credendi*, for example, later Anglican thought may misappropriate reason by placing it under the categories of the secularist world.

Yet another interpretation of Anglican distinctiveness is presented by A. Michael Ramsey in *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*.[98] The following quotation encapsulates what Ramsey is saying:

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[93] Sykes, *Unashamed*, 108, there is a special doctrine of Anglicanism, namely, the Anglican doctrine of the church, but not an Anglican doctrine of the Anglican Church.
[94] In B. N Kaye, *Reinventing Anglicanism: A Vision of Confidence, Community and Engagement in Australian Christianity*, (Adelaide: Openbook Publishers, 2003), 44.
[95] Hardy, "Theology", 33-34.
[96] Hardy, "Theology", 37.
[97] Hardy, "Theology", 37.
[98] A. M. Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, Second Edition, (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1936-1956), 156.

> This Church of England cannot be explained in terms of politics alone. It bore a spiritual witness, if only by linking together what Christians elsewhere had torn asunder – the Gospel of God, which had made the Reformers what they were, and the old historical structure which the Reformers as a whole had rejected but without which the Gospel itself lacks its full and proper expression…. The Anglican church appealed…to the primitive Church with its structure and tradition, and thus interpreted the Bible in its true context…. it saw that Scripture centres simply in the fact of Christ Himself, and that this fact is to be apprehended with the aid of the whole structure and tradition of the Church.[99]

Ramsey believes Anglicanism's distinctive features point to the attainment of catholicism, so long as its true nature is understood and followed. He says that "The English church did not always perceive the meaning of its own order in its deepest relation to the Gospel and the universal church".[100] However, "In spite of the pressure of Erastianism…the English church was reminded by its own shape and structure that it was not merely an English institution but the utterance in England of the universal Church".[101] And so, Ramsey, while pointing to distinctive features of essential Anglicanism points us to the idea of the provisionality of church and theology – indeed, a provisionality of ecclesiological intention – while it allows us to believe in an Anglican doctrine of the church, but not an Anglican doctrine of the Anglican Church. As Ramsey indicates, such provisionality is inherent in an initial and incipient English Reformation failure to "always perceive the meaning of its own order in its deepest relation to the Gospel and the universal church". On this point Ramsey explains:

> For while Anglicanism is vindicated by its place in history, with a strikingly balanced witness to Gospel and Church and sound learning, its greater vindication lies in its pointing in its own history to something of which it is a fragment. Its credentials are incompleteness, with the tension and the travail of its soul. It's clumsy and untidy, it baffles neatness and logic. For it is sent not to commend itself as 'the best type of Christianity,' but by its very brokenness to point to the universal Church wherein all have died. [102]

In other words, while an ideal of catholicism is fostered by essential Anglicanism, even within its provisionality, its actual attainment by that same provisionality may not be so fostered nor so attained.

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[99] Ramsey, *The Gospel*, 204-205.
[100] Ramsey, *The Gospel*, 205.
[101] Ramsey, *The Gospel*, 206.
[102] Ramsey, *The Gospel*, 220.

CONCLUSION

From this brief citation of quotations, it is possible to see alternative ways in which to account for the identity of Anglicanism, together with alternative assessments of its integrity.[103] But each statement invites us to consider the meaning of catholicism, its relationship to Anglicanism, and the possibility of its attainment. Each statement, however, also presents similar assessments of the distinctiveness of Anglicanism. There is a consistent ideal to express a distinctive methodological account of Anglicanism. Each statement may also suggest to us that the notion of Anglican distinctiveness implies a search for what is essential and what is not essential in faith. And so, the question of the role of reason in Anglican theology is present, together with the question of the identity of Anglican comprehensiveness. As we have seen, Mascall believes he stands within a tradition of essential Anglicanism and its ideal of attaining a genuine catholicism. He too regarded official Anglicanism as somewhat provisional. However, his expression of the essential material features of Anglicanism appears to be at variance with those of some other writers. How are the questions of Anglicanism, catholicism, and Mascall's approach to be related?

3. THE PROBLEMATIC: MASCALL AND AN ANGLICAN SEARCH FOR CATHOLICISM

It is within the broad context of Anglican practice and ecclesiological interpretation that Mascall sets out in the 1930s to offer Anglicanism an alternative way of thinking based on Thomas Aquinas's ontological approach to theology. As we have seen, the aspect of provisionality may, in various ways and as Ramsey's approach may suggest, raise questions concerning the possibility of a coherent relationship of Mascall's approach to Anglicanism and of Anglicanism's relationship to catholicism. From the quotations given above, Anglicanism appears to be a way of seeking the catholic faith: but will Mascall's

[103] W T. Stevenson, "Lex Orandi-Lex Credendi" in Sykes, *The Study*,193, notes a reason for alternative approaches to Anglicanism: "because the [liturgies are] couched primarily in terms of the symbols and myths of the various…texts, which by their nature are open to a number of interpretations…". Aidan Nichols, *The Panther and the Hind: A Theological History of Anglicanism*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), 52, presents another reason as he quotes Diarmaid McCulloch. It is "the building of a Protestant Church which remained haunted by its Catholic past".

approach provide a coherent way of achieving this aim in a compatible relationship with Anglican ideals, and will the Anglican or catholic ideal be modified in the process? The following section will examine the lineaments of Mascall's approach in order to begin comparing it to an Anglican search for catholicism or orthodoxy. This will be set out in five questions, namely:-

- the question of the relationship of revelation to tradition;
- the question of the relationship of revelation to reason;
- the question of the relationship of reason to tradition;
- the question of the nature of catholicism; and,
- the question of the structure of thought inherent in a relationship of revelation and reason.

Revelation to Tradition?

A first issue concerns the question of the relationship of revelation to tradition.

Much Anglican ecclesiology often makes much of the *distinction* between the things that are essential for salvation and the *adiaphora* [lit., "things indifferent"].[104] In this approach, things essential for salvation emerge from a particular communal reading of scripture, but this also includes a reasoned discernment of scripture and of tradition in relation to scripture.[105] It also implies a distinction between faith and theology.[106]So, a question of the *distinction* is of continuing significance for some Anglicans and for the question of essential Anglicanism.[107] However, regarding the question of the authority of scripture and its relationship to tradition, Mascall himself warns against the danger of an approach which limits the things necessary for salvation to a particular reading of scripture. In discussing St Paul's teaching on the Holy Eucharist and the disorders within the church at Corinth, he says that

[104] See for example, Kaye, *A Church*, 86 *passim*.
[105] For example, Kaye, *A Church*, 67, writes: "It is striking that those [Articles] concerned with salvation are precisely and firmly separated from those which have to do with the church.… The notion that there is no salvation outside the church, as reflected in late medieval Roman Catholicism, is here being denied by this ordering of the Articles".
[106] *Cf* W. R. Crockett, "Holy Communion" in Sykes, *The Study*, 310.
[107] For example, Kaye, *A Church*, 69-71, where he refers to Article 6: "The article is important in highlighting that Scripture is not viewed in a monochrome or undifferentiated way The truth…has a certain hierarchy".

> Had these disorders not occurred, we should have no explicit evidence that St. Paul had ever heard of the Eucharist. This shows how very dangerous it is to assume, as so many have assumed, that anything which is not definitely mentioned in the New Testament either did not exist or was of no importance in the primitive church…. Thus some of the most important and universally accepted aspects of the church's life may be virtually unmentioned in the Scriptures.[108]

And so, Mascall raises questions about a search for catholicism or orthodoxy in scripture only, and of the relationship of scripture and tradition. As we shall argue, he believed theology should be based on the tradition of the church, which is a tradition of faithful reason, as well as on the scriptures. This tradition of faithful reason incorporated a philosophy of metaphysical realism. Regarding theology he was clear: "The theologian is concerned not to demonstrate conclusions from premises, but to make explicit the content of the living tradition of the Church".[109]

While Anglicans differ in regard to the relationship of scripture to tradition and of reason to tradition, it seems clear that Mascall's concern with tradition is not simply a concern for the past, or indeed with a portion of the past. He believed revelation to be present in the ongoing and living tradition of the living church, which is the "Spirit-bearing body of Christ".[110] This approach, however, seems somewhat to relativize the importance of the first five consensual and primitive centuries of the "undivided church", and perhaps, of the scriptures. Nevertheless, many Anglicans believe this earlier period produced an authoritative source of doctrine and so a way to reject medieval doctrinal accounts.[111] Geoffrey Rowell also pointed out the importance of both authority and continuity to the early Tractarians. The development of a catholic consciousness focussed on the Fathers as "witnesses to the reality of the *consensus fidelium*…" meant that an "organic character of Christian tradition" was to be found in later times. Such a Patristic faith, expressed in the Fathers' use of typological scriptural exegesis and sacramentalism,[112] encouraged the Tractarians to see themselves in continuity with them. The question concerns the extent of tradition.

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[108] E. L. Mascall, "St. Paul's Teaching on the Holy Eucharist" in I. Bulmer-Thomas (ed.), *St. Paul: Teacher and Traveller*, (Leighton Buzzard: The Faith Press, 1975), 115.
[109] Mascall, *Christ*, 237.
[110] Mascall, *Corpus Christi*, 8.
[111] For example, Middleton, *Restoring*, 3: "The Catholic integrity of Anglicanism is patristic rather than papal…. [It is a] 'will to profess only the faith of the undivided Church…' ".
[112] Rowell, *Vision Glorious*, 12.

But for many Anglicans, an upholding of a Patristic and a Reformation approach to authority allows a sufficient statement of the fundamentals of faith to be found and a basis for the distinction concerning non-fundamentals and things necessary for salvation to be made.[113] Indeed, all Anglicans believe in the *distinction*: it "found a ready home among Anglicans".[114] Non-fundamentals may be "true or valuable…[but] not necessary for salvation".[115] Many Anglicans look to some kind of inter-weaving of scripture and early tradition. A typical Anglican approach to tradition notes a significant place for continuity, as the following quotation from Henry Chadwick shows:

> Within the Anglican Communion the accepted norms of authority are located first in the faith declared in Scripture, then in the safeguard of interpretation provided by the Catholic Creeds, and finally in the liturgical tradition of Prayer Book and Ordinal, both of which are in essentials rooted in ways of worship much older than their sixteenth century origin.[116]

However, as we have noted, a concern for continuity raises questions about the relationship of the special place of the earlier centuries to the scriptures, and of the relationship of earlier centuries to a more extensive account of tradition. Within this broad stance, Mascall appears to seek the intellectual treasures from the whole tradition for an adequate expression of catholicity.

As we have seen, while the *distinction* may imply a significant place for revelation, it also suggests a significant place for reason.[117] Mascall, however, in accepting a tradition of faithful reason, does not compromise the necessity of revelation. Revelation is believed to be significantly prior to reason, as the following passage indicates:

> In addition to [the] primary work of rendering explicit the Christian revelation, theology has a secondary, but nevertheless a most important task. This is to illuminate and fertilize the workings of the natural reason, and so to bring the sciences of the natural reason to their fructification.[118]

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[113] For example, P. H. E. Thomas, "Doctrine in the Church" in Sykes, *The Study*, 252-254 and Sykes, "The Fundamentals", 265: "[The] *adiaphora*, or things indifferent, became of great importance to the entire Reformation tradition".
[114] S. W. Sykes, "The Fundamentals of Christianity" in Sykes, *The Study*, 263.
[115] Kaye, *A Church*, 71.
[116] H. Chadwick, "Tradition, Fathers and Councils" in Sykes, *The Study*, 105.
[117] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 3: "If English people are ever to be won back to the Faith of historic Christendom, it will very largely be as the result of an apologetic based upon a clear and reasoned exposition of the fundamental fact of the triune and creative God". *Cf* R. P. C. Hanson, "The achievement of orthodoxy in the fourth century AD" in R. Williams (ed.), *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 148: "It is impossible to interpret the Bible in the vocabulary of the Bible".
[118] Mascall, *Christ*, 242.

Mascall believes that the living tradition of the church contains revelation which, in turn, enhances the natural powers of reason. In Mascall's approach, this process did not cease at the time of the undivided church, but included a medieval approach to philosophy. He explains as follows:

> I mean by traditional theism the doctrine about God and the universe which, deriving from the impact made upon the Græco-Roman world by the Christian Church and passing by way of Augustine, received, as regards its main features, a coherent formulation in the thirteenth century in the world of St. Thomas Aquinas.[119]

This approach also needed to be restored within contemporary Anglicanism because "Anglican theology…has…departed from its own tradition."[120] Has a Reformation approach to authority disrupted a beneficial tradition of faithful reason, and so compromised a fuller approach to catholicism? This may be so, as the following discussion shows. Perhaps, while accepting in principle the fuller tradition and its intellectual treasures, it was neglected in practice by Anglicans in a Renaissance concern to "return to sources".[121]

Nevertheless, an Anglican belief in tradition – or some kind of inter-weaving of scripture and tradition to attain a distinction of things essential from the *adiaphora* – may involve certain ambiguities. For example, Richard Bauckham has pointed out that an Anglican desire to find an authoritative interpretation of the scriptures in Patristic sources does not necessarily mean an unambiguous belief in the authority of tradition. Concerning the Anglican Reformers' view of tradition in its relation to scripture, Bauckham explains that "Certainly they could appeal to the true tradition of the early church against the corrupt tradition of the medieval period, but in a way which ultimately presupposes the independent authority of Scripture".[122] It was scripture alone, and not the principle of the undivided church that told the Reformers that the doctrine of the early centuries was pure, as Article XXI affirms. But such an Anglican appeal to the scriptures through the Fathers may result in both a material and a methodological deficiency for some Anglicans. Consequently, such ambiguities may also involve the Anglican Church in a neglect of the great tradition of faithful reason or Christian philosophy: reason must join with revelation.

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[119] Mascall, *He Who Is*, vii.
[120] Mascall, *He Who Is*, x.
[121] Chadwick, "Tradition, Fathers, and Councils" in Sykes, *TheStudy*, 102.
[122] R. Bauckham and B. Drewery, *Scripture, Tradition and Reason: A Study in the Criteria of Christian Doctrine*, (London: T and T Clark International, 1998-2004), 123.

Nevertheless, some Anglicans, therefore, may not wish to evaluate tradition as does Mascall.[123] In their effort to uphold revelation, they may appear to unbalance the synthesis of revelation and tradition, and also of revelation and reason. There is perhaps a discrepancy between Mascall's view of tradition and some other Anglican views as there also appears to be a possibility of an ambiguous view of the relation of revelation to tradition within Anglicanism. The question of the relationship of revelation to reason is further discussed as a second question.

Revelation to Reason?

A second question concerns the question of the relationship of revelation to reason.[124]

As we have seen, in Anglicanism, an overall goal is often said to be the need to attain a proper catholicity or orthodoxy. How this is to be achieved in the intellectual and cultural contexts of changing times is a question each generation has sought to answer and has involved various attitudes to the nature and authority of scripture and scripture's relationship to revelation. Mascall pointed to the primacy of revelation within the living tradition over reason. He explained that

> for its material and inspiration [theology] turns not merely to the deliverances of the human mind, weakened and wounded by the Fall of man, but to revelation which God has committed to his Church and which, as the centuries have rolled by, has become more and more explicit under the guidance of the indwelling Spirit.[125]

The "revelation which God has committed to his Church" in this approach includes scripture and its ongoing interpretation and application. Yet, it seems for Mascall that scripture is not the only source of revelation since "some of the most important and universally accepted aspects of the church's life may be virtually unmentioned in the Scriptures". Tradition, it appears, is the arena where scriptural revelation and reason inter-act: the scriptures entail the tradition, and revelation is to be found in both.

Therefore, as we have seen, Mascall understood that theology can be given a stable formulation which further provides a foundation for future growth. Such is the tradition of

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[123] Bauckham, *Scripture*, 118-124, points out that there are four views of tradition: the *coincidence* view, the *supplementary* view, the *ancillary* view, and the *unfolding* view. On the basis of this analysis, it is possible to see that Mascall and the Reformers may have had divergent views on tradition.
[124] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 8.
[125] Mascall, *Christ*, 247.

faithful reason. He believed that Aquinas' work shows this as he is the primary exemplar of "traditional theism" in the Western world.[126] It is in his work "with his clear delimitation of the spheres of philosophy and theology and his doctrine of an ordered and organic relation between them [that he] achieved the final synthesis of the Judæo-Christian revelation with Greek philosophical thought".[127] And so, while Mascall accords a primary role to revelation, the notion of tradition incorporates both the idea of on-going revelation and of an on-going fructifying relation of revelation and reason.

Specifically, Aquinas' significant achievement was to provide a synthesis of ontological thinking and Christian doctrine such that belief in God could be found reasonable to non-believers.[128] This does not mean that Mascall's belief in a demarcation of the two spheres of revelation and reason is to be compromised.[129] In a significant passage he contrasted this procedure with an alternative modernist approach based on a priority of reason over revelation:

> The liberal aim, namely the commendation of the Christian Faith to the contemporary world, was highly laudable, but the cost which liberalism was prepared to pay in its unsuccessful attempt to actualize it was too high. If the claim of reason to a rightful, if limited, recognition is to be justified, theology must return to its traditional position and apply itself to its traditional task, with a clear understanding of the demarcation between the spheres of faith and reason and of the relation between them.[130]

Theology is to be based on both reason and revelation. He explains that

> Christian theology…has a twofold material on which to work – namely, the deliverance of natural knowledge, and the revelation given by God in Christ, which latter comes to the theologian through the medium of Scripture, to a very great extent formulated as dogma. The relation between these two, which is both intricate and delicate, is simply one of the many instances of the relation between nature and grace.[131]

Mascall appears to be consistent in maintaining such a demarcation and a mutual inter-relationship of the two spheres throughout his writings. Likewise, this quotation does not compromise Mascall's belief in the revelationary and revelatory benefits of tradition.

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[126] Mascall, *He Who Is*, viii.
[127] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 7.
[128] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 80.
[129] *Cf* Mascall, *He Who Is*, xii.
[130] Mascall, *He Who Is*, xii.
[131] Mascall, *Christ*, 236.

The priority of revelation is exemplified in Mascall's doctrine of grace and nature. He believes grace transforms nature from within, and that this is especially indicated by the doctrine of the incarnation. Therefore, we may say that for Mascall, theology is ultimately concerned with creation and its renewal,[132] and so as creation is the basis for its own supernaturalization by grace, natural theology is informed by revelation. In this way it appears to inform doctrinal theology. And so, it appears that a concern with creation entails a greater concern with tradition. This point will be taken up below.

Revelation has a capacity to extend the range and the power of reason. The principle upon which this occurs is expressed in a well-known axiom: *Grace perfects nature but does not destroy it*.[133] As Mascall explains, "Natural gifts…of intelligence and judgment [are exercised] within the climate of faith, hope, and charity [and are] renewed and strengthened [by grace]".[134] Nevertheless, in Mascall's thinking doctrine is more about a loyalty to revelation than about a rational expression of belief.[135] Yet, revelation is said to have a capacity to encompass and extend reason within this movement of obedience. One of theology's tasks is to find ways of expressing the faith in new cultural contexts.

In a challenge to liberal theologians, Mascall explains that

> The theologian…has a direct duty to Christians as such, in helping them live by an essentially unchanging gospel in an essentially changing world, but, as we have seen, this does not mean that the unchanging Gospel can be expressed in unchanging terms….[136]

And so, in reference to secularist theologies, he has the following criticism:

> The general criticism to which this secularisation of the Christian faith exposes itself is that it reduces the dialogue between Christianity and contemporary thought to a purely one-way process; there is no question of contemporary thought adapting itself to the Gospel, the Gospel must come into line entirely with contemporary thought.[137]

As we have seen, liberal and modernist accounts appear to place more emphasis on adaptation than is evident in Mascall.

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[132] Mascall, *Via Media*, 148-157.
[133] Mascall, *Christ*, 243.
[134] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 36-37.
[135] Mascall, *Secularisation*, 36, the theologian must form "a deliberate habit of loyal submission to Christian tradition…".
[136] Mascall, *Secularisation*, 2.
[137] Mascall, *Secularisation*, 7.

Mascall incorporates his philosophy of metaphysical realism into doctrinal theology as a way of being loyal to the primacy of revelation. One way to understand this aspect is found in the notions of *manuductio* [lit., "a leading by the hand"]. David Burrell explains this with regard to Aquinas. In theology, reason leads us by the hand in order to see what a thing is by the use of logical and philosophical categories.[138] And so, Aquinas's theology is not about a necessity of thought, but about reflection and a demand for an internal intelligibility. As Burrell explains, "Reflection opens the category of the cognitive out beyond concept formation to judgment".[139] It leads to "ontological clues" where there is to be found an inner affinity of God with humanity and in which the intelligence and the will consents to deeper values of universality and aspiration. However, while Burrell stresses that God's essence is unknowable, a proposition with which Mascall agrees,[140] Mascall points out that God is also extremely knowable. This is because existence is intelligible and involves a deeper kind of knowing than is concerned with a mere knowing of facts.[141]

The incorporation of ontological thinking into theology suggests such a *manuduction*. Loyalty to revelation, however, does not compromise a concern with the rationality of doctrine.[142] Mascall describes theological speculation as the giving of reasons for particular assertions and dogmatic interpretations. This is an example of a "*rationes convenientiæ* [lit., "a coming together of reasons"], in order to illuminate and show the mutual coherence of truths that have been already accepted".[143] Revelation has a fruitful relationship with reason. Theology, in this approach, is accounted for by the re-instantiation, restoration, elevation, transformation and perfection of nature and reason by grace.

As we shall see, Mascall believes that natural theology is the result of an abstracting of the rational processes inherent in Christian belief. It is not a prolegomena to revealed theology. In the concrete world, natural theology is done by believers because reason is open to the

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[138] D. B. Burrell, *Analogy and Philosophical Language*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 123.
[139] Burrell, *Analogy*, 134.
[140] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 10.
[141] Burrell, *Analogy*, 139.
[142] *Cf* F. Crosson in E. T. Long (ed.), *Experience, Reason and God*, (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1980), 62ff,
The Five Ways merely trace the prior dependence of creation on the Creator. *Cf* also F. Kerr (ed.), *Contemplating Aquinas: On the Varieties of Interpretation*, (London: SCM Press, 2003), 74ff: philosophy leads us by the hand by making vivid to the intellect the truths of dogma.
[143] Mascall, *Corpus Christi*, 34.

influx of revelation. However, in a significant statement, Mascall points out that grace possibly accompanies reason in what he calls an experience of *contuition*, which is a natural process of insight whereby the mind attains an apprehension of Infinite Existence as a transcendent cause.[144] As he says, God "will communicate himself to us in deliberate activity, whether that activity is subsequent to our rational recognition of him or whether it is an occasional, frequent or possibly even an invariable accompaniment of it". Natural theology is a significant example of the fruitful relationship of revelation to reason.[145]

Consequently, the relation of revelation to reason implies a belief in a correlative nexus of nature to supernature. It is expressed in the following two quotations. First, Mascall argues a case for the congruence of revelation and reason:

> It is that grace not only supplies perfections that lie above the level of nature, but also restores nature to its own integrity. *Gratis* is *sanans* as well as *elevans* [lit., "grace is healing as well as elevating"]. It follows, therefore, that, while in principle there is a certain limited knowledge of God which is accessible to the human reason as such, in practice it is only in the light of revelation and under the assistance of grace that the human reason can function adequately and can obtain, even within its own proper sphere, a knowledge of God which is free from error. Philosophy and theology [revealed theology] are thus in the abstract autonomous, being concerned respectively with the sphere of reason and nature and with the sphere of revelation and grace, but in the concrete a true philosophy can only be developed in the light of the Christian revelation.[146]

And, secondly, he argues for an integral integration of revelation and reason:

> I also argued that it is possible, and is indeed likely, that a personal God will not merely restrict himself to the status of a passive and unresponsive object for our consideration and investigation, like the inanimate members of the physical world, but will communicate himself to us in deliberate revelationary activity, whether that activity is subsequent to our rational recognition of him or whether it is an occasional, frequent or possibly even an invariable accompaniment of it.[147]

As we have seen, revelation is to "illuminate and fertilize the workings of the natural reason",[148] as reason attempts to "open out" revelation. There is an integral and mutual inter-relationship. So, in the task of theology in its obedience to revelation, reason's powers are healed, elevated and extended without ceasing to be natural. In this approach, both propositions and images – including the liturgical symbols of tradition – possess a

[144] Mascall, *Existence*, 89 *et al*.
[145] Mascall, *Openness*, 141-142.

[146] Mascall, *Christ*, 233.
[147] Mascall, *Openness*, 141-142.
[148] Mascall, *Christ*, 242.

cognitive value, and both have their parts to play in revelation and in theology, although theology is primarily about conceptualities.[149]

The intimate relationship of revelation and reason leads a theologian to seek truthfulness. Mascall follows the scholastic understanding of truth as the adequation of the mind to reality.[150] In this approach, meaning is derived, not from language, but from the mind's relationship to external reality, where language is to be seen as an instrument of the mind. This approach bypasses the objection that meaning is only a question of language.[151] The linguistic turn in philosophy in the twentieth century shows the essential bankruptcy of phenomenological and idealist approaches to philosophy. Conditioned by secularist and idealist philosophies which deny the mind access to extra-mental reality, language becomes the *locus* of meaning. However, in a realist metaphysical approach, meaning is a function of intelligence, not of words.[152] Consequently, doctrinal assertions of the distant past are understood by a process of translation into various cultures today within a process of dialogue with the past. Mascall rejects a prominence sometimes given to the idea of contemporaneity which suggests that only in the present we may know the truth. Theology, therefore, is about translation of the mind of Christ into "new formulations [that] do not distort the primordial deliverances of the gospel and the essential content of the tradition".[153]

An approach to truth, as demanded by revelation, begins with an adequate epistemology. A key element of Mascall's ontological thinking is his epistemological realism. Without slavishly following him, Mascall believes that Etienne Gilson's writings accurately articulate the metaphysical realism of Aquinas's theology which is able to provide an antidote to the mistakes of subjectivist, phenomenological and linguistic philosophies. A significant aspect of this approach is that real understanding of the inner metaphysical nature of extra-mental realties is possible.[154] Mascall's epistemological and ontological philosophy will be examined in more detail in Chapter III. But for the movement, let us acknowledge its principal lineaments in what follows.

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[149] E. L. Mascall, *Theology and Images*, (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co. Limited, 1963), 7 *passim*.
[150] E. L. Mascall, *Whatever Happened to the Human Mind: Essays in Christian Orthodoxy*, (London: SPCK, 1980), 19.
[151] Mascall, *Whatever*, 20.
[152] Mascall, *Whatever*, 20-22.
[153] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 36.
[154] Mascall does not seem to slavishly follow Gilson. The reason is that Mascall is a dogmatic theologian.

An adequate epistemology concerns a metaphysical account of a realist understanding of perception, based on Gilson's realist approach to perception.[155] Mascall's ontological and realist thinking is based in the common and foundational human experience of the senses and in our intelligent penetration of realities which we normally accept as real until we are challenged by pseudo-sophisticated university/philosophically generated doubts.[156] For Gilson, epistemology is a part of metaphysical realism,[157] and not the reverse.[158] Gilson and Mascall do not begin with cognitive and critical theories, and so avoid the inherent problems of such approaches. Thus Mascall is able to give a priority to revelation and also to find a philosophy which exhibits the rationality of revelation. This is to be found in the so-called "doctrine of existence" – a way of referring to metaphysical realism – and which may become a basis for doctrinal theology.[159]

A significant aspect of Mascall's theory of perception is the term, *contuition*. By developing *contuition*, he possibly makes a new contribution to natural theology in the twentieth century. Not original to Mascall, contuition describes the process of insight into Infinite Being which is the result neither of intuition alone nor of argument alone, but of both together in symbiosis. The mind apprehends in one cognitive act the contingency of finite being when stimulated by reasoned discussion,[160] and so in perceiving finite beings as they really are, we are enabled to perceive Infinite Being. He explains that

> If our mind…is able freely to fulfil its proper function of apprehending finite beings as they really are, it will, in the very act by which it apprehends them, be capable of penetrating to the ontological depths of their nature so as to know them as creatures of God.[161]

In *Existence and Analogy*, Mascall describes such a cognitive apprehension as about "monstrations", and not demonstration.[162] This apprehension engages the whole person, and it is clear from Mascall's understanding that the lines which divide knowledge from feeling, insight from calculation, wonder from logic, are blurred in the inter-penetration of

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[155] Mascall, *Openness*, 92-97.
[156] See, for example, Mascall, *Words and Images*, Chapter 1, *et al.*
[157] Mascall, *Openness*, 92 *et al*.
[158] See especially E. Gilson, *Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge*. M. A. Wauck, (tr.). San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1939-1986, and, E. Gilson, *Methodical Realism*. P. Trower, (tr.), (No place: Christendom Press, 1990).
[159] Mascall, *Existence*, ix.
[160] Mascall, *Openness*, 108, 111, 155. *Contuition* is not used in *He Who Is*, but *intuition* is given the same meaning.
[161] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 85.
[162] Mascall, *Existence*, 90.

mental faculties. So too are moral virtues to be included in this process. Bare ratio[n]ality is only one strand of experience.[163] In *He Who Is*, Mascall includes the will in the "whole man" in the process of apprehension.[164] Thus,

> One of the essential prerequisites…for an acceptance of Christian theism is a contemplative and reverent attitude to finite beings…. For it is hardly likely that we shall see things as the creatures of God if our primary attitude to them is as things for us to do something with.[165]

A contemplative and reverent attitude to finite beings may be understood as a responsible and moral approach to the world. "Its subject is not the intellect in isolation, but the whole man".[166] It is a unitive experience.

And so, in contradistinction from much positivist/analytical theory of knowledge and of language, he suggests that intelligence is capable of performing many types of cognitive activities. These include induction and intuition or the unity of indirect reference whereby the mind is capable of apprehending conclusions in a set of premises *per modum unias* [lit., "by a united mode"],[167] when given adequate stimulation.[168] They include, as Mascall says, both *intellectus* and *ratio* as "two ideas of knowledge".[169] However, adverse cultural and societal situations diminish the effectiveness of these operations.[170]

On this point, he believes that Western culture influenced by industrialization and secularism diminishes our appreciation for creation and our ability to achieve such an insight into Infinite Being.[171] "It can equally well be asserted that the conditions of life in our modern industrialised societies have largely atrophied a normal human faculty".[172] In addition, Mascall claims that "as a *thinking* being, the modern Christian has succumbed to secularisation".[173] Secularization may be a result of a lack of an ability to engage in contemplative wondering about existence.[174] This may explain any distain for natural theology in the twentieth century either in secular societies or in theology. Perhaps,

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[163] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 84 *et al.*
[164] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 76.
[165] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 81.
[166] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 76.
[167] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 87.
[168] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 90.
[169] Mascall, *Words*, 63-87.
[170] See, for example, Mascall, *Christian Universe*, Chapters 1 &2.
[171] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 81 *et al.*
[172] Mascall, *Words*, 86.
[173] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 17.
[174] Mascall, *Openness*, 141.

however, as McGrath's recent work in natural theology may suggest to us, a cause of the lack of ontological thinking is the result of a certain type of "natural theology", one emerging from a particular Enlightenment approach to reason and to theism which is in turn based on an investigation of the so-called "Book of Nature" in order to find evidence of God's existence.[175] This approach contrasts with the "traditional" approach based on an ontological thinking and on revelation. Enlightenment approaches to rationality and natural theology may be correlated with the rise of technology and industrialization and may have helped to produce or increase secularism. In any case, it may be doubtful that Mascall is suggesting that an answer to the lack of natural theology and to secularism is to be found in a return to a pre-modern rural society.

Modernity expresses itself in its epistemological theories, which are essentially opposed to revelation and tradition, and metaphysical realism.[176] Consequently, modern cultural consciousness inhibits a mental ability to penetrate the ontological depths of creation.[177] Mascall opposes these theories by pointing out deficiencies of a self-referential and incoherent kind. He applies this to Cartesian and Kantian accounts of foundationalism and strongly based accounts of epistemic justification, including logical/analytical positivism and strongly subjectivist and phenomenological epistemologies.[178] Alternatively, for Mascall, the Five Ways enable the grip of modern cultural consciousness to be broken as they form one side of a two-armed approach – they are in a reciprocal and correlative relation with intuition and contemplation. On the one hand, they give form to a somewhat unthematic contemplative attitude, and on the other, they stimulate an intuition of Infinite Being.

Mascall's realist epistemology is encapsulated in his often repeated description of realist cognition and perception. For example, in *The Openness of Being* the account includes the following two elements:-

[175] A. E. McGrath, *The Open Secret: A New Vision for Natural Theology*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 140-170.
[176] Mascall, *Words*, 79 *et al*.
[177] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 84
[178] Mascall, *Words*, 65-70.

- that there is no perception without sensation (*nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu*); and,
- that the sensible particular is not the terminus of perception, that is, not the *objectum quod* [lit., " the object which"] (to use another scholastic phrase), but the *objectum quo* [lit., "the object by which"] through which and in which the intellect grasps, in a direct but mediated activity, the intelligible extra-mental reality, which is the *being*, the real thing.

It is this real thing, an intelligible being that is the *objectum quod* of intelligence.[179]

Epistemological realism is articulated in the following two aspects:-

- in what Mascall calls the *Intellectual Principle*;[180]
- in the doctrine of meaning as the intelligent grasp of reality by mind through the senses; and,
- in the doctrine of the openness of being.[181]

An implication of these points is that creation, mankind, nature, supernature, grace, reason, revelation, God, the world, the church, and the ministry may be organically and intellectually related in a coherent whole.

Thomist Realism is for Mascall set within a broader setting which may be called moderate realism.[182] This is a broad philosophical approach, a *via media* between ultra-realism and nominalism. In a specifically doctrinal work, *Corpus Christi*, Mascall addresses the broader philosophical issues in his realist approach where grace perfects nature. Mascall finds that an account of moderate realism is able to "do justice to the Christian facts" as he finds them in the scriptures and the sacred doctrine of the church.[183] Alternatively, an

> ultra-realist metaphysical doctrine about universals, which, if it were true, would involve that the assumption of human nature by Christ *ipso facto* regenerated every member of the human race and so transformed the whole human race into the Church of God by one instantaneous act…. Whatever may be the correct metaphysical doctrine about universals and particulars as regards the lower creation, where man is concerned neither such an extreme realism nor the opposite extreme of nominalism…meets the case.[184]

In Aquinas' approach, created reality resides in the individual, but its universal is in the mind of God.

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[179] Mascall, *Openness*, 99.
[180] Mascall, *Whatever*, 1.
[181] Mascall, *Openness*, 141 *et al*.
[182] Mascall, *Recovery*, 24: "St. Thomas Aquinas…[held] that the universal had a real existence, but that, except for its existence as an exemplar in the mind of God, it existed only in the particulars".
[183] Mascall, *Corpus*, 11.
[184] Mascall, *Corpus*, 11.

The doctrine of creation does not deny the priority of revelation in its relationship to reason. Natural theology occurs in a context of tradition and revelation. Mascall describes the relation of creation to God as one of absolute dependency.[185] Within a process of analogical thinking, the creation is seen to be both dependent and real.[186] The analogy of being and God's impassibility are derived from a metaphysical approach to creation. So, a significant point to be noticed is that while "Philosophy and theology [revealed theology] are thus in the abstract autonomous, being concerned respectively with the sphere of reason and nature and with the sphere of revelation and grace…in the concrete a true philosophy can only be developed in the light of the Christian revelation".[187]

As we have seen, it is not surprising that there have been objections to Mascall's approach, especially concerning the link between natural theology and revelation. Mascall's works of natural theology may lead to the impression that he is more concerned with reason than revelation and that he requires an argument for faith to be rational.[188] However, as we have seen, he gives a priority to revelation. He also gives some priority to faith over reason as he gives priority to tradition over secularist adaptation of theology.[189] Furthermore, theology is not based either on religious experience, nor on an unmediated account of revelation. Reason is primarily "the instrument by the use of which the problem of God's existence is to be investigated."[190] In this account, faith and reason appear not to be in opposition, yet reason does not establish arguments which are "a necessary first step in establishing the credibility of theism".[191] Priority is given to revelation and faith.[192]

In Mascall the link between natural theology and doctrine occurs within the aspect of revelation and faith, and it is how this occurs that is questioned by those who may reject a role for natural theology. As we shall see in Chapter IV, anti-metaphysicians may question

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[185] Mascall, *Existence*, 130-133.
[186] Mascall, *Existence*, 122-126.
[187] Mascall, *Christ*, 233.
[188] For example, the American protestant theologian R. H. Nash, *Faith and Reason. Searching for a Rational Faith*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 94, rejects any attempt to present natural theology as "a necessary first step in establishing the credibility of theism", which he believes Mascall is doing. He adds that "This approach is positively wrong-headed in its capitulation to the evidentialist-foundationalist model of rationality". Nash follows A. Plantinga's *Reformed Epistemology*.
[189] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 35 *et al*.
[190] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 30.
[191] Nash, *Faith and Reason*, 94.
[192] In *He Who Is*, xi, Mascall writes, "If the claim of reason to a rightful, if limited, recognition is to be justified, theology must return to its traditional position and apply itself to its traditional task, with a clear understanding of the *demarcation* between the spheres of faith and reason and of the relation between them".

whether and how this passage is possible, and whether natural theology speaks of the same God as revealed theology. Mascall points to the mental dynamic involved in this process when he says that "Natural theology is the passage from the recognition of the existence of the finite world to the affirmation of the existence of God. Its legitimacy therefore depends upon whether this passage can be validly made; and the case of the anti-metaphysicians is that it clearly cannot."[193] The connection may occur within an asymmetrical relation of creational dependency, found supremely in the created human nature of Christ. Nevertheless, "at the very heart of the creature is God's presence of immensity, the incessant act by which he pours into it its whole being and substance".[194] Mascall believed the Five Ways articulate the dependency of created being and intellect on the Creator.[195]

So, Mascall's synthesis of revelation and reason within tradition may be questioned by both anti-metaphysicians and by those who oppose the supposed priority of revelation in scripture and tradition. Alternatively, as Hardy has suggested, the nature and role of reason needs greater definition since reason may be swallowed up by revelation and the scriptures by some Anglicans, where an unbalancing of the synthesis of revelation and reason may occur. In any case, our exposition of Mascall's approach shows that there is a possible question concerning the role of reason within Anglicanism: it may be over-played or under-played. Either way, tradition may be neglected. It appears that in Mascall's approach, to believe in revelation is to believe in reason. And to believe in revelation and reason seems to entail that tradition is an arena for the exaltation of creation in theology. An important question concerns whether Mascall's account of the synthesis is compatible with conventional Anglican approaches.

Reason to Tradition?

And so, a third issue concerns the question of the relationship of reason to tradition.[196]

By means of tradition, which is an arena of revelation, Mascall assesses non-traditional theology, especially the theology of the liberal, modernist and secularist approaches. He appeals to such theologians to find revelation within the community of faith. He explains that "The Christian Faith and the Christian Church have been the source from which my

[193] Mascall, *Words*, 84.
[194] Mascall, *Via Media: An Essay in Theological Synthesis*, (Greenwich: The Seabury Press, 1957), 119.
[195] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 65.
[196] This question is not quite the same as the second aspect above, that is, the relation of tradition to reason.

inspiration as a theologian has been drawn. I have used the phrase *Theologizandum est in Fide* [lit., "looking at things theologically is in faith"], and I would now add the words *in Ecclesia, in Liturgia* [lit., "in church, in liturgy"]".[197] In this sense, it may be said that it is the church and its liturgy which is the tradition in Mascall's approach.

Consequently, Mascall is clear that the theologian is a servant of the church, not of the secular university. "Theology is…in its essence a function of the Church as the Body of Christ, and the theologian is a man to whom the exercise of that function has been especially committed."[198] The reason is to be found in the supernatural status of the church as Christ's Body which is the cause of the truthfulness of theology's formulations.[199] Although such formulations are genuine, they also are "partial and inadequate, projections, on to the plane of the temporal existence of the Church militant, of the unformulated substance of Christian truth [as it is] held in the mind of him who is the Truth itself".[200] The church on earth is simply the "lower fringe" of the church triumphant.[201] Therefore, in Mascall's approach, the order of the being of the church and the order of knowing in the church are inseparably held together. And so Mascall describes theology in the following terms:

> 'Theology [is] an ecclesial activity concerned with the revelation given by God to man through Christ in his Church.' The theologian, I wrote, 'is operating within the great tradition of thought and life into which he was incorporated by his baptism, and the dynamic process which is the enterprise of theology down the ages takes place within the People of God, the Body of Christ.'[202]

Mascall is clear that theology is "the study of God and of all other beings in their relation to him", not "the study of what men had thought about God in the days when thinking about God was believed to be both possible and intellectually respectable".[203] Theology is closely linked to the formation of a Christian mind,[204] which is to be based on "a personal commitment to Christ and a faithful practice of the Christian religion".[205] By contrast, theology is not to be identified with a number of ancillary disciplines, such as psychology,

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[197] Mascall, *Saraband*, 383.
[198] E. L. Mascall, *Secularisation*, 37, and Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 57.
[199] E. L. Mascall, *Jesus: Who He Is and How We Know Him*, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985), Chapter 4.
[200] Mascall *Secularization*, 38.
[201] E. L. Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, Chapter 4 and throughout Mascall's writings.
[202] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, xxi-xxii.
[203] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, xi.; see also 22.
[204] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, xii.
[205] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, xii.

linguistics, history, and so on.[206] Theology is to be defined as "supernatural" insofar as it "needs more than merely academic resources".[207] It is to be based on "sanctifying grace", which is experienced in both the individual theologian and in the church. Theology is Christian because it is concerned above all else with Jesus Christ, in whom the grace of God is fully seen. Thus, theology which concerns a true understanding of salvation, is "fundamentally concerned with the same theme as the Church's pastoral ministry, namely the redemption and glorification of man by God his creator through the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son".[208] It is concerned ultimately with an encounter with the living God.[209] It is based on a demarcation of reason and revelation: "The theologian, as I see him, is concerned with the revelation which God has delivered to the Church in Christ and only secondarily with the truth that he can discover by his natural powers".[210] Yet, while Mascall believes theology to be a supernatural and ecclesial activity based in faith,[211] it is "not naked faith, but faith invested by grace with reason and imagination, and its direct and immediate authority is God's revelation as embodied in the living Scriptures, that is to say, the living Church".[212] Rather, the "task of theology is to display in its fullness and bring to its blossoming the revelation which God has committed to his Church".[213] Theology may not by-pass tradition.

While he believes reason is capable of separating out possible unstable features of medieval theology,[214] Mascall has been accused by Paul Avis of importing a Tridentine model of tradition into Anglicanism in his appeal to the living church. He said that Mascall is one whose "theological centre of gravity lies outside the Anglican tradition", which tradition should be post-Tractarian, critical and mainstream. Appeal to modern French Roman Catholic philosophical theology in the Thomist tradition sets Mascall apart from

[206] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 20 & 23.
[207] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, xx.
[208] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 23-24.
[209] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, xix-xx – from Kenneth Leech.
[210] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 35.
[211] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 35.
[212] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 34.
[213] Mascall, *Christ*, 239.
[214] See Mascall, *Recovery*, 3, 15, 29, 35, 42, 44 *et al*, where this theme is expressed in the following, 36: "[The church] inherited [deeply rooted elements of thought] unconsciously and… without criticism from the debased and distorted religion of the late Middle Ages… many of them held in common by Catholics and Protestants alike…". Mascall especially includes views of *sacrifice*, nominalism, the loss of an eschatological view of the church, clericalism, pietism, Christocentricism, individualism in salvation, subjectivism, justification, angelism, and sacraments in this. The point is that all these represent a loss of ontological thinking in the church.

mainstream Anglicanism.[215] However, in reply it appears that Mascall is well-aware of the need to question tradition, and also of questioning the tradition of Reformation Anglicanism. For example, questioning principles of union between the Anglican Church and localized national protestant churches, he says that

> At a time when the Roman Communion has released itself, to an unexpected and amazing degree, from the shackles of Tridentine and Counter-Reformation theology and even from that of the Western Middle Ages, it would be tragic if Anglicanism, with its historic appeal not to the authority of any sixteenth century reformer but to the Fathers and the undivided Church, were to find that it had committed itself, either in theory or in practice, to union devised on a predominantly sixteenth-century basis.[216]

Thus, while many Anglicans may seek a critical approach to tradition, they may find themselves trapped in a Reformation paradigm which may fail to appreciate the treasures inherent in a wider view of tradition begun by the Fathers. Mascall may remind us to ask about how provisional the Reformation paradigm is to be for Anglicans, and whether an appeal to medieval tradition may be of profit for us. For Mascall, as we have seen, an appeal to tradition is to an organic relationship of scripture and the church as it is interpreted in new settings by the living church.[217] Such an interpretation involves for Mascall the preservation of the tradition of Christian philosophy. Perhaps, it is metaphysical realism that may offset the suggested depredations of Mascall's approach to tradition inherent in Avis' criticism. In any case, Mascall approves of the Constitution on Revelation in Vatican II which says that divine revelation is to be seen as "coming down from Christ as a living stream in which Scripture and Tradition form one organically united whole".[218] Consequently, in contradistinction to Avis' assessment of Mascall, an appeal to the living church is not an appeal to an untested stream of ideas, but to take seriously the theological nature of the church as a living organism, the keeper of the scriptural tradition, and the exemplar of intelligent realism.[219] Therefore, it may be said that Mascall's synthesis of reason and tradition does not compromise the necessity of reason as a source of theology and as a critic of tradition.

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[215] P. Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church: Theological Responses in Historical Perspectives*, Revised and Expanded Edition, (London: T & T Clark, 2002), 302. To be fair to Avis, he is not making a general assessment of Mascall's theology, but suggesting typical Anglican approaches to the question of the doctrine of salvation in the church. Nevertheless, his assessment applies to Mascall's relationship to Anglican theology in general.

[216] E. L. Mascall, "The Canadian 'Principles of Union' " in *Anglicanism and Principles of Christian Unity*, 3, (1972): 3.

[217] See Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*.

[218] Mascall, "The Canadian Principles" in *Anglicanism*, 7.

[219] See especially Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, Chapter 4.

With specific reference to the relationship of revelation, reason and tradition, Mascall introduces an idea from Lionel Thornton regarding these three sources of theology. In describing the incarnation, he writes that "What confronts us is the spectacle of the divine intervention neither tyrannising over its environment nor vanishing into it, but mastering it by entering into it and transforming it from within".[220] Later he wrote that "Revelation masters its environment, because God identifies himself with human history in order to transform it".[221] Following the principle that grace perfects nature and does not destroy or ignore it, he understands that revelation enters a tradition and transforms it from within and its role is analogous to the assumption of human nature by the Divine Word in the incarnation.[222] And so Mascall upholds the priority of revelation over both tradition and reason, without compromising reason and reason's critical role. In this synthesis, reason's powers are restored, re-instantiated and extended, and its range increased without destroying its creational and natural status.

In contradistinction to Mascall's approach, Richard Hooker is sometimes cited as an Anglican theologian who gave reason priority over tradition. For example, commenting on Article XX and reflecting the thought of Hooker, Kaye says, "The church is here said to have power to decree rites or ceremonies. It has authority in controversies of faith. The church is not simply the tool of some other authority, either tradition or Scripture. Rather, the church has genuine authority which it exercises".[223] To support this, Kaye quotes Hooker's principle that accounts for the church's authority to change tradition. It is the

> principle of change in the area of 'positive' law. Church polity falls into this area and is thus open to change. God's ordinance in this area is both mutable (open to change) and yet also God's ordinance. God's providence is seen in sustaining continuing 'ends' or purposes by changing ordinances because of changing circumstances. 'In this case therefore men do not presume to change God's ordinance, but that yeelde thereunto requiring itself to be changed' (Hooker, III.10.5).[224]

And so, the suggestion is that reason has a priority over tradition, but not over revelation. Paradoxically, Kaye's account in giving the church such authority is in some ways similar to Mascall's. Mascall, however, appears to have integrated scripture, tradition and reason

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[220] Mascall, *Secularisation*, 28.
[221] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 45.
[222] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 35, where Mascall endorses Gabriel Moran's idea that "the primary locus of revelation is the consciousness of the ascended and glorified Christ".
[223] Kaye, *A Church*, 72.
[224] Kaye, *A Church*, 106.

within a living whole, while Hooker seems to have not so much separated them as somewhat unravelled them from their mutual bonding in a unique and organic living whole, namely, the living church. Therefore, an important question is which approach is more essentially Anglican: what appears to be Mascall's closer symbiosis of scripture, reason and tradition, or what appears to be Hooker's somewhat looser synthesis?

In line with Thornton's approach, Mascall insists on a clear acknowledgment of the source and priority of revelation. The theologian

> is not concerned simply to make deductions from premises or to pass judgement upon dogmas of the Faith, but to allow himself to be used by the divine Head of the Mystical body as an organ through which, in accordance with the will of God for him and for his time, some tiny fraction of the truth which is in Christ may be expressed more clearly…. [He] is to express not just his own thoughts but those that the Divine Head is thinking in his Mystical Body, of which the theologian is a member….[225]

Tradition here is conceived of as an ongoing living and charismatic process of which we are a part. Consequently, without necessarily denying Hooker's rational principle, Mascall is saying that it is revelation more so than reason that may be seen to bring change in the church. Therefore, it appears somewhat hasty to suggest that as a principle, reason may have a priority over tradition *tout court*. Concerning Hooker's approach to "providence", discussion must include an acknowledgement of the nature of tradition as a fructifying relationship of revelation and reason. Nevertheless, Mascall's upholding the priority of revelation may lead some Anglicans to view Mascall's belief in tradition as a kind of traditionalism. An important question concerns the place of critical thinking within essential Anglicanism and how dependent on revelation, and so on tradition, we may conceive reason to be. Does an incorporation of metaphysical realism in theology help to resolve the question of what is essential Anglicanism, and how a balanced synthesis may be supported and maintained?

Perhaps, the Anglican approach to tradition is not so clearly delineated as to avoid possible confusions and confrontations within the church. As we have seen, Anglicans may possess an ambivalent attitude to tradition. Bauckham's comment on an Anglican attitude to tradition given above may point to the presence of such ambivalence. Furthermore, reason requires that an appeal to a Reformation paradigm should include an appeal to tradition.

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[225] Mascall, *Christ*, 239.

But who sets the limits on such an appeal: scripture, reason, or tradition itself? In the name of a Reformation approach, reason may either critically overwhelm tradition in the cause of scripture or Patristic sources, or it may overwhelm tradition in its own name. Alternatively, in the name of scripture, reason and other tradition may be ignored. However, this is both unreasonable and untraditional since the Reformation paradigm is itself a tradition that points to tradition and incorporates the use of reason in its assertions.

In this task, Mascall affirms that Anglicans are "bound to adhere to that appeal to primitive wholeness which so notably distinguishes the great post-Reformation Anglican divines, with their emphasis on Scripture and the Fathers".[226] But as we have seen, Mascall believes that we should appeal to reason restored, re-instantiated and extended, and its range increased without destroying its creational and natural status.

Catholicism?

A fourth issue concerns the nature of catholicism.

Mascall prefers to use the term orthodox rather than conservative or catholic to describe the proper and ideal mode of theology.[227] Theology is orthodox when it provides stable, permanent, but incomplete statements with the intention to be obedient to the revealed apostolic faith.[228] Stability is the result of three aspects of thinking, namely:-

- a lack of self-contradiction or its logical possibility;
- a coherence with whatever else we know of God in the doctrine of creation; and,
- a balanced *via media* where extreme views are not allowed to "plump for simplicity at the expense of adequacy".[229]

Mascall contrasts Christological heresies as inherently unstable with classic accounts which are not the result of compromise but of synthesis.[230] While stability is a sign of contemporary relevance of a doctrine, instability is a sign of an ambiguity of concepts, where some concepts may become their opposites.[231] Stability results from a faith-inspired

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[226] E. L. Mascall, *Corpus Christi*, x.
[227] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*.
[228] For example, Mascall, *Whatever*, 28: "It will be my purpose to argue…that the Definition of Chalcedon is the truth and nothing but the truth, but also that it is not the whole truth".
[229] Mascall, *Christ*, 72. *Cf* A. M. Ramsey, "What is Anglican Theology?" in *Theology* 295 (1945): 4, regarding classic Anglicanism, "[It] claimed to do both far less and far more that the theologies of Calvin, of Luther and of Trent… ".
[230] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 173.
[231] Mascall, *Words*, 3.

use of reason. The theologian is to "illuminate and show the mutual coherence of truths that have been already accepted".[232]

Specifically, Mascall's view of Chalcedon illustrates this approach. He believes that the Chalcedonian formula is of continuing relevance for contemporary belief and that it also allows for further development.[233] Indeed, "after fifteen hundred years most of its potentialities are still unrealized".[234] In its development, further discussion and clarification of it in later Councils did "not make Chalcedon a mere episode but…rescued it from irrelevance as a *cul-de-sac*".[235] And so orthodoxy is "flexible and dynamic". Furthermore, "Its strength is that it offers far more possibilities for development and new applications than do the self-consciously up-to-date 'new approaches', which have already run into a sheer dead end".[236] As we have seen, to appeal to tradition is to appeal to the presence of the same God who is known in the present. Such an "appeal to Christian tradition is [an] appeal from the part to the whole".[237] A search for orthodox doctrine involves an "appeal to the past…using whatever powers of discrimination we possess, in order to extricate the authentic norm so far as we are able [and to]see how it can be best expressed in the theology of our own day…".[238] But to be orthodox and catholic, Anglicans should "get back behind the controversies of the sixteenth century and to abandon those late medieval assumptions held in common by both Catholics and Protestants…which…led to deadlock".[239]

As we have seen, orthodox theology is to be firmly rooted in liturgy and the Christian life, and not in secular models of thinking in which a theologian may be misled in believing "that all respectable modern scholarship is anti-supernaturalistic".[240] The contemporary crisis of theology in Anglicanism is because theologians have failed to do what ancient theologians did, namely, to link theology with worship and life. Theology is to be mindful of its religious roots where Christianity is "corporate, objective, liturgical and

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[232] Mascall, *Corpus Christi*, 34.
[233] E. L. Mascall, *Whatever*, 35.
[234] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 193.
[235] E. L. Mascall, "The Relevance of Chalcedon today" in C. C. Marcheselli, (ed.)**,** *Parola E Spirito: Studi in Onore di Settimio Cipriani*, Vol. II, (Brescia: Paideia Editrice, 1982), 1043-1050, see especially 1045.
[236] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 11. So Mascall, *Whatever*, 52.
[237] Mascall, *Corpus Christi*, 34.
[238] E. L. Mascall, *Recovery*, 42.
[239] Mascall, *Recovery*, 42.
[240] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 22; see also 10.

theocentric".[241] But theology is not a mere function of liturgy as it encapsulates a final norm of belief.[242] Rather, doctrine must be an adequate expression of both liturgy and life. Mascall explains that

> In the great formative period of Christian dogma in the fourth and fifth centuries, it was the adequacy as accounts of Christ's work of salvation and as directives of Christian worship and living that, equally with their faithfulness to the apostolic tradition, provided the criteria for assessing doctrinal proposals as orthodox or heretical.[243]

In the context of cultural change, Mascall distinguishes the essence of theology and its variable verbal formulation where the task of the theologian is to relate "the unchanging Gospel to the contemporary situation".[244] This is based on the distinction between a proposition which is asserted and its form of words.[245]

Consequently, orthodox theology is a "correlation of two factors",[246] namely, the essential meaning contained in a proposition, and its verbal expression. While the church and the gospel are one throughout the ages, forms of words vary.[247] And so, there is an analogical relationship between the essence of the faith or "substance of the ancient doctrine",[248] and its contemporary formulation where new formulations must be encouraged so all will benefit.[249] Again it is a question of obedience to revelation or to Christ and involves "habit of loyal submission to Christian tradition, while at the same time bringing to bear upon it all the critical and interpretative gifts which God has given him…[through] union with God who is the Truth itself".[250] Therefore, Mascall believes secularist theologians, such as J. A. T. Robinson, in their effort to communicate to a new generation, have failed to see the distinction between the substance of theology and its formulation.[251] The "development of Christian doctrine [is] a progressive translation, into the conceptual and linguistic framework of our earthly modes of knowing and speaking…of the truth contained in the mind of Christ…".[252] In the end, there is a "primacy of meaning over its verbal expression

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[241] Mascall, *Recovery*, 15.
[242] This notion received affirmation in Sykes, *Integrity*, 46 *et al*.
[243] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 15.
[244] E. L. Mascall, *Secularization*, 4.
[245] Mascall, *Secularization*, 26.
[246] Mascall, *Secularization*, 4.
[247] Mascall, *Secularization*, 4.
[248] Mascall. *Secularization*, 32.
[249] Mascall, *Secularization*, 32.
[250] Mascall, *Secularization*, 36-37.
[251] Mascall, *Secularization*, 110.
[252] E. L. Mascall, *Theology and the Future*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1968), 35.

[and] this persistence of understanding though all the relativities and imperfections of the media in which it is embodied and through which it is communicated…".[253] Orthodox theology, therefore, is an exercise in spirituality, intellectual integrity, ecclesial loyalty, and moral virtue. It seeks catholicity in the fruitful relationship of revelation and reason within the one tradition. Without denying critical reason, Mascall's approach appears to present a tighter symbiosis of revelation and reason which seems to entail an over-coming of the gap between the being and the becoming of doctrinal understanding within the arena which is the tradition of the living church.

Mascall's approach may be problematic for some Anglicans who, as we have seen, grant a priority to reason over revelation, or who grant a priority of scripture over reason. Both approaches may ignore a synthesis of scripture, tradition and reason, or, of revelation and reason within tradition. Some Anglicans may regard the rejection of medieval doctrines and practices as an unleashing of a truly catholic impulse in the Church. Others may believe the scriptures alone contain all that is truly catholic and the only source of revelation. Perhaps, Anglican ecclesiology is somewhat ambivalent about the essence of catholicism.

The Structure of Mascall's Thought: Revelation and Reason?

A fifth issue concerns the question of the precise nature of the structure of thought to be found in Mascall's writings.

The following examines Mascall's approach to this question concerning the role of natural theology and of its relationship to revelation and faith. As we have seen, Mascall does not give a priority to reason as he demarcates but does not separate the spheres of revelation and reason. Nevertheless, natural knowledge has a certain priority over revelation. He explains that

> Logically, natural knowledge is prior to revelation, for grace presupposes nature…. But in the concrete world, revelation has priority over natural knowledge, for in a fallen world grace has not only to supply what lies outside the intrinsic powers of nature, but also to restore the powers of nature to their own integrity.[254]

[253] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 172.
[254] Mascall, *Christ*, 236.

There is a distinction to be observed between what occurs in the concrete world and what may be abstracted from it. Within this distinction there is a logical priority given to natural knowledge. This distinction sets a pattern for Mascall's approach and it has a somewhat linear structure. It begins as our cognitive grasp of created existence and goes on to encompass Trinitarian doctrine. In such a traditional approach, it is suggested that creation is opaquely known through reason, and that this provides a logical starting-point for the church's *via* to the Beatific Vision. In this sense it has been called a *theologia gloriæ*. Logically and in the *ordo essendi*, the path to glory begins in an opaque apprehension of creation, where reason is to be demarcated from revelation.[255]

The basis for this is the creational congruence of grace and nature. It may be said that "Logically and essentially, the doctrine of God is the fundamental doctrine of the Christian Religion…everything other than God depends upon him and exists for his glory".[256] So we may learn about the "existence of God by the exercise of the human reason…. [which is] the instrument by the use of which the problem of God's existence is to be investigated".[257] These quotations also may help us explain Mascall's commitment to "traditional theism", that is, the doctrine of God based on metaphysical realism. The logical priority of natural knowledge over revelation is problematic for some protestant theologians and for many Anglicans who follow a protestant approach. For example, R. H. Nash, accuses Mascall of giving a priority to reason and of demanding arguments for the existence of God before faith may be considered to be rational. Likewise, the protestant theologian, J. B. Cobb significantly questions Mascall's claim that reason possesses a certain objectivity while it is somewhat inspired by faith.[258] Cobb's criticism will be discussed in Chapter IV after further exploration of the relationship of Mascall's theology to Anglicanism in Chapter II, and an elaboration of Mascall's "doctrine of existence" in

[255] Mascall, *Christ*, 235.
[256] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 1.
[257] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 30.
[258] In addition to those mentioned above and those in subsequent Chapters, some of Mascall's critics include the following:-
(1) R. W. Prevost, *Probability and Theistic Explanation*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990);
(2) I. Trethowan, Review of Mascall, *The Secularization of Christianity* in *Downside Review*, 83, (1965): 275-278, and, I. Trethowan, Review of Mascall, *Theology and the Future* in *Downside Review*, (1969): 229-230;
(3) V. I. Bartolini, *Cognitional Theory in Eric Mascall's Defence of Theism in a Secular Age: A Critical Study*, (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana¸1969);
(4) C. C. J. Webb, Review of Mascall, "The Revolt against Liberalism in Theology: Mascall's 'Christ, the Christian and the Church", in *Journal of Theological Studies* 48 (1947):189-190, 495-496, and,
(5) D. M. MacKinnon, Review of Mascall, *Words and Images* in *The Church Quarterly Review* 159 (1958):114-117.

Chapter III. Chapter V will respond to the questions raised in Chapter II about the relationship of Mascall's theology to Anglicanism.

4. MASCALL'S RELEVANCE TO THE PRESENT ANGLICAN SITUATION

What is the relevance of Mascall's integration of ontological thinking into theology for present Anglicanism? Perhaps, essential Anglicanism lacks structural or material resources which may impede it in the fulfilment of its stated aims of integrating the gospel and the universal church. How does Mascall's ontological thinking affect an Anglican understanding of the gospel and of the place of tradition?[259] Is the Reformation paradigm sufficient unto itself, particularly given Hardy's claims of the possible misappropriation of reason or the presence of various "churchmanships" within Anglicanism? Have Reformation ideals and practices presumed certain accounts of reason that later generations of Anglicans did not follow?[260] In particular, on the basis of a clue concerning the presence of an ontological thinking in doctrinal statements, we may ask if representative texts of Anglicanism such as the Thirty Nine Articles presume an ontological interpretation of foundation doctrines and as especially contained in the first five Articles, but seen throughout. If there is such a presumption, what becomes of the distinction between what is essential for salvation and what is not essential? [261]

Chapter II will continue examining the question of the relation of Mascall's theological approach to essential Anglicanism by examining the relationship of Mascall's ontological thinking to Anglican ecclesiology. It will do this by elaborating the discussion of the nature of Anglicanism and by comparing Mascall's approach with historic Anglicanism by means of three controverted issues. These are the doctrines of justification, the Blessed Sacrament and apostolic succession. From this a provisional conclusion will be drawn about the relationship of Mascall's theology to Anglicanism.

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[259] For example, What does the *gospel of the ephapax* (Article XXXI) mean in relation to Mascall's approach?

[260] C. Podmore, *Aspects*, 42, "[The Church]…has borne witness to Christian truth in its historic formularies, the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion, the Book of Common Prayer and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons…". The official texts are seen to be somewhat provisional expressions of Christian truth.

[261] *Cf* Kaye, *A Church*, 64-66, where he distinguishes between the fundamental and epistemological Articles.

CHAPTER II

MASCALL AND ANGLICANISM: CLASH OR FULFILMENT?

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will examine more closely the relationship of Mascall's metaphysical realism to Anglican ecclesiology and doctrine. The fundamental question is: What is the relationship of essential Anglicanism to Mascall's Anglo-Catholic and metaphysical approach? We will ask about this relationship by examining the Articular response to three controverted doctrines, comparing and contrasting these to Mascall's approach. This search will be attempted on the basis of a clue suggested by Mascall's theology, namely, that there may be an unexamined ontological presumption within the Articles. Finally, we shall ask if we may possess an initial reason to consider whether Mascall's theology either clashes with Anglicanism or perhaps fulfils it.

The material presented in this chapter examining the relationship of Mascall's theology to Anglicanism will be set out under the following three headings:-

1. Essential and Articular Anglicanism: a Development;
2. The Comparison of Mascall's Approach with Anglicanism: Three Test Cases; and,
3. Conclusion: Clash or Fulfilment?

1. ESSENTIAL AND ARTICULAR ANGLICANISM

As we have seen in Chapter I, some writers believe that there is a distinctive Anglican ecclesiology which emerged in the Elizabethan era, but which is of continuing relevance.[1] For example, P. E. More develops a theory of Anglican distinctiveness on the basis of a contentious Reformation issue, namely, the question of the necessity of an authoritative interpretation of the faith. Its lack may be exemplified by the *via media*. He points out that "[The fundamental issue of ecclesiology] comes down to a simple question of fact, *pragma*, as do finally all questions of truth…. [And so] what [Anglicans reject] is the Absolute of authority based on *a priori* theories of infallibility".[2] Kaye, in an allusion to this question, points to Anglican distinctiveness in terms of a belief in the indirect authority of providence which Hooker was able to elucidate as an alternative to a belief in a need of an infallible interpretation of the faith. He explains that

> Hooker is more profound and more daring than most in characterising as the ordinances of God the changing expression of the faith in the life of the church. It is a striking emphasis on the engagement of God in the creation and in the life and experience of the church. Such a theology is not only quintessentially Anglican, but wonderfully relevant in the modern world.[3]

In any case, it appears that the idea of the distinctiveness of essential Anglicanism emerges from the application of four fundamental tests to common practice. W. R. Crockett accounts for Anglican identity on the basis of these tests, namely:-

- the scriptural test;
- the patristic test;
- the rational test; and,
- the consensual test.[4]

From the applications of tests to common practice an ecclesiological method emerges,[5] and so, an Anglican identity is formed. From a review of the literature concerning the ecclesiological accounts of Anglicanism, we may adumbrate the identity of essential

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[1] *Cf* Avis, *Blackwell Encyclopedia*, 132: "Richard Hooker (1554-1600) had moved beyond the first Reformers' doctrine of a church constituted by word and sacrament, to a concept of a visible divine society…".
[2] More, "The Spirit", xxviii.
[3] Kaye, *A Church*, 106.
[4] W. R. Crockett, "Holy Communion" in Sykes, *The Study*, 310.
[5] *Cf* B. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, Second Edition, (New York: The Seabury Press, 1972-1973), 4: "A method is a normative pattern of recurrent and related operation yielding cumulative and progressive results".

Anglicanism in the following seven aspects. Within these points a certain logical order may be discerned:-

- a pragmatic and dialectical approach to ecclesiology beginning with the question of common practice where the identity of Anglicanism is to be a matter of a shared praxis;
- an effort to retain as much as possible of the heritage of the past with scripture ultimately as "the criterion of [the Reformers'] catholicity", and where there is a continuous tradition of this faith;[6]
- a belief in a process of distinction-making as a permanent feature of Anglicanism – based on a certain reading of scripture – and especially a *distinction* concerning the things deemed necessary for salvation and the *adiaphora*. This *distinction* becomes both a principle of unity, namely, as both an agreement on fundamentals through an acceptance of the need for the distinction *per se* (so as to save the catholic faith for the church), and also, a principle of diversity, as it sets legitimate parameters to diversity. Thus the *distinction* is a fundamental principle of reform and so of the *esse* of the church itself;[7]
- a rejection of the need of an authoritative interpreter of divine truth – with regard to either scripture or tradition;
- a belief in the authority of the church to order its own life and in a societal way to attain consensus, together with a methodological concern for a conciliar involvement of the laity, and so for a mutual interaction – a *perichoresis* – of church and civil society;
- an emerging methodical intention – a balanced synthesis and symbiosis of scripture,[8] tradition and reason – expressed in the performance of common prayer, which is integral to the maintenance of the *distinction*;
- a dialectical approach to truth issuing in a belief in a *via media*, so that *via media* is a "consequence" of reform, not its aim.[9] *Via media* is, in turn, both a qualified description (not explanation) of Anglicanism, and, a goal to be attained in a search for a reconciling *comprehension*.[10]

We may see here both the systematic nature of Anglicanism and an implication of the emergence of ambiguity regarding the question of final authority. Ramsey summarizes the Anglican ecclesiological method as a "balanced doctrine of 'unum corpus' [lit., "one body"]" believed to be taught by the Fathers. It included "the structure of Scripture, Creed, Episcopate, Sacraments…intact as one whole".[11] It concerns a search for unity in diversity,

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[6] H. F. Woodhouse, "Sixteenth Century Anglican Theology" in H. Cunliffe-Jones (ed.), *A History of Christian Doctrine*, (Edinburgh:T. & T. Clark Ltd., 1978), 424.
[7] H. R. McAdoo, *The Unity of Anglicanism: Catholic and Reformed*, (Wilton: Morehouse-Barlow Company, Inc., 1983), 18, and further, 34-39, concerning the implication of the *distinction* for the principle of unity, namely, both an agreement on fundamentals and an acceptance of the need for the distinction *per se*, so as to save the catholic faith for the church.
[8] McAdoo, *The Unity*, 18.
[9] McAdoo, *The Unity*, 13-14.
[10] McAdoo, *The Unity*, 17, *comprehension* is not a synonym for compromise, and relates to the legitimate limits of diversity, 16-17 & 19.
[11] Ramsey, *The Gospel*, 159.

and not for the middle way as such. It emerges as an intentional method which is integral to the yielding of cumulative and progressive results.[12] It is essentially heuristic in intention, and so somewhat provisional. It aims at transforming the unknown (catholic Christianity) into the known within history.

And so, we may propose an account of essential Anglicanism and of the Anglican theological method in the following summary statement:[13]

> Beginning with the question of common practice, a fundamental method of seeking catholicity,[14] through apostolicity, perhaps exemplified in a Patristic way of interpreting the gospel,[15] is applied to faith and order. The appeal to tradition is to antiquity-in-continuity in order to maintain both the truth of the gospel and of the being of the church:[16] a faithful church seeking consensus. Catholicity is rooted in an ongoing and societal interpretation of the gospel by means of a balanced synthesis/symbiosis of scripture, tradition, and reason in faithfulness to the gospel, by means of a scripturally-imbued common prayer, and focussed in the leadership of the bishops as members of the Apostolic Succession. Bishops, the scriptures/gospel, sacraments and the liturgy are thus visible and essential signs of the continuity of the faith and practice of the Apostolic church. It is not an appeal to a pure church as to an emergent method of orthodoxy where there is no single source or pinnacle of authority. The church is both a mystical body and an institution.[17] There is no need for any authoritative interpretation imposed by a centralized jurisdictional interpretative agency. Within the church as a *societas communitas* [lit., "a communitarian society"], [18] there is a distributed concept of catholicity as there is a distributed collegial and conciliar pattern of dispersed institutional authority:[19] the Anglican Church is no *societas perfecta* [lit., "a perfect society"].[20]

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[12] *Cf* Lonergan, *Method*, 20.

[13] With reference to the question of whether Anglicanism is best considered in terms of an Erastian, an Apostolic, a baptismal, or a "church in society" paradigm, a church "gathered around its bishops" need not prejudice any of these approaches. In fact, episcopacy may be interpreted to imply a flexible ecclesiology containing all four as appropriate to a particular historical and cultural reality. The Statement is not necessarily skewed towards an *apostolic paradigm*. See P. Avis, *Anglicanism*, 15-29, who espouses the baptismal paradigm rejected by Kaye in Kaye, *A Church*, 187, for a "church in society" paradigm. See also S. Cowdell, "Anglicanism, Post-modernity and a Habit for Giftedness" in B. N. Kaye (ed.), *"Wonderful and Confessedly Strange": Australian Essays in Anglican Ecclesiology*, (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2006), 185.

[14] McAdoo, *The Unity*, 16, who points out that from J. Jewel onward, the Church understood itself as the representative of the catholic church on English soil.

[15] This statement especially incorporates some phrases from Middleton, *Restoring*, 2-4, 34-69, and of Ramsey, *The Gospel*, *et passim*.

[16] McAdoo, *The Unity*, 23.

[17] *Cf* P. Avis, *Beyond the Reformation? Authority, Primacy and Unity in the Conciliar Tradition*, (London: T & T Clark, 2006), 2-3, 13-15, *et passim*.

[18] S. Cowdell, "Anglican Moral Decision-Making and the Challenge of Same Sex Unions" in Doctrine Panel of the Anglican Church of Australia, *Faithfulness in Fellowship: Reflection on Homosexuality and the Church*, (Mulgrave: John Garratt Publishing, 2001), 156: "Anglicanism finds its identity in the living conversation between Scripture and life…. In this process, [it is] at once spiritual, liturgical and moral, personal, congregational and public…".

[19] Avis, *Beyond?*, 168: "Anglican polity [combines] conciliar (synodical) governance with episcopal oversight (which Anglicans hold to be complementary)...".

[20] Avis, *Beyond?*, 190.

Therefore, it may be possible to describe essential Anglicanism in the following four summary points:-

- the formal cause is to be found in the *Principle of the Permanent Distinction* of fundamentals and non-fundamentals and resulting from the application of the *Four Tests*;
- the efficient cause is to be found in the *Principle of Public Discourse and Consensus* in a community marked out in a continuity of faith and order;[21]
- the material cause is to be found in the *Principle of the Hapax of Faith*, wherein the gospel and Creeds are based in the apostolic and Patristic faith, are marked out by the Thirty Nine Articles, and are also integrally set within common prayer where a sufficient knowledge of salvation is thus attained; and,
- the final cause is to be found in the *Principle of Catholicity* as a fundamental principle of reform which is of the *esse* of the church itself.

The multiple aspects of this dialectical method are encapsulated by and within the Thirty Nine Articles and so the *distinction* and Articles help to define the church. However, it should be noted that, paradoxically, an appeal to the Fathers was not so much an appeal to a "Patristic way of interpreting the gospel" as such, since the Fathers may not have actually embodied and exhibited such a method – whether intentionally or otherwise – in a real process of consensus and continuity. Rather, an Anglican appeal to the Fathers was a significant element within the history of Anglicanism that enabled such a method to emerge and be intentionally discerned as a balanced synthesis of scripture, tradition and reason, that is, within the Anglicanism of the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries.[22]

Not all Anglicans will agree with this account presented as a working definition of Anglicanism. However, it acknowledges the inter-connection of ecclesiology and "the actual experience of church".[23] Perhaps on this point, all Anglicans may agree. Yet, it also notes that an ideational approach to Anglican identity through a praxis approach to ecclesiology may be swayed by the presence of ongoing empirical elements in the Church, such as the historical reality of the episcopacy. Our experience of the institutionality of the church may influence the ideal, so that ecclesiology becomes an ideological justification

[21] McAdoo, *The Unity*, 18, & 37.
[22] *Cf* S. L. Greenslade, "The Authority of the Tradition of the Early Church in Early Anglican Thought", and G. V. Bennett, "Patristic Tradition in Anglican Thought, 1660-1900", both in *Tradition im Luthertum und Anglikanismus: Herausgegeben vom Institut für Okeumenische Forschung in Strasbourg durch Günther Gaassmann und Vilmos Vajta*, (Gutersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1972), 22-31 & 63-87 respectively.
[23] Kaye, *Wonderful*, 10.

for institutional structures and customs.[24] But this need not necessarily be the case. For instance, the phrase "focussed in the leadership of the bishops who are members of the Apostolic Succession" need not necessarily prejudice a view of the Apostolic Succession of bishops in favour, for example, of an Irenaean view of episcopal magisterial authority – which was not universally accepted in the Patristic church.[25] Consequently, perhaps all Anglicans may yet agree that an ongoing search for catholicity is an essential aspect of Anglicanism.

Essential Anglicanism, therefore, probably is best found in the tension between the actual and the ideal, but succumbs to neither aspect in its expression. Nevertheless, we may accept that it is neither to be "read-off" a perceived historical reality, nor is the empirical reality the result of a predetermined ecclesiology. While the empirical reality may not be "best practice", the praxis and dialectical approach to ecclesiology may allow for constant reformation. Scott Cowdell points out the following concerning variant views:

> [While, in the sixteenth century] religious unity at the level of worship and church order was imposed by fiat [it allowed] significant room for individuals to stake out widely varying personal positions within a loose, structural conformity....[26]

The question of comprehensiveness and legitimate pluralities is significant for Anglicans, and it implies another question, namely, whether Anglicans are required necessarily to agree with what essential Anglicanism is, or if they do, whether the Reformation successfully achieved it in its material output. Is *essential Anglicanism* itself a coherent, consistent and stable notion to be found throughout Anglican history?

For the purpose of this discussion, we may note that if essential Anglicanism is encapsulated in a fundamental method of seeking catholicity through apostolicity, it requires a set of fundamental beliefs/doctrines to be placed within the official and representative texts, namely, the Thirty Nine Articles, which become a necessary foundation for ongoing reform,[27] and a starting- point for dialectical thinking. Such a set is

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[24] *Cf* Avis, *Beyond?*, 13-14, regarding the lack of dominance of the political/institutional elements of the church over the theological.

[25] A. Dulles, *The Survival of Dogma: Faith, Authority, and Dogma in a Changing World*, (New York: Crossroads, 1982), 110.

[26] S. Cowdell, "Anglicanism, Post-Modernity and a habit for Giftedness" in Kaye, *Wonderful*, 182.

[27] As we have seen, for example, in D. W. Hardy, "Theology through Philosophy". Also, P. Toon, "The Articles and Homilies" in Sykes, *The Study*, 146: "[The Reformers] wanted to ensure [the Church] taught apostolic doctrine [that was orthodox and neither] radical or Roman [with] genuine unity [and] perimeters of a comprehensiveness based on the gospel".

to be found in at least the first five of the Thirty Nine Articles.[28] A significant question is whether these fundamental Articles – related to others in a hierarchy of consequence concerning our salvation – contain an unexamined inherent epistemological presumption concerning the ontological reality of their transcendent relation.[29] Before we proceed to address this question, we note an objection concerning the distinctiveness of the Anglican method.

This objection claims that the *distinction* concerning of things necessary for salvation and the notion of dispersed authority it engenders are not unique to Anglicanism and so cannot be the basis of essential Anglicanism. Contemporary ecumenical convergence, especially after Vatican II, has militated against the significance of the notion of distinctiveness. Paul Avis, however, is one writer who maintains the continuing relevance of the notion of distinctiveness through its empirical reality.[30] He notes an empirical distinctiveness with regard to authority within Anglicanism. This is to be seen in doctrine, cult and order, specifically in an emphasis on two sacraments, a specific role for English government in the life of the church, a lack of sacrificial connotations in liturgy, and a belief that the church has authority to set the form of the cult and its ceremonies. Anglicanism is at least distinctive in that it rejects the need of a monarchical or centralized magisterial authority which binds authorized interpretations. On this basis, this objection is overthrown.

To return to the question of the Articles and of an unexamined ontological presumption, let us first of all note an observation by Oliver O'Donovan about modern sensibilities concerning the nature of knowledge. In pointing to an explicit epistemological understanding inherent in the Reformers' approach to the setting-forth of a fundamental set of beliefs in official Anglicanism, O'Donovan says,

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[28] *Ct* G. F. Tavard, *The Quest for Catholicity: A Study in Anglicanism*, (London: The Catholic Book Club, 1963), and his discussion of Cranmer's conception of catholicity. He asks at what point in time the authority of the consensual primitivity ceased to operate because the church went astray and could no longer be trusted.

[29] *Cf* O'Donovan, *Thirty Nine Articles*, 49: "In the first five Articles the English Reformers rehearsed in traditional terms their faith in God as Trinity…as they had received it from the early centuries…. In the sixth, seventh and eighth articles everything has changed".

[30] Avis, "Distinctiveness", 141-155.

> The puzzle for the modern reader is to conceive of how there may be a way of knowledge (which does not overstep its bounds and lay claim to becoming the thing known) that is not defined in terms of the knowing subject…. [In reply] we fail to see that the way of knowing any given thing is dictated in large measure by *what that thing is*, and not only (or even mainly) by the situation of the person who has come to know it.[31]

In this quotation, O'Donovan may be seen to alert us to the significance of epistemological questions within Anglicanism. He suggests the possibility of a disparity between a modernist attitude to knowledge and an attitude possessed by the Reformers and implied by the Articles.[32] The modernist objection is that the Reformers did not account for the possibility of a subjective or historically relative distortion in our knowledge of doctrinal truths. Whatever was the case, a further reason to investigate Articles concerns the question of whether there are significant indicators of such an unexamined presumption. Before we proceed to discuss the question of an ontological presumption and how that presumption may be indicated, we ask if there are other problematic areas in Anglicanism in addition to an epistemological question, on the basis of its provisional and dialectical character, that may lead us to question whether there may be a fruitful relationship between Anglican theology and Mascall's approach. Including the question of epistemology, there are four possible areas to be considered. They concern:-

- a question about epistemology;
- a question about the *distinction*;
- a question about the *lex orandi-lex credendi* principle; and,
- a question about a defalcation of reason.

The first problematic issue follows O'Donovan's epistemological question. In what way are the epistemological presumptions of the Articles explained by historical circumstances at the time of the writing, and would any unexamined epistemological assumptions jeopardize the integrity of doctrinal statement concerning the things necessary for salvation? What would be the outcome for doctrine if later historical circumstances rejected any realistic understandings in the doctrines? Perhaps such rejection is to be found in the work of the English Modernists, the liberals and the radical theologians of Mascall's era. Perhaps these groups, while maintaining a loyalty to verbal formulæ, have presented

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[31] O'Donovan, *Thirty Nine Articles*, 50.

[32] *Cf* Mascall, *He Who Is*, x, "if we go behind the liberal movement to the great Anglican divines of the seventeenth century we find that, whether they agree or disagree with their Roman-Catholic contemporaries, at least they speak the same language…[of] scholasticism…".

diverse and incompatible interpretations of foundational doctrines,[33] which may jeopardize further the integrity of essential Anglicanism. In any case, the question of epistemological assumptions is implied by the question of doctrine.

A second problematic issue concerns the relationship between the necessary and essential doctrines and the role of this distinction for an assessment of common practice. It may be noticed that the fundamental set is also part of common practice inherited from the past. Is this set itself to escape assessment because it is deemed to be a sufficient statement of catholic and ecumenical doctrine? Can fundamental doctrines both be the basis of assessment and also subject to assessment without implying a certain circularity or confusion? How do we know what is essential for salvation? If the hermeneutical rules for deciding are set by the community,[34] then how is circularity avoided and controlled?

A third problematic issue concerns the viability of an Anglican belief in the principle of *lex orandi est lex credendi* [lit., "the law of prayer is the law of belief"].[35] Here, the necessity of authoritative and perhaps infallibilistic interpretations of belief is rejected in favour of a somewhat doxological approach to doctrine which is authoritatively supported by canon law.[36] Is this method able to avoid the development of incompatible beliefs, where comprehensiveness is stretched to breaking-point and which adversely affects Anglican identity?[37] The question of liturgical conformity may hide an intentional disconformity of belief.

A fourth problematic issue concerns Hardy's point about the defalcation of reason, discussed in Chapter I. An assumption of sanctified reason inherent in the formation of doctrine may hide the presence of alien accounts of reason employed to assess common

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[33] For example, see A. M. G. Stephenson, *The Rise and Decline of Anglican Modernism*, (London: SPCK, 1984); *Cf* also Sykes, *Unashamed* xii-xiv: "Did the church really believe in the central doctrines of the Christian faith as traditionally taught...? Or was there now to be a greater comprehensiveness to embrace a radically 'non-supernatural' interpretation of belief…[in]…John Robinson… Professors Wiles and Lampe…Bishop Jenkins…and…Don Cupitt [?]". *Cf* S. W. Sykes, "The Genius of Anglicanism" in G. Rowell (ed.), *The English Religious Tradition and the Genius of Anglicanism*, (Wantage: Ikon Productions Ltd., 1993), "We can be quite confident in saying that there is a boundary between beliefs which are part of the faith and those which are incompatible with it".

[34] *Cf* Chadwick, "Tradition, Fathers and Councils" in Sykes, *The Study*, 103: "[The] hermeneutic of rules will not be unrelated to the consensus of the community".

[35] See, for example, Stephenson, "Lex Orandi", in Sykes, *The Study*, 189-190.

[36] See, for example, Sykes, *Integrity*, 45-48.

[37] *Cf* Sykes, *Integrity*, 6, *passim* and 16: "Maurice explicitly denied that the English church stood on an 'invisible equatorial line between Romanism and Protestantism.' Instead of this he offers the view that the English church is a union of opposites…".

practice. Reason may be confused with "whatever were the practices of the wider community, thereby following the vicissitudes of the development of philosophy and the sciences".[38] In this situation, in later centuries, reason was detached from "practically-mediated theology to become autonomous",[39] and to become by the mid-twentieth century a function of language. Finally, as Mascall points out, in the later part of the century, reason was caught up in a fragmentation of the university and society, and so was deemed a historically contingent artefact to be used in the interests of discrete groups. Alien accounts may derive from secularized culture and community. As Henry Chadwick said, "Rational discourse is a communal activity, not a private soliloquy".[40]And so, the question of reason implies a question of authority, and both continue to be relevant. [41] For example, the question of how to integrate dispersed authorities remains pertinent.[42]

Consequently, within an ongoing interpretation of doctrine and of common practice,[43] there are questions about the legitimacy of innovation in essentials,[44] and what may be regarded as an authoritative interpretation.[45] Perhaps, as Maurice Wiles was quick to point out, there can be no privileged time of understanding that gives the views of one era a universal

[38] Hardy, "Theology", 37.
[39] Hardy, "Theology", 37.
[40] Chadwick, "Tradition, Fathers and Councils" in Sykes, *The Study*, 103.
[41] *Cf* M. Wiles, *The Remaking of Christian Doctrine*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978), vii: "A revisionist theologian is one who acknowledges [the] fact of change and sees revision as an inescapable feature of theological work"; also 118. *Cf* F. C. Kreiger in M. D. Bryant, *The Future of Anglican Theology*, (New York: The Edwin Mollen Press, 1984), 87ff, regarding the case of J. F. Bethune-Baker.
[42] *Cf* Toon, "The Articles and Homilies" in Sykes, *The Study*, 153: "The other important lens [the first being the Articles], on this way of stating their place, is the Catholic Creeds. Such an approach leaves open the possibility of a further 'lens' being produced by the Churches of today or tomorrow".
[43] *Cf* Sykes, "The Fundamentals of Christianity" in Sykes, *The Study*, 273: "There is no ready-made precision in the content of the fundamentals…".
[44] *Cf* R. H. Fuller, "Scripture" in Sykes, *The Study*, 96: "Today Anglicanism cannot justify its adherence to the doctrines of the trinity and incarnation unless it is prepared to accord an authority to the Church as 'witness and keeper of Holy Writ' (Article XX). It is on the authority of the Church of the early centuries, not of the Bible alone, that Anglicanism upholds them".
[45] *Cf* More, "The Spirit", xxvii-xxx, where he notes the implications of the idea that the church has the ability to interpret the scriptures in such a way so as to determine authoritatively the distinction between fundamentals and accessories and also in the process to deny infallibility. He cites Chillingworth's axiom about the difference between 'being *infallible in fundamentals* and being an *infallible guide in fundamentals*' ". The latter is that which many Anglicans reject about the church. Thus, they believed the scriptures set forth the salvific fundamentals with "admirable simplicity" so that no infallible interpreter or infallible human organ of interpretation was necessary. Anglicans believed in no infallible ecclesiastical interpreter; but what if the lack of infallible interpretative power in the church was extended to 'the ultimate source of all authority… to admit that the Bible also was a 'created power' ". What if the Bible were infallible in fundamentals but not an infallible guide in fundamentals? "This is not an idle question. Upon an affirmative answer to it depends the identity of the Anglican spirit as manifested in that day and in ours".

solidarity over another if we accept the legitimacy of historical consciousness.[46] Doctrinal development represents an "alteration of perspective". Alternatively, Mascall's own view is that such developments are to give a new verbal expression to an essentially unchanging set of doctrines.[47] In changing times, it may not always be clear whether the fundamentals of Christianity are the same as the foundational Articles.[48]

The following section discusses the relationship of the Articles to Mascall's approach to see if there is a disparity between them. We shall then proceed to investigate the nature of three contentious Articles. They are the doctrine of justification by faith, the doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament and sacraments, and of the apostolic succession.

2. The Comparison of Mascall's Approach with Anglicanism: Three Test Cases

Introduction – Mascall's Catholic Realism and the Articles

Catholic thought may be described as linear in structure. It includes an ontological account of creation as the logical starting-point of theology understood on the basis of realist metaphysics.[49] In Mascall's approach, it incorporates both a restoration and an advance in the context of the new creation. Mascall believes a proper starting-point for a catholic theological reflection is to be found in an examination of questions concerning the world's existence, as the following quotation shows:

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[46] *Cf* Wiles, *Remaking*, 45: "The rise of modern historical consciousness has…made historical relativists of us all…".

[47] Mascall, *Secularisation*, 2, *passim*: "the terms themselves – and their meanings – are constantly changing, and it is this that makes the theologians task one of extreme difficulty. That there is an unchanging nucleus of belief and practice to which the Christian is committed he is bound to hold: that any particular expression of it is absolutely permanent and immutable and complete he may well doubt".

[48] *Cf* Sykes, "The Fundamentals of Christianity", 273 says: "…the fundamentals of Christianity are not necessarily to be identified with the fundamental *articles* of Christianity". *Cf* Wiles, *Remaking*, 42: "There is not one logically necessary starting-point from which the structure of Christian doctrine can be developed in linear succession…".

[49] Hampson, *Christian Contradictions*, 2, "By contrast with [linear] Catholic thought, the essence of Lutheranism is that it is structured by a dialectic…. unlike the linear structure of Catholicism [where] the human can move from the one situation to the other while keeping the self intact".

> I would maintain that the problem of the meaning of human life *is* simply the way in which the problem of the world's existence bears upon the individual man or woman in his subjective singularity. And the final choice is between ultimate irrationality and meaninglessness on the one hand and a transcendent ground of rationality and meaningfulness on the other.[50]

And so, meaningfulness begins with an acknowledgement of existence. However, it includes an account of existence as God's creation, of "all created beings [as]…un-self-sufficient and dependent…. [since] as Christian thought envisages them, [they] are not closed but open; their very continuance depends upon the fact that God incessantly pours into them their being…".[51] Metaphysical openness to the Creator implies an epistemological openness to revelation.

As we have seen, Mascall has reservations about the teaching of the Articles.[52] In supporting the foundational Articles he questions the overall approach of the Articles, as is evident from his questions about justification, church, ministry and sacraments. He wants to get behind the controversies and what he believes is the limited vision of the sixteenth century to something more authentically orthodox and catholic.[53] In our examination, the following two questions are relevant:-

- what are the significant differences between Mascall's approach and that of the Articles? and,
- what may be the indicators of any such differences, if any?

We may base this examination of the differences by asking if an ontological assumption necessarily contained within a statement of the foundational Articles and throughout is nevertheless to us a sign of a lack of a deeper approach to creation and metaphysical realism. This will lead in a later chapter to further questions, namely, whether the relationship between Mascall's approach and the Articles is one of conflict, congruence or completion?

Justification

Justification has been regarded as a controverted issue in church history. It concerns the true nature of the gospel and the question of baptismal regeneration and the Real Presence

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[50] Mascall, *Christian Universe*, 44.
[51] Mascall, *Christian Universe*, 102.
[52] Mascall, *Recovery*, 7 *passim*.
[53] Mascall, *Recovery*, 162 *passim*. *Cf* P. Toon, "The Articles and Homilies" in Sykes, *The Study*, 147.

in the eucharist.[54] It is a part of the larger question of grace, which for Mascall, can only be conceived under the influence of an ontological understanding of creation, as his criticism of Lutheranism shows.[55] He makes it clear that he is sympathetic with the catholic view taken up by Trent. Nevertheless, it is arguable that Article XI on justification neither bears the marks of Lutheran extrinsicism, nor those of Trent.[56]

The question of what is meant by the term *justification* is relevant to any present-day discussion. On the basis of an explanation of justification by the New Testament scholar N. Tom Wright, it appears that justification has indicated since the time of Augustine a process of salvation.[57] It seems to have lost the meaning St Paul gave to it.[58] Wright argues that justification is concerned with declaring who are the true members of the covenant family of Abraham. They are demarcated on the basis of their faith in the Messiah, which is a sign and badge that they are true members of that covenant family. Such a sign contrasts with that chosen by some Jews of Paul's day, namely, Sabbath, circumcision and Torah: "the works of the law". Justification concerns the definition of the people of God, and not their salvation: it is about ecclesiology, not soteriology. It concerns the covenant declaration issued by God the Righteous Judge as in a court room, and so explains the application of a forensic metaphor. The Righteous Judge vindicates his people by declaring them righteous in the terms of the covenant. Justification is about a status, not a process. In this way God fulfils his own covenantal role of finally dealing with sin in Christ as is announced by the gospel. God declares in the Last Judgment and in the present time that those who believe in Christ, because of his death and resurrection, are in the right as members of the covenant family of Abraham. Faith in the gospel is evidence that a process of regeneration by the Holy Spirit has already taken place within an individual. Faith is not

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[54] C. O. Buchanan, E. L. Mascall, J. I. Packer & the Bishop of Willesden, *Growing into Union: Proposals for Forming a United Church of England*, (London: SPCK, 1970), 44.
[55] Mascall, *Recovery*, 19-36.
[56] Hampson, *Christian Contradictions* 190, quotes Forde: "It [justification by faith] is a 'critical principle' which functions to determine what is and is not the gospel. Doctrines are words *about* God. Faith, however, comes by hearing the world *from* God".
[57] *Cf* also A. E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification*, Volume I, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 2: "The *doctrine* of justification has come to develop a meaning quite independent of its biblical origins, and concerns the *means by which man's relationship to God is established*".
[58] N. T. Wright, *What Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), Chapter 7, 113-133. A fuller statement of justification is in N. T. Wright, *Justification: God's Plan & Paul's Vision*, (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009).

a condition of grace or of regeneration, but is the result of regeneration.[59] As Wright says, "Sanctification is the completion, not of justification, but of regeneration…. Justification is a different *kind* of event altogether: regeneration and sanctification are acts of grace to change the heart and life, whereas justification is the declaration…that the believer is in the right".[60] In Wright's understanding, the declaration is logically subsequent to regeneration.

Wright's claim that justification has moved from ecclesiology to soteriology brings new light on the question and provides a basis for us to assess the Reformation understandings. Ironically, it corroborates Mascall's view that progress by Anglicans in ecumenical theology may be made by getting behind the individualistic understandings of the Reformation period. It is possible to see that some of the contentious issues between protestants and Catholics may be resolved by redefining terms, and that some of the puzzles we may find in the protestant account may be so resolved. Nevertheless, while keeping Wright's account in mind and using it heuristically, the following discussion of justification in Anglicanism and in Mascall's writings approaches the question of justification in the terms provided by the Articles, Mascall, and Trent, namely, as a soteriological event. In such statements, "justification" is seen as a process of salvation and of sanctification. In this context, the term indicates that an accreditation by God that salvation is to be attained or achieved is possible. It implies a presumed meritorial basis of salvation and so issues in either an *imputation* of merit on the protestant side, or as *impartation/infusion* on the Catholic side.[61]

Nevertheless, it may be more accurate to say that Trent and the Articles are to be understood as of a mixed provenance, that is, about sanctification within a soteriological account, but employing the forensic language of justification.[62] The various accounts of justification seem to be answering the question of how we may legitimately, or justifiably,

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[59] N. T. Wright, "Justification: The biblical Basis and its Relevance for Contemporary Evangelicalism" in G. Reid (ed.), *The Great Acquittal: Justification by Faith and Current Christian Thought*, (London: Fount Paperbacks, 1980), 14, 15, 17, 35 & 37.

[60] Wright, "The Biblical Basis", 17.

[61] Wright, *Justification*, 188: "Part of the problem with seeing everything in terms of merit (as some medievals did, thereby conditioning the thought-world of the Reformation as well), whether it be the merit we should have and can't produce, the merit which God reckons to us, or whatever, is that even if we get the logic right we are still left with God as a distant bank manager scrutinizing credit and debit accounts". See also 213.

[62] *Cf* E. A. Litton, *Introduction to Dogmatic Theology*, New Edition, P. E. Hughes, (ed.), (London: James Clarke & Co., Ltd., 1882-1960), 266: "Justification, in its active significance, is a gift of God: but whether the gift is of a declaratory or a creative nature is matter of debate. The Protestant Confessions adopt the former view, the Romish the latter…".

be made acceptable to God from a human view point. Such acceptability is declared in the Judgment but also in the present time in the gospel, and described in the church's doctrine according to the gospel. If the doctrine concerns salvation but employs the language of justification, then here and in Luther's approach, faith is to be seen distinguished from "works" as works are to be separated from regeneration.[63] Therefore, since the term *justification* is "the declaration that somebody is in the right",[64] it is possible to see how the declaration itself may become confused with the process leading to the possibility of the declaration being made,[65] and how a soteriological account may have become conflated with forensic language,[66] and how confusions and conflicts between Catholics and protestants may arise.[67]

The minimalist structure of the Articles on justification, and especially Article XI, *Of the Justification of Man*, could possibly be seen to reflect a New Testament presentation of justification in line with Wright's account. Nevertheless, it appears that the approach here is fundamentally soteriological. Support for this assertion may be found in the so-called *Homily on Justification*, or as it is called, *A Sermon of the Salvation of Mankind, by only Christ our Saviour, from Sin and Death everlasting*,[68] where there is a separation of faith and works as found in Articles XII and XIII. This separation tends to place the Anglican account in line with the protestant *sola fide* [lit., "by faith alone"] tradition of salvation/justification, yet the Article says *per fidem* [lit., "though faith"], and so does not totally reflect this approach. Yet, confusions and conflicts may arise concerning the meaning and role of faith and works in both an Anglican account of the doctrine of "justification by faith" as it is in Article XI and in the *Homilies*,[69] and with reference to the Tridentine account, and finally regarding Mascall's account. Its thrust is supported and

[63] This point is taken up below.
[64] Wright, "The Biblical Basis", 14.
[65] *Cf* Wright, "The Biblical Basis", 14: "Justification is not the *means* whereby it becomes *possible* to declare someone in the right".
[66] *Cf* R. Leaver, *The Doctrine of Justification in the Church of England*, (Oxford: Latimer House, 1979), 26, where he refers to W. D. Davies' view that *justification* is an element in the experience of reconciliation.
[67] Litton, *Introduction*, 266, regarding the differences, "The instrumental cause [of justification in the Tridentine Declaration] is the sacrament of baptism; and 'the only formal cause is the righteousness of God, not that by which He is righteous [as in the Protestant formularies], but that by which He makes us righteous, namely, by which we are renewed in the spirit of our minds…".
[68] *Sermons or Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches in the Time of Queen Elizabeth of Famous Memory*, A New Edition, (London: C. & J. Rivington, 1828), 22-35.
[69] The relevant *Homilies* are "Salvation of Mankind", 22, "A Short Declaration of the True, lively, and Christian Faith", 36, and "A Sermon of Good Works annexed to Faith", 50.

reaffirmed in Hooker's sermon of 1586, *A Learned Discourse of Justification, Works, and How the Foundation of Faith is Overthrown*.[70]

The Articles on justification are placed in the fourth group of the Thirty Nine Articles. As Kaye says, this indicates a rejection of the idea that there is no salvation outside the church.[71] In any case, both Lutheran and Catholic approaches to justification appear to be denied in Article XI, and also in the group IX to XIV. These Articles occur in the section of the Articles dealing with salvation in Christ.[72] Article X denies Pelagianism as did the Council of Trent, and does not allow for any natural human co-operation outside of prevenient grace. The greater definition and attention given to the nature of co-operation in the Tridentine decrees are not found here.[73] And in contrast to Lutheran perspectives, Article XI is presented in doctrinal terms.[74] Its form, placement and content indicate this. It says,

> We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Faith, and not for our own works or deservings: Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only is a most wholesome Doctrine, and very full of Comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification.[75]

As we have seen, in this Article, justification appears to be understood as an aspect of the gospel and of the salvation it declares: the gospel declares that a person is "accounted righteous before God". The Article seems to strongly imply by the phrase "justified by Faith" that it is the gospel that announces a method of salvation, which is, by/through faith alone, as opposed to another way, namely, by works. That faith is understood as the basis and means of salvation, where "justification" implies such a gospel method of salvation, is seen in the next sentence. If so, then the second sentence could also be read as saying: "Wherefore, that we are *saved* by Faith only is a most wholesome Doctrine…". The gospel's soteriological declaration of God's acceptance appears to be conflated with the declaratory language of justification, and this suggests that faith is a salvific event prior to

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[70] R. Hooker, "A Learned Discourse of Justification, Works, and How the Foundation of Faith is Overthrown" in J. Kiefer, "A Sermon by Richard Hooker with Introductory Comments", 17-23, internet resource – http://elvis.rowan.edu/~kilroy/CHRISTIAN/library/hooker-learned.htm .

[71] Kaye, *A Church*, 67.

[72] See Kaye, *A Church*, 64-69, understands the Articles to be ordered in seven groups.

[73] See H. Bettenson (ed.), *Documents of the Christian Church*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1943), 367.

[74] Hampson, *Christian Contradictions* makes the point that Luther is not interested in human deification and justification by faith is the hermeneutical framework and stance by which Lutherans read the scriptures – it is not a doctrine as such, but a way of configuring all scriptural material.

[75] The Anglican Church of Australia, *A Prayer Book for Australia*, Liturgical Resources Authorized by the General Synod, (Sydney: Broughton Books, 1995), 827.

regeneration, even though the Latin text says *per fidem*. In other words, there appears to be an ambiguity which is exacerbated by its minimalist structure. It is perhaps not too much to say that the doctrine appears to be of a mixed provenance and appears somewhat confused. We may see how a protestant doctrine of *imputed* righteousness may be associated with this Article and with the word "accounted". Furthermore, the note of comfort associated with the of *sola fide* approach found in protestant accounts of justification is implied by Article XI and refers to the subjective experience of salvation expressed in justificational terms.[76] The *Homily* supports this interpretation of the Article.

The *Homily* "Salvation of Mankind" states that "Faith only justifieth".[77] However, as we have seen, it seems to so draw a distinction between faith and works that they appear as separated modes within a process of salvation. This is indicated by statements such as the following: "Consider diligently these words, without works, by faith only, we obtain remission of our sins…",[78] and, "ye heard…how that three things are required to the obtaining of our righteousness: that is, God's mercy, Christ's justice, and a true and a lively faith, out of the which faith springs good works."[79]

However, such an approach seems to be ambiguous. The phrase adopted by the interpreter W. H. Griffith Thomas to explain the *Homily*, shows this when he writes: "A careful consideration of the Homily will show beyond all question…the emphatic teaching that faith alone has the office of justifying…[and] that faith is not mere intellectual acceptance of truth but a personal trust in God's mercy and Christ's sacrifice".[80] Likewise the *Homily* "Of the true, lively, and Christian Faith" insists on a separation of faith and works. It declares, "Therefore let us do good works, and thereby declare our faith to be the lively Christian faith".[81] The *Homily* "Salvation of Mankind" states plainly that "without works, by faith only, freely we receive remission of our sins. What can be spoken more plainly,

[76] *Cf* Wright, "The Biblical Basis", 31: "When we come to the debate between Catholic and protestant we find that the confusions we have just noted have bedevilled it all through. Because justification has not been separated from regeneration, Roman Catholics have accused Protestants of constructing an antinomian doctrine, an immoral legal fiction, or a hopelessly subjective Christianity…".
[77] *Homilies*, 27.
[78] *Homilies*, 27.
[79] *Homilies*, 26.
[80] W. H. Griffith Thomas, *The Principles of Theology: An Introduction to the Thirty Nine Articles*, (London: Church Book Room Press Ltd., 1963), 197.
[81] "Of the true, lively, and Christian Faith", 48.

than to say, that freely without works, by faith only, we obtain remission of our sins?"[82] A lively faith never appears without trust,[83] repentance, hope and charity,[84] and good works.[85] However, in the end it appears that the testing and approving of faith by virtues and works probably provides little difference between the general Anglican account and that of Trent, and so is based on a conceptual ambiguity. While Article XI implies a role for a declaratory aspect of justification/salvation, this does little to allow us to remove it from its processual soteriological provenance. *Per fidem* is read as *fide*, or as *propter fidem* without correction within a soteriological intention within a minimalist discourse. And so, Article XI is about salvation, yet acclaims "justification by Faith" as it describes this process of salvation in the declaratory and forensic language of justification.

That the *sola fide* doctrine may have questionable consequences is indicated by Wright when he points out that "Luther not only confused justification and regeneration but consequently put faith in the position of a work, the one thing which God requires as a condition of grace".[86] Wright believes he did this by "asking 'How can I find a gracious God?' and answering 'By faith' ".[87] With Wright's help, we may see that it is the association of the terms of salvation with the forensic aspects of justification that allows a priority of faith over regeneration that is at the basis of the so-called doctrine of "justification by faith" approach. It is also a basis for a belief in the so-called imputation of God's righteousness "by/through faith" approach. But as Wright explains, " 'Imputed righteousness' is a Reformation answer to a medieval question, in the medieval terms which were themselves part of the problem".[88]

O'Donovan claims that the reason for the inclusion of the word "accounted" as opposed to "makes" reflects an Anglican choice for imputation over impartation but also concerns a sense of the corporate nature of salvation. The importance of the word accounted is that "it defends the finality of God's decision in the resurrection of Christ".[89] Thus, O'Donovan explains:

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[82] *Homilies*, "Salvation of Mankind", 27.
[83] *Homilies*, 39.
[84] *Homilies*, 27.
[85] *Homilies*, 54 *passim*.
[86] Wright, "The Biblical Basis", 30.
[87] Wright, "The Biblical Basis", 30.
[88] Wright, *Justification*, 213.
[89] O'Donovan, *Thirty Nine Articles*, 79.

> In saying that we are *counted* righteous, the Reformers did not challenge the link between salvation and wholeness; they challenged the restriction of salvation to the sphere of the individual soul…for what transpires within that private sphere...is but the expression a public work…the redemption of the human race.[90]

Nevertheless, O'Donovan's comments indicate a soteriological provenance for and a declaratory aspect of justification as it points to the corporate nature of salvation in the minds of the Reformers. However, an important question asks if his corporate emphasis mitigates any ambiguities to be found here. The "we" of Article XI does not seem to avoid such ambiguities, and the *Homily* points in another direction to that of O'Donovan.

What, however, would be Mascall's view of the Articles on justification? If he finds problems, perhaps it is in what they do not affirm. They may reflect an emphasis on Christianity as a proclamation of the word of God, even if there is a corporate understanding of salvation concerning faith, sacraments and church. While such an Articular approach may not be identical to a Lutheran understanding of the church, it may nevertheless fail to reflect an intentional ontological basis for the account of salvation. We turn now to Mascall's account of this doctrine.

Mascall contrasts the catholic view of deification with the protestant view associated by him with Lutheranism, with A. Nygren and also of K. Barth,[91]on the basis of its extrincesism, "which sets side by side a grace which cannot really change man and a faith which cannot really embrace God…"[92] And so to contrast his view of good works with the protestant view he is criticizing, he writes as follows:

> Christians ought to do good works, but these have noting to do with the heart of the Christian religion…. They do nothing at all to make [a person] pleasing to God. They are a pure epiphenomenon, and [our] status before God is the same whether [we do] them or not; all that that depends on is…faith. They may have considerable *moral* significance; they have no *religious* significance whatever. We may well wonder at a religion that places such a dichotomy between the realms of morality and of religion.[93]

[90] O'Donovan, *Thirty Nine Articles*, 79-80.
[91] Mascall, *Recovery*, especially Chapter 4.
[92] See Mascall, *Recovery*, 90.
[93] Mascall, *Recovery*, 27.

Mascall's discussion of justification in *Christ, the Christian and the Church*, enables a comparison with the Articles.[94] His account includes the following seven themes:-

- an incorporation of human nature into the incarnate human nature of Christ;
- an elevation and deification of human nature to a participation in God;
- an understanding of grace as a source and cause of supernature;
- an ecclesial context of incorporation to be found in baptism;
- an account of real change within the individual and the Body of Christ in the process of justification;
- an approach to good works as a cause of further influxes of grace; and,
- an understanding of the doctrine of creation in terms of the doctrine of the openness of being.

Consequently, Mascall affirms that God the Creator imparts grace as he imputes it. He infuses human nature with supernatural created grace that begins the process of human elevation into the human nature of Christ, and so into a share of the filial relationship of the Second Person of the Trinity. A real quality is infused by baptism so that the individual is incorporated into both the sacramental and Mystical Body of Christ. The merits of Christ are imparted to the individual not as a reward for good works, but are accepted by us through faith. And so the significant point concerns an ontological change. As he says,

> The point is this: that the work by which God accepts us in Christ is not merely external, legal or 'logical' fiction, but a supernatural rebirth which brings about an ontological change in us; that in baptism we are brought into a real relation with the glorified manhood of the Redeemer, that in baptism there is a real supernaturalization of our human nature in its essence, which can result, if we co-operate with the grace of God, in a progressive supernaturalization of its operation and in the manifestation of supernatural virtues.[95]

This approach understands salvation as regeneration which is to be applied by us in a process of sanctification in which we "co-operate with…God". Consequently, Mascall understands the terms *justificare* to refer to both the imputation and also the impartation of Christ's merit. His objection to the protestant view is that "justification has been envisaged as simply an act of God by which man is accounted righteous without any ontological change being made in him".[96] That is, the protestant Reformers

[94] Mascall, *Christ*, 79-91.
[95] Mascall, *Christ*, 83.
[96] Mascall, *Christ*, 81.

> do not expect to see acts of supernatural virtue in the justified man; quite the contrary. But because they do not believe in a real communication of the life of God to the human soul, they are unable to see the man himself as being the subject of these acts. The sole subject, in any real sense, is God, although the merits of the acts are attributed to man by imputation.[97]

Mascall explains the Lutheran view of justification/salvation as follows:

> The supernatural and the natural in the justified man are like two parallel streams with no real connection: the former, which is wholly good, is God's operation; the latter, which is wholly bad, is man's.[98]

He is unable to accept a view of justification outside an ontological account in which there is a real communication of the life of the incarnate Christ to human nature, and in which human nature is elevated within a process of ontological change within the church and so in the individual.

Of significance for Anglicans, a re-assessment of good works is part of Mascall's overall approach.[99] His somewhat more positive view of good works is seen in his longer discussion of justification in *The Recovery of Unity*. Here, Mascall agrees with the catholic account that good works done under grace, merit further grace and glory, so that we are enabled "to fulfil our place in the divine order and attain, under God, our God-given end."[100] And so, co-operation merits further influxes of grace on the way to the Beatific Vision. Therefore, "even if merit is Christ's merit, although it is *imparted* to us as to become our own possession, in union with and in dependence upon him, [it] is not merely imputed."[101] The note of possession indicates that the over-riding context is that of creation and creational dependency in Mascall's thinking. As creatures, we possess both created being and grace.

A significant question concerns whether Mascall's account lends itself to the fullness of "comfort" asserted in the Article as of great benefit to Anglicans.[102] As we have seen, the motif of the fullness of comfort concerns the doctrine of salvation associated with the

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[97] Mascall, *Christ*, 81.
[98] Mascall, *Christ*, 81.
[99] *Cf* Hooker, "A Learned Discourse" 17-23.
[100] Mascall, *Recovery*, 51. Mascall is quoting Victor White.
[101] Mascall, *Recovery*, 51.
[102] Wright, "The Biblical Basis", 17: "Justification results in holiness because it presupposes the new birth. It is therefore also the basis of Christian assurance, the certain hope of eternal life"; 37: "The biblical doctrine of justification declares: God is God…be glad and rejoice…".

language of justification in its forensic aspect.[103] Perhaps, the note of comfort – a sign that some type of declaration has taken place or been announced in the protestant view – is only to be seen in Mascall's account with reference to the declarations of the sacramental liturgies. By saying that "even if merit is Christ's merit, although it is *imparted* to us as to become our own possession, in union with and in dependence upon him, [it] is not merely imputed",[104] Mascall implicitly affirms it in his thinking. The Articles, in using justificational language to declare a note of comfort, assert both an objective possibility of reconciliation and also its joyful personal experience. This seems to be the basis for the separation of faith and works in the Articles and in Hooker's understanding.[105] Faith is seen to be an instrumental cause of salvation/justification,[106] and so may be seen to set the believer in a new relationship with God. Justification by faith and the action of imputation, in turn, is the basis for an individual's comforting experience of divine acceptance and is "very full of comfort".[107] Alternatively, Mascall's emphasis on baptism means that the declarations within its ritual can be taken to implicitly affirm his acceptance of the personal impact of both imputed and imparted righteousness. So we cannot deny that Mascall is unable to appreciate the nexus of comfort and "justification by faith" that is at the basis of a contrast between his view and that of the Articles. Yet, any note of comfort in Mascall does not compromise his ontological account of salvation because it does not mean what it means in the protestant context. As we have seen, while "justification by faith" begs the question of the nature of salvation and the role of faith in relation to regeneration and sanctification, Mascall is concerned to point to a creational basis of salvation. This is affirmed in his emphasis on the sacraments.

Does Mascall think his account is congruent with essential Anglicanism? As we have seen, Mascall thinks his account of justification coheres with the intention of the Articles and of

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[103] See, for example, A. E. McGrath, *Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification from 1500 to the Present*, Volume II, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 2: "Justification is defined as the forensic *declaration* that the believer is righteous, rather than the process by which he is *made* righteous, involving a change in his *status* rather than his nature"; and 12, concerning Luther's account of justification: "The believer is…*iustus apud Deum et in reputatione eius*".

[104] Mascall, *Recovery*, 51.

[105] Hooker, "Learned Discourse", 10, 16-23 *et passim*.

[106] McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, II, 14: "Luther avoids any suggestion that man is justified *on account of* his faith: justification is *propter Christum*, and not *propter fidem*".

[107] *Cf* Tracy, *Analogical Imagination*, 389: "[Barth, Bultmann and Tillich] recognized that the word liberates us from our compulsive attempts at self-justification…".

Richard Hooker. He believes that his view of faith is that of Article XI,[108] but that imputation means impartation. He says it is

> thoroughly in line with the tradition of Anglicanism…[and] may be seen from the following passage from Hooker…: 'we participate Christ partly by imputation… partly by habitual and real infusion, as when grace is inwardly bestowed while we are on earth…. The first thing of his so infused into our hearts in this life is the Spirit of Christ…'.[109]

Even if Mascall thinks his view is congruent with Hookerian Anglicanism, a number of differences concerning the nature of salvation and a creational basis for it may be discerned. For example, an examination of Article XI fails to reveal a concern with creation, elevation of nature, infusion, impartation, merit, co-operative grace, and the other aspects of a catholic understanding of justification. While the separation of faith and works makes some sense in a soteriological/salvific provenance from a protestant perspective, it may not do so in a creational and ontological perspective. If Mascall understands salvation in creational terms, it is possible therefore to see the reason for his fuller account of justification "by faith" as involving both imputation and impartation. Consequently, if approached from the perspective of a creational basis of salvation, "justification by faith" and "accounted righteous before God" may be read as opening the door to a fuller ontological account. It seems that Mascall's account of justification provides such a richer creational and ontological basis than is to be found in the Articles.

Perhaps, however, Mascall and many Catholics have misunderstood Protestantism on this point as Daphne Hampson so accuses him and them. It is a failure to understand the Lutheran dialectical structure of thought wherein justification is not a doctrine of the faith but a way of thinking.[110] She writes,

> Meanwhile the Anglo-Catholic Eric Mascall, in his usual uncomprehending and hostile way, comments in lectures given in 1973: '…[We need not] be worried…whether [grace]…implies a simple change in God's attitude towards man, in virtue of which God treats him as innocent while leaving him corrupt, or whether it produces a real change in its recipient. Because God's word is creative, what God says goes: it produces effects and does not merely register attitudes'. It is of course a complete farce to say that according to Luther God leaves man corrupt!... Catholics miss something of the richness of Catholicism in Luther.[111]

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[108] Mascall, *Christ*, 83: The merits of Christ "are accepted by us through faith (*propter meritum Domini* and *per fidem*, as Article XI says)".
[109] Mascall, *Christ*, 82-83.
[110] Hampson, *Christian Contradictions*, *passim*.
[111] Hampson, *Christian Contradictions*, 122. She quotes E. L. Mascall, *Nature and Supernature*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1976), 68.

Furthermore, she notes Mascall's description of Lutheranism as an "icy blast" that is inappropriate:

> Given the overwhelming joy of Luther's hymns, talk of an 'icy blast' is perhaps inapposite? But this is also interesting. The emotional heart of Mascall's Catholic position lies in human love for God. For Luther it lies in rejoicing in faith, in trusting in God.[112]

Such a criticism is significant if the Articles reflect a protestant approach. However, an important point to be noticed is that even if Hampson's criticisms are accurate at one level, they may be beside the point for an assessment of the relationship of Mascall's approach to Anglicanism. Ironically, Mascall's criticism of Lutheranism works to emphasise his commitment to metaphysical realism as the basis of this criticism, and this, in turn, emphasises a contrast with the Articles. In *Nature and Supernature*,[113] he returns to a familiar theme, that of the influence of nominalism on Reformation theology.[114] The question is whether grace effects ontological change in humans and is not a "mere influence operating an a comparatively superficial level but is concerned with the deepest reality of man at the point where the Creator gives him his very being and conserves him in existence".[115] He understands that grace "relocates" us "on the way that leads to the beatific vision",[116] and that in salvation, the "rational creature is raised above its natural condition to participate in the divine goodness".[117] Nature and supernature are acts of the Creator, and are two aspects of the one relation God has with creation. His account of justification appears to be congruent with the logical priority of creation and of re-newed creation. Nevertheless, Mascall believes Luther has been overly influenced by nominalism.[118]

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[112] Hampson, *Christian Contradictions*, 169-170. Hampson quotes E. L. Mascall, *Grace and Glory*, (London: SPCK), 67.
[113] Mascall, *Nature and Supernature*, 67-68.
[114] Mascall, *Recovery*, 23-24: "Nominalism, in its origin, was one of the answers given to a purely logical and metaphysical problem – the problem of the relation between the universal and the particular". Mascall goes on to contrast the "medieval ultra-realists, following in the footsteps of Plato…. [and those] at the other extreme, the nominalists [who] held that the individuals were the subsistent realities and that the[universal] was a mere name arbitrarily conferred on them for reasons of convenience and denoting nothing common to [a class] in reality". Aquinas, however,"[held] that the universal had a real existence, but that, except for its existence as an exemplar in the mind of God, it existed only in the particulars".
[115] Mascall, *Nature and Supernature*, 69.
[116] Mascall, *Nature and Supernature*, 67. Mascall, however, reconstruct Aquinas's view on transubstantiation. See *Corpus Christi*, Chapter 6.
[117] Mascall, *Nature and Supernature*, 69.
[118] Mascall, *Recovery*, 25-27: "[Luther] cannot think of [justifying grace] as consisting in a supernatural transformation of a man's being in its ontological depths *beneath* the observable level; for on nominalist principles there is nothing beneath the observable level to transform". *Cf* Hampson, *Christian* Contradicitons,

Mascall also has been strongly criticised by Gordon Rupp, who questions the historical accuracy of Mascall's understanding of the influence of nominalism on Luther. Rupp's criticism will be discussed briefly in Chapter V.[119]

As we have seen, ironically, the historical accuracy of Mascall's belief about Luther concerning nominalism may also be beside the point since he assesses Luther from the aspect of metaphysical realism.[120] A questionable belief about the influence of nominalism on the Reformers need not impinge on the integrity of Mascall's ontological account. In any case, by the mid-1970s, Mascall seems to have modified his rejection of Lutheran accounts on the basis of their assumed nominalism. But this suggests only that Mascall once believed that Luther and other sixteenth century theologians were influenced by nominalism, although not intentionally so, and that now we may say more definitely that it was not the case. Significantly, Mascall writes, "We have, I hope got far enough away from the late medieval nominalism to conceive of a real change in man which is not reducible to an instantaneous change in his perceptible behaviour."[121] In any case, Mascall already had conceded a few years earlier that "Luther's nominalism, as scholars are seeing with increasing clarity, was only skin-deep".[122] He explains that

> The twentieth-century revival of Reformation study has shown that Luther and those who followed him did not separate justification from sanctification ontologically. The idea that Luther believed there was no subjective change at all in the man whom God declares and calls righteous is groundless.[123]

However, a putative failure to understand both a dialectical Lutheran structure of thought and the nature of an influence of nominalism only points to the significance of Mascall's ontological approach. The significance of Mascall's metaphysical realism for an understanding of a relationship with Anglicanism is not to be put in jeopardy on the basis

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35: "But it is also the case that Luther does indeed think that we 'change', the so-called ***second righteousness***".

[119] See G. Rupp, *Protestant Catholicity: Two Lectures*, (London: The Epworth Press, 1960).

[120] Mascall, *Recovery*, 91: "I believe that Pere Bouyer is fundamentally correct in his assertion that the deadlock between Catholics and Protestant on the theological level has been mainly due to their common inheritance of uncriticised, but highly criticisable, assumptions and thought-forms from the theologically decadent late-Middle Ages, and that of these by far the most insidious and vicious, with its barren and spectral extrinsecism, was the nominalist outlook which had come to dominate philosophy and theology alike". Other influences include the individualistic trends from the late Middle Ages, and the continued infection of Tridentine catholicism with nominalism, 92.

[121] Mascall, *Nature and Supernature*, 68.

[122] C. O. Buchanan, *Growing into Union*, 45.

[123] Buchanan, *Growing into Union*, 45.

of the accuracy of his earlier or later attitude to nominalism.[124] So, while Mascall's account of nominalism in Chapter 2 of *The Recovery of Unity* has implications for the nature of Anglicanism from an ecumenical perspective, it need not detract from his ontological emphasis as a resource for Anglicanism.

Regarding ecumenical issues, and the twentieth century attempts at reconciliation between the churches, Mascall explains that

> The ultimate cause of their separation…[lies] in certain uncriticised assumptions which both had inherited from the decadent theology of the period immediately preceding their separate existence. It is much to be hoped that…an attempt will be made to secure for the Church of the future something more Catholic and Evangelical than either Anglicanism or Presbyterianism as we have known them. It would be a dismal achievement if we were simply to load upon the Church of the future the incubus of our joint inheritance from the past, uncriticised and unamended.[125]

While getting behind sixteenth century errors to become more orthodox and so more ecumenical, as we have seen, Mascall does not limit the guidance of tradition to the ancient Fathers, even though he writes as follows.

> Theologically speaking, the tragedy of the sixteenth century was that, neither Protestants nor Catholics were adequately equipped to deal with the tremendous *religious* upheavals and demands of the time…. [They] made little attempt to get behind [the divisions]…and heal the breach. Only perhaps in that small, and to all appearances ambiguous, body the Church of England did the intuition arise that the place to which Christians ought to look for guidance was the undivided Church and the writings of the ancient Fathers….[126]

Yet, as we have seen, it is clear that Mascall conceives the continuing intellectual and philosophical tradition as of great value. He approaches the doctrine of justification from this perspective. It appears, therefore, that a significant difference between Mascall's approach to justification/salvation and the Anglican approach concerns the question of metaphysical realism. Further investigation into their characteristics confirms this assessment. However, there is a possible objection raised by Louis Weil.

The Articular contrast with Trent is taken up by Weil, who claims that a Catholic approach is inconsistent with Anglicanism. He acknowledges the non-Pelagian emphasis of Trent

[124] He had always claimed that Lutheran theology was one thing and Lutheran religion another. See Mascall, *Recovery*, 86 *passim*.
[125] Mascall, *Recovery*, 52.
[126] Mascall, *Recovery*, 30.

and that it insisted on the primacy of faith vivified by hope and charity wherein faith co-operates with good works".[127] However, Weil is troubled by this account. He says,

> Although Trent asserted that Christians should never trust in themselves, this approach to the merit attached to good works left the way open for what the Reformers saw to be the undermining of the gospel that trust was to be placed in God alone.... Although Trent's reaffirmation of the primacy of grace in justification was an important response to the Pelagianism of much late medieval piety, in the end the Council's approach to good works did not deal radically enough with the central concern of the Reformation.[128]

Weil's objection to Trent is that it did not avoid the possibility of self-justification, which is negated by the phrase "accounted righteous". As Wright says of this approach, "[It is] – however much one says one believes in grace – a way of taking back, with the Pelagian left hand, what one had just given with the Augustinian right…".[129] And so, the meaning of merit is begged, and so is the question of whether it contradicts the intention of Article XII and the meaning and intention of "accounted righteous" before God. Weil sees the differences in terms of an Anglican understanding of the sacraments. He believes that the unity of the Reformed approaches lies in "the rejection of any concept of merit as the source of the grace of justification…".[130]

Weil's emphasis on the sacraments goes some of the way toward an ontological approach. Ironically, however, if Wright is correct about the doctrine of "justification by faith" in Protestantism, then the *sole fide* approach may also lead to the possibility of self-justification in its inversion of faith and regeneration. In any case, as we have seen, the "by faith" approach does not negate the possibility of a self-justification and of salvation by "works". Consequently, Weil's objections need not jeopardize the possibility of Mascall's approach being concordant with Anglicanism.

Although Mascall's understanding of justification is similar to Trent's, his understanding implies that he would not have rejected the idea that a concept of merit necessarily denies a declaratory meaning to justification. The declaratory aspect may be seen to encapsulate

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[127] L. Weil, "The Gospel in Anglicanism" in Sykes, *The Study*, 76.
[128] Weil, "The Gospel", 76.
[129] Wright, *Justification,* 186.
[130] Weil, "The Gospel", 76. Also he says, "It is particularly with regard to the role of the sacraments as instruments of grace that Anglicanism maintained its own middle way".

and institute in experience that "trust was to be placed in God alone". In the 1970s, Mascall co-wrote the following.

> The forensic thought-model of God as lawgiver and judge…of justification as a paradoxical acquittal and acceptance of the ungodly…permeates the Bible and must be taken as basic and normative category, not capable of reduction to, or explanation in terms of, any other…. [But] in fact a true doctrine of justification is only achieved when set in the context of incorporation.[131]

This quotation indicates the richer nature of Mascall's account. It appears that the difference between Mascall's theology and the Articles concerning justification/salvation is based on the respective presence or absence, not of an ontological presumption only, but of an ontological and creational intention.[132]

The Blessed Sacrament and Sacraments

The Articles place the question of the church before that of the ministry, and then speak generally of the existence of ministry (Article XIX) before they speak of ministers (Articles XXIII and XXVI). Articles on the sacraments are in the sixth group. The sacraments are placed within the context of a discussion of the church, and reflect the felt need to rid the church of abuses connected with the authority of priests and of medieval ceremonies.[133] The Reformers seem to have understood sacraments as instruments to strengthen the faith of the believer and of building up of the church. Article XIX sets forward the nature of the visible church in somewhat dynamic or practical terms, not in institutional terms nor with reference to apostolic succession. Article XXV speaks of the sacraments as "not only badges or tokens of Christian man's profession, but rather they be certain witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by which he doth work invisibly in us…". As W. R. Crockett says of the eucharist, "The sacramental signs are connected with the reality which they signify through their use rather than in an objective manner. Such a standpoint represents an attempt to retain sacramental realism in relation to the faithful believer rather than in relation to the elements".[134] Such an approach also may be seen to reflect a desire to remain somewhat agnostic about theories of sacramental realism. There is, for example, only the hint of a theory of the relation of sacraments to proclamation in these Articles.

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[131] Buchanan, *Growing*, 47-48.
[132] *Cf* Sykes, *Unashamed*, 116 regarding the Anglican doctrine of the church, and as noted *supra*, not an Anglican doctrine of the Anglican church.
[133] J. Webster, "Ministry and Priesthood" in Sykes, *The Study*, 323.
[134] Crockett, "Holy Communion", 309.

The following is an outline of Mascall's sacramental theology set out in the following three points:-

- the nature of the church in which the sacraments are set;
- the nature of the sacraments in relation to the church; and,
- the nature of Mascall's sacramental understanding.

After this, there follows some implications of Mascall's understanding and of its relation to Anglicanism.

First, concerning the nature of the church in which the sacraments are set, we may say that a doctrine of the church forms the context for his theology of the sacraments. The doctrine of the church, in turn, is related to the incarnation understood as the elevation of human nature into divinity. The doctrine of the incarnation also is set within a broader creational context, as seen in the following passage.

> The truth is not merely that in Christ the new creation was effected on our behalf, but that through our union with him it is to be brought about in each of us. Becoming a Christian means being re-created by being incorporated into the glorified manhood of the ascended Christ…. The normal, and divinely appointed means by which this re-creation is initiated is clearly the Sacrament of Baptism… the Anglican formularies leave no doubt about this.[135]

It is not that an individual is incorporated into Christ by being added to an already existing group of people. It is rather that incorporation is into Christ by baptism, and that since baptism partakes of the reality of the church as the Body of Christ, incorporation into Christ is incorporation into the church. And so the individual experiences the faith and life of the church which is the life of Christ. The church, therefore, is described as a sacramental reality and this means that it is a sign and a steward and instrument of God's salvation.

However, the sacraments in Mascall's thinking, especially baptism and the eucharist, are not mere instruments, but organs interior to the life of the Body of Christ. The church and its organs have the character of a sign which suggests the ambiguous presence in history of the divine reality, the transformed humanity in Christ, in which the church participates. Mascall writes, "It is in the Eucharist that [the Christian's] life is given its true

[135] Mascall, *Christ*, 78.

interpretation as not merely his life but the life of Christ in him…".[136] The visible aspect of the sacraments expresses the invisibility of the divine action within the sacramental species because they are interior organs of the church. Tradition, therefore, is an event of historical incorporation. Its ambiguity at the historical level arises from the fact that "the Sacramental Body is, in a quite definite sense, perfect, while the Mystical Body is not".[137] And so, the church is not the continuation of the incarnation but of the resurrection by virtue of the fact that the Glorified Christ acts through the sacraments in his mystical Body.[138] Concerning eucharistic offering, he explains that

> As Christians we are *filii in Filio* [lit., "sons in Sonship"]…through our real incorporation into Him…. The Church is *Totus Christus*¸ the Whole Christ… in its mystical aspect it consists not only of Christ but also of us…. The Church's offering is made, not just by us who are its members or just by Christ who is its Head, but by Head and members together, *membra cum Capite* [lit., "members with the Head"]….[139]

In this passage we may see also an example of Mascall's understanding of eucharistic sacrifice. The church is the Body of Christ, incorporated into Christ.[140]

Secondly, concerning the nature of sacraments in relation to the church, sacraments may be understood on the basis of the principle *operari sequitur esse* [lit., "operation follows being"]. This principle also implies an account of the nature of a Christian and of the church. "Being a Christian is an ontological fact, resulting from an act of God…[which is] incorporation into the human nature of Christ".[141] Salvation is divinization through the incarnation. And so "in baptism we are brought into a real relation with the glorified manhood of the Redeemer, that in baptism there is a real supernaturalization of our human nature in its essence, which can result, if we co-operate…in a progressive supernaturalization of its operations…".[142] And so, of the eucharist, Mascall writes,

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[136] Mascall, *Christ*, 164.
[137] Mascall, *Christ*, 163.
[138] Mascall, *Corpus*, 43 *passim.*
[139] Mascall, *Christ*, 164.
[140] Mascall, *Recovery*, 140, regarding Anglicans and Catholics: "What has happened with both [Anglican and Catholic views of eucharistic sacrifice in the sixteenth century] is that the unity of Christ with his Church has simply fallen to pieces…".
[141] Mascall, *Christ*, 77.
[142] Mascall, *Christ*, 83.

> [The Body of Christ] as a sacramental Body…becomes present on our altars at every Eucharist when, by the operation of the Holy Ghost and the priestly act of Christ, bread and wine are transformed into, and made one with, the glorified Body which is in heaven…. It is not a repetition of Christ's sacrifice but is identical with it…. So, then, the Eucharist is the one perfect act of worship that we can offer God.[143]

Therefore, as we have seen, the definition of a Christian and of the church is to be seen in terms of God's action, not in terms of human experience.[144] God's work is invisible in us, as Article XXV says, but it is in the ontological depths of the redeemed Christian. Since we are social beings, restoration is by insertion into the redeemed community, which is supernaturally elevated into the life of God.[145] We may not expect that it will produce visible physical and moral effects, but by degrees as the soul co-operates with grace, behavioural and experiential effects may appear.[146]

Sacraments are the basis for a "re-created humanity" which is the church, and are connected with an ontological understanding of justification as an impartation of the life of God and the glorified humanity of Christ.[147] Consequently, justification[148] – whether as in an ecclesiological or a soteriological connotation – is ordered to the sacraments and the sacraments are linked as aspects of the one action of God, which gives us a share in eternity.[149] The church as the Mystical Body of Christ is imperfect, and so is brought into integral connection with the sacramental Body of Christ, which is perfect. The sacraments define the essence of the church's unity, which is the unity of God, by providing for its reality.[150] And so the church is not an organization but a sacramental organism.[151] The Body of Christ exists under three forms, namely, the natural but elevated humanity Jesus took from the Blessed Virgin Mary, the sacramental Body, and, the Mystical Body. The results of incorporation into Christ is a "real share in the eternity of God…we receive, by grace, a created participation in God's own mode of Life".[152]

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[143] Mascall, *Christ*, 161-162.
[144] Mascall, *Christ*, 77.
[145] Mascall, *Christ*, 79.
[146] Mascall, *Christ*, 87.
[147] Mascall, *Christ*, 79-91.
[148] Ironically, while Mascall's approach is of a soteriological provenance, it points towards an ecclesiological provenance and so corroborates Wright's account.
[149] Mascall, *Christ*, 171-172.
[150] Mascall, *Christ*, 115.
[151] Mascall, *Recovery*, 216 *passim*.
[152] Mascall, *Christ*, 100.

Thirdly, concerning the essence of Mascall's sacramental thinking, and especially of the Blessed Sacrament, we may observe his rational approach. The key is to be found in his joining together of two significant propositions:-

- that the presence of the Body is to be conceived to be under the species of bread and wine which only occurs by virtue of sacramental signification and where an outward aspect is not necessarily an outward sign; and,
- a proposition that not all supernatural causality is sacramental.

When taken together, these two propositions exhibit and affirm a consistent and coherent catholic account of the Blessed Sacrament. When taken conjointly within the context of a rational and metaphysical theism concerning creation and re-creation, they reflect his underlying pattern of thought and so account for the rational integrity of his understanding. And so, it appears that Mascall's ontological and creational understanding has implications for his discussion of the individual Christian, the nature of the church, the sacraments, the work and person of Christ, and the nature of the Holy Trinity. It appears that these aspects form an integrated whole in the one structure of thought where there is correlation of meaning within analogical thinking about being and the elevation of human nature to a participation in the Divine nature. Mascall's sacramental realism is formed on this basis.

However, an apparent point of conflict with the Articles occurs with regard to transubstantiation. Mascall does not believe that transubstantiation contradicts the Articles, only that certain versions of it and certain interpretations of them do so. He explains that sacraments are signs of a very special kind in that they are divinely instituted and make present what they signify. Mascall believes this understanding is in line with Article XXV.[153] In line with Article XXVII, Mascall says that sacraments possess supernatural causality described as representative signification; but he notes that not all supernatural causality is sacramental. They are subject to new and unique laws.[154] So, in the Blessed Sacrament, in line with Article XXVII, the mode of the Presence and its means, are both unique.[155] The Body of Christ is present *per modum sacramenti* [lit., "by a sacramental mode"]. In sacramental signification, the Body of Christ is present in an altogether different way to the way substances are ordinarily present in space. It is present not through its own occupation of an extended volume of space but solely through its

[153] Mascall, *Christ*, 173.
[154] Mascall, *Christ*, 174.
[155] Mascall, *Christ*, 175.

association with the species of bread which *is* extended. The bread is an effective sign of It.[156] The elements are taken up into the supernatural order and identified with the Holy Things which they signify. Sacramental signification follows a similar process to the taking up of human nature into the Second Person of the Trinity at the incarnation, but the two actions are analogous and not univocal.

Mascall believes this view is not denied by the Articles, the Catechism, and the Black Rubric. He believes that these official documents do not deny transubstantiation as such, only a crude form of physical presence. He believes that the Black Rubric implicitly affirms the real and essential presence though not a corporeal presence "after the manner of a body". This cannot mean "the Presence of a Body", since the Real Presence is affirmed, although it is not a materialistic one.[157] Therefore, the Real Presence under the form of sacramental signification does not contradict the type of transubstantiation that "overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament" nor does it contradict that the Body of Christ is taken and eaten in the "Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner", as Article XXVIII states. As Mascall explains, "spiritual and heavenly" cannot mean denial of the Real Presence since Christ's glorified human nature includes whatever physicality is proper to his glorified Body which is "given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper". Although this understanding is weakened by careless expression in the Catechism by falsely associating the material elements with our bodies and the inward and spiritual grace with our souls,[158] the prohibitions of Article XXVIII apply to the type of physicality that does overthrow the nature of a sacrament.[159] Problems arise for a belief in transubstantiation in an approach where there is either no sacramental signification because of a loosening of a relationship of the Presence with the elements as effective signs as in *receptionism*,[160] where the elements have no other function than that of a veil of the Body and Blood,[161] or, where a false physicality is asserted. Mascall sees the separation of the material and the

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[156] Mascall, *Christ*, 175-176.
[157] Mascall, *Christ*, 176.
[158] Mascall, *Christ*, 189-190.
[159] *Cf* E. L. Mascall, "The Body and Blood of Christ" in *The Church Quarterly Review* 154 (1953): 60. See also 57: "The Body and Blood of Christ [are] really present beneath [the bread and wine], so that the natural earthly life of the Christian is the outward sign of his supernatural heavenly life, a life which, while it will achieve its culmination in the beatific vision, is already operative here and now".
[160] Mascall, *Recovery*,12, in, quoting Hooker wrote that Hooker taught that "the real presence of Christ's most blessed body and blood is not therefore to be sought for in the sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the sacrament". See R. Hooker, *Ecclesiastical Polity*, V, lxvii, 6, (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1902), 376.
[161] Mascall, *Christ*, 176-180.

spiritual in the Catechism as evidence of the loss of a belief in metaphysical realism in the sixteenth century.

Mascall's account of the sacraments is possibly at variance with the way most Anglicans have understood the intention of the Articles, and it has a partisan ring to it. Although he affirms things that most Anglicans have rejected, such as transubstantiation, real presence, private masses, reserved sacrament, adoration and Benediction, and the eucharistic sacrifice, his positive explanation of them is not inconsistent with his basic approach. He includes them as part of the Church's "recovering the lost unity of an integrally Catholic theology".[162] The Church, he says, is

> bound to adhere to that appeal to primitive wholeness which so notably distinguishes the great post-Reformation Anglican divines, with their emphasis upon Scripture and the Fathers. But [he adds] I cannot see that [I am] bound to hold that either the Anglican liturgy or the Anglican divines were at all points successful in making that appeal.[163]

The appeal that Mascall desires the Anglican Church to make is based on the elevation of nature so as to participate in supernature.

The starting-point of the doctrine of creation is the basis of his sacramental understanding. Consequently, when a comparison is made between Mascall's approach and the Articles, it appears there is a contrasting approach adopted in these Articles, especially on the basis of a different approach to the location of the Real Presence, and of the nature of a real participation in that Presence by the believer. Once again, it appears that the difference between Mascall's theology and the Articles concerning sacraments is based on the respective presence or absence, not of an ontological presumption, but of an ontological and creational intention.[164]

Apostolic Succession

The question of the apostolic succession has been a controverted issue in Anglicanism. The content and the structure of the Articles about ministry reflect a process of distinction-making, which is redolent of the *adiaphora* approach. Ministry in the congregation is

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[162] Mascall, *Corpus*¸ xii.
[163] Mascall, *Corpus*, x.
[164] *Cf* also Hampson, 35: "…for Luther, salvation is a reinstantiation of ***creation***…. Salvation and the doctrine of creation are one and the same thing, to be placed on one side of what I have called the 'dialectic' ".

distinguished from ministers, and this is further distinguished from the threefold order, and so on. Article XXXII uses the terms bishops, priests, and deacons before Article XXXVI speaks of the Ordinal. It does this only to deny celibacy as a divine requirement applicable in the sixteenth century. But in the Articles at least, there is no theory of ministry. Nevertheless, while Anglicans maintained the threefold order as it was received from the medieval church, Article XXXVI defends the Ordinal from charges of insufficiency and superstition in "rightly, orderly, and lawfully" consecrating and ordaining. The Articles, however, do not recognize apostolic succession or provide an extensive theory in its defence.[165] Estimations of the significance of both the retention of the traditional orders and the lack of rationale differ according to underlying theological approaches.[166]

The following is a discussion of Mascall's approach to the question of apostolic succession. It is set out in two parts:-

- a summary of Mascall's account of apostolic succession in terms of a creational thinking and organic and relational aspects of this approach; and,
- a contrast between Mascall's view and alternative contemporary accounts that appear to uphold an Anglican agnosticism regarding bishops. It includes comments by Kaye, Webster and Norris.

Mascall surveys the New Testament and builds his understanding of apostolic succession on its basis. [167] He believes his approach is reasonable.[168] The doctrine of the ministry is grounded in the nature of the church which is priestly and apostolic. He believes that the church on earth is the "manifestation…of the human nature which the eternal Word united with himself in the womb of Mary".[169] And so, the church's apostolic character is not to be identified with one of its ministerial organs. However, if nothing more is said than that about the church then the following passage is relevant:

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[165] W. P. Haugaard, "From the Reformation to the Eighteenth Century" in Sykes, *The Study*, 18: "The English church…gave prominence to the threefold ministry…. But neither [the Ordinal] nor the relevant Articles defined the degree to which such continuity might be essential to the Catholic integrity of the church". However, as Webster, "Ministry and priesthood", 321-322, points out, "A fairly consistent theology of ministry emerged" in Reformation Anglicanism. Similarly, R. Norris, "Episcopacy" in Sykes, *The Study*, 333-340, points out that a theology of episcopacy emerged within Anglicanism. The point is that there is no extensive official theory of apostolic succession.

[166] Norris, "Episcopacy" in Sykes, *The Study*, 337-344.

[167] Mascall, *Corpus*, 14-15.

[168] See, for example, Mascall, *Corpus*, 11-12. Also 34: "The existence of the ministry rests not upon theological speculations, but upon Scripture and tradition.

[169] Mascall, *Corpus*, 25.

> It seems to be quite impossible to make sense of the plain New-Testament fact that Christ chose from those whom he called unto him twelve whom he named apostles, and that after his Resurrection he breathed into them his Spirit, gave them the authority to teach and baptise all nations.[170]

Consequently, in Mascall's understanding, the presence of episcopacy in the Anglican Church is not to be understood as an accident of history or simply on the basis of the providential activity of God in it. Its meaning is to be found in the nature of the church and in the reasonable implications of both the New Testament evidence and of other doctrines, for example, the doctrine of the Trinity.[171] Mascall believes that tradition is congruent with the New Testament's presentation of a differentiated body under the leadership of the Apostles. Consequently, it is possible to say that there is both an historical and a rational basis for a permanently differentiated church. In this sense only, it is possible to say that apostolic succession is the result of God's providential activity. As Mascall says, "The existence of the ministry rests not upon theological speculations, but upon Scripture and tradition…. [where] speculation may be of value as providing *rationes convenientiæ*…a mutual coherence of truths that have already been accepted".[172] And so, an understanding of the essence of the church together with a reasonable account of what is found in tradition accounts for such a theological meaning of the ministry. This, in turn, is reflected in and corroborated by the church's historical experience in the development of episcopacy and the threefold order.[173]

Mascall says,

> We can only conclude [if we reject apostleship] that the Church is meant to be something essentially, and not merely accidentally, different in all succeeding ages from what it was when the Lord Messiah instituted it in the days of his flesh. And this I find very difficult to believe.[174]

Mascall's account of the church and episcopacy concerns the organic terms of incorporation based on creational thinking. It describes both the incorporation into Christ and the structural and organic relationships that make up the differentiated nature of the

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[170] Mascall, *Corpus*, 31.
[171] Mascall, *Corpus*, 33-34.
[172] Mascall, *Corpus*, 34.
[173] Mascall, *Recovery*, 166: "The natural theological interpretation of this movement [including the Tractarian emphasis on apostolic succession] might well seem to be that the Church had been gradually led by the Spirit of God into a fuller understanding of an institution which had been providentially preserved in it through all the turmoils of the Reformation".
[174] Mascall, *Recovery*, 174.

apostolic and priestly body of the church. This includes an apostolic and priestly ministry on the basis of the "pattern of the life of God".[175]

> And the life of God is not an undifferentiated but a trinitarian life….in which sonship, with its two aspects of apostleship and priesthood, is not common to all three Persons but is proper to the Son alone…. [If] we remember that the Church is *ecclesia de Trinitate*, mirroring the pattern of the triune God, as well as *ecclesia de Christo*, [lit., "a church of the Trinity and a church of Christ"] mirroring the pattern of the Incarnate Lord, we can see how congruous it is that, in addition to the apostolic and priestly character of the whole Church as *corpus Christi*, there should be an apostolic and priestly character that adheres in the ordained ministry alone.[176]

Mascall's view of the church expresses its nature in the following four terms:-

- as a formal cause – the filial reality within the Trinity;
- as an efficient cause – the working of the Trinity incorporating humanity into Christ, which is the ontological ground of the church as the new creation;
- as a material cause – the glorified Body and Blood; and,
- as a final cause of the church's existence – the partaking of the divine nature.

The Incarnate Son's Priestly and Apostolic nature – in the filial status of the Word and Incarnate Lord – is the cause of the church's character as well as that of the ordained ministry. Here, the church's "ministerial, pastoral, liturgical, and teaching functions…primarily inhere...".[177] Significantly, "the Church is the Spirit-bearing body" and this "is only another way of saying that the principle of the unity of the Holy Trinity and the principle of the Church's unity are identical, for the principle of the unity of both is the Holy Ghost".[178] Mascall describes these relationships as organic and their outworking as collegial.[179] So he writes of ordination in the following terms:

> While the notion of 'apostolic succession' represents an important aspect of consecration to the episcopate, the essence of consecration or of ordination consists not in the tactual communication of a new quality but in the reception of the consecrand or ordained into the organic body of the episcopate or presbyterate respectively, that is to say, in a new relation – a membership-relation – to the existing ministerial organism and a new relation – a ministerial-relation – to the organic body of the Church…. [and this relation] is equally consistent with the very fruitful notion of collegiality.[180]

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[175] Mascall, *Corpus*, 33.
[176] Mascall, *Corpus*, 33.
[177] Mascall, *Recovery*, 216.
[178] Mascall, *Corpus*, 9. As we shall in Chapter V, D. L. Berry, "Mascall's View of the Church" in *Anglican Theological Review* 48 (1966): 31-40, takes serious issue with this understanding.
[179] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 215.
[180] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 212-213.

Thus, Mascall develops the idea of succession in terms of incorporation rather than as a substitution of one bishop for the last in history. Incorporation means that "the college of apostles expands into the college of bishops or that the college of bishops is the college of apostles, in an enlarged and transformed condition". [181] Consequently, ordination provides a special character in terms of a relation of its incipient to the church, rather than as a quality given to the individual. Mascall justifies this approach on the basis of the Trinitarian doctrine of subsistent relations and proposes the idea that "Relationship [is] a Principle in Theology".[182] Ordination concerns not an institution of an abstract view of episcopacy and priesthood, but of a provision of bishops and priests.

In an important statement about the inter-penetration of church and its ministerial organs, Mascall writes,

> The doctrine of collegiality is based upon the fundamental theological nature of the Church as the People of God and the Body of Christ. Just as the local Church is seen as neither a self-sufficient entity nor a mere component of the universal Church, but as the local manifestation of the life of the whole body – the fullness of the Church concentrated, as it were, to a point – so the individual bishop is seen as being the local focus through which in this or that place there is manifested the universal episcopate, to which Christ has committed (whether directly or indirectly, whether explicitly or implicitly may be a matter of controversy) the ministerial, pastoral, liturgical, and teaching functions which primarily inhere in him as the Apostle and High Priest of our profession…*Theologically* the Church's structure is much more like that of a living body differentiated into mutually interfunctioning vital organs than like that of a society composed of individual members, though it must be repeated that no comparison does full justice to its unique nature.[183]

In this statement, we see the structural significance of Mascall's creational and metaphysical realism as it is reflected in organic and relational terms. However, it is the combination of the organic understanding of the church together with the New Testament evidence of a differentiated body of disciples that allows us to see the essence of his approach. This combination represents an attempt to produce a rational account of the doctrine of apostolic succession and so explains how we may understand providence concerning this question. In it, episcopacy and the threefold order are neither outside the organic structure of the church nor a mere functional instrument within explained by a notion of historical contingency.[184] He intends the statement, "Relationship as a Principle in Theology", to account for a significant degree of coherence concerning the following

[181] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 213.
[182] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 209, where this phrase is the title of Chapter 4.
[183] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 215-216.
[184] Mascall, *Corpus*, 34.

terms: nature, incarnation, re-creation, church and ministry. They reflect an understanding of God's action within history and the church. [185] Ecclesiology, therefore, is essentially eschatological,[186] and analogical.[187]

Mascall's analysis of the whole church makes the church of earth as the "lower fringe" of the whole. In the whole church, the college of apostles expands into the college of bishops as the church grows in history.[188] Consecration is an act not of the earthly church but of the universal apostolate most of whose members are beyond the grave, acting through the earthly part, and incorporating a new member into itself.[189] We are not successors but contemporaries with the apostles and saints, we appeal to them, [190] and are united with them by incorporation into the ascended Lord who is Head of the Body.[191] Tradition is to be understood in organic terms, since an appeal to tradition is the appeal from the part to the whole.[192] "We shall be guilty of a grossly untheological secularization of the relational and corporate understanding of the Church and the ministry if we limit our perspective to that part of the Church which is militant here upon earth."[193] Consequently, the episcopate possesses functions and status analogical to those of the apostles. For example, the episcopate as a whole exercises the apostolic function of eye witness to the resurrection by guarding the faith in later times. Its organic relation to the whole church is indicated by its term sacramental character, as it partakes of the church's own sacramental character.

Mascall believes that the Reformers reacted not against the episcopate as a religious and theological entity, but against the corrupt and secularised institution of prelacy which they saw displayed in the contemporary church.[194] Therefore, Mascall believes, we must get back behind the thinking of the Reformation and the Middle Ages in order to see the theological nature of the episcopacy. On this point he explains

[185] Mascall, *Corpus*, 33.
[186] Mascall, *Corpus*, 24.
[187] Mascall, *Corpus*, 30.
[188] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 213.
[189] Mascall, *Corpus*, 23.
[190] Mascall, *Corpus*, 34.
[191] Mascall, *Recovery*, 186.
[192] Mascall, *Corpus*, 34.
[193] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 225.
[194] Mascall, *Recovery*, 161.

> It is the task of discerning the persisting Christian reality manifesting itself through the various forms in which it has been embodied throughout history – seeing, for example, the essential reality of the Christian bishop shining out through the superficially unprepossessing figure of the tribal wizard or the Whig grandee – and doing our best to let it express itself in the form that is appropriate to our own day, not as something which we have thought up *in vacuo* in the study…but which we have inherited as a concrete historic reality by our baptism into the Body of Christ.[195]

Historical analysis shows that a change had occurred in ecclesiological understanding by the sixteenth century. It was a change from the primitive conception of the eschatological nature of the church to that which the Reformers received. He explains that

> The Church was no longer seen as a new order of being, transcending the order of time and space, but as a divinely historical entity, whose task was the sanctification and supernaturalisation of the secular and natural order. This is of course a perfectly true description of the Church in its visible aspect, but when it virtually displaced the earlier conception two serious consequences followed. The Church Catholic came to be simply identified with the Church militant. And the chronological continuity of the Church from the first century to the present day overshadowed the presently subsisting union between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven, constituted in the person of the ascended Lord. History replaced eschatology, and participation gave way to succession.[196]

This change led to the conception of the church as an earthly society with constantly changing membership, and the ministry was a smaller group with the same character within it. Rather, the differentiated unity of the church is the unity of the Trinity. Mascall's ecclesiology does not begin with common practice but with metaphysical realism and with the elevation of nature by grace.

And so, apostolic succession is understood by Mascall to be a permanent feature of the organically differentiated body of the church where the church is incorporated into the life of Christ, reflects the pattern of the Trinity, and participates in the life of God. In it our participation in the truth of revelation is attained through our openness to the tradition. Tradition encapsulates the contemporary presence of the whole Christ, saints and all the people of God. Therefore, Mascall's writings imply that revelation, justification, sacraments, ecclesiology, apostolic succession, tradition, Christology, Trinitarianism, and, philosophy and epistemology, are all to be seen as a part of the one and consistent

[195] Mascall, *Recovery*, 162.
[196] Mascall, *Recovery*, 184-185.

ontological understanding which derives its impulse from an ontological understanding of creation and re-creation and participation in the Divine life.

Briefly, we may contrast Mascall's thinking with some contemporary approaches in order to place in relief his understanding. Mascall's presentation of apostolic succession contrasts with the bare fact of the retention of episcopacy in the Anglican Church and the lack of doctrinal support in the official texts. Kaye interprets this in the following terms:

> The argument in support of this conclusion [that is, for the retention of episcopacy] was historical and traditional, not absolute or constitutional. Such a defence presupposes the providential presence of God in the history of humankind, and in particular the church. This was a very Hookerian defence; one ought to retain the existing pattern of church order unless there are good reasons to the contrary.[197]

Likewise, J. Webster says, "It remains unclear…exactly what the threefold order consists in: though Anglicans are generally committed to three orders of ministry, the content of the orders is a matter of debate."[198] The official acceptance of episcopacy in Anglicanism is often supported by a widely held "exclusivist" view that bishops are deemed to be the *esse* or *plene esse* [lit., "being or fullness of being"] of the church. As R. A. Norris says, this has had a "permanent influence on Anglican understandings of the importance of church order".[199] However, "this influence…has not meant a general commitment to the view that where there have been no bishops…there has been no Church".[200] It is not that the reverse of this broad conclusion has been drawn as a matter of fact by Anglicans, but that it could not be drawn since such a view has not become officially fixated.

The difference of approach between these contrasting accounts indicates that apostolic succession remains a contentious doctrine in Anglicanism. Nevertheless, it appears that the difference between Mascall's theology and that of the Articles and some Anglican theologians concerning ministry and apostolic succession is based on the respective presence or absence, not of an ontological presumption, but of an ontological and a creational intention.

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[197] Kaye, *A Church*, 78.
[198] J. Webster, "Ministry and Priesthood" in Sykes, *The Study*, 332.
[199] R. A. Norris, "Episcopacy" in Sykes, *The Study*, 344.
[200] Norris, "Episcopacy", 344.

3. CONCLUSION: CLASH OR FULFILMENT?

Mascall wants to provide an adequate conception of "God" according to the Christian religion, one that avoids the "anthropocentricism and subjectivism of recent philosophical theology [and] towards the theocentrism and objectivism which has characterized the great Christian systems of the past".[201] He wrote as follows concerning the centrality of the Creator for theology:

> Being, even imperfect created being, is not just a dead 'thereness'; it is something active, living, and vocal of the divine creativeness. Here, of course, St. Thomas is not only running counter to idealism of a certain type, but to much modern realism as well…. To the Catholic, created things are not merely footprints, they are voices speaking the present creativity of God. Because they participate in His perfection they are themselves endowed with something of His activity.[202]

This view encapsulates the essence of Mascall's theological project. Mascall's theology begins with creation where the world does not possess the reason for its existence in itself. Neither are we able to think that it does if we allow our intelligence to penetrate beneath its surface to its ontological depths. If we do, we find it to be both real and dependent in its finitude. As we have seen, in Mascall's approach to Christian doctrine, creation is logically prior to redemption.[203] Consequently, the worship of the Creator is prior to gratitude for redemption in the "Christian metaphysic",[204] and knowledge of it is to be subsumed under the knowledge of creation. The demarcation of revelation and reason does not necessarily imply the separation of faith and reason. Consequently, he is able to point to the inadequacy of a purely revelationary approach to theology,[205] and also of the liberal approach. The difference concerns the presence of a creational approach based on metaphysical realism in Mascall's writings.

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[201] E. L. Mascall, "Three Modern Approaches", 21.
[202] Mascall, "Three Modern Approaches", 24.
[203] *Cf* Mascall, *He Who Is*, 1: "Logically and essentially, the doctrine of God is the fundamental doctrine of the Christian Religion, for, according to its teaching, everything other than God depends upon him and exists for his glory". Furthermore, "One of the drawbacks of being a *creature* is that you see everything the wrong way round: you look at things from man's standpoint and not from God's. The order in which things ultimately exist, the *ordo essendi*, is usually the precise opposite of the order in which we come to know them, the *ordo cognoscendi*…this is specially true of…God himself".
[204] Mascall, "Three Approaches", 20.
[205] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 23-29. See 26, regarding Barth: "One of the grounds on which traditional theism has refused to base belief in God simply upon the fact of revelation is that revelation itself needs rational justification".

Mascall believes he is a loyal Anglican in basing his theology on a fuller tradition than that of the early centuries. A statement of this position is found in a discussion "Dogmatic Theology of the Mother of God", as follows.[206]

> I do not believe that an Anglican is bound to accept what is sometimes, by a peculiar piece of wishful thinking, described as 'the Reformation settlement'. I believe that we need a new and more drastic reformation…which will, in some respects, be a reversal of the Reformation…but much more than merely a reversal. For, largely through ignorance, the sixteenth-century reformers abolished many laudable practices which were primitive, and stereotyped many abuses which were merely western and medieval…. I am speaking as a perfectly loyal Anglican…an Anglican is not committed to believing anything because it is Anglican, but only because it is true.

This reorientation of vision is encapsulated in the conclusion to the discussion of three doctrines above where it appears that the difference between Mascall's approach and that of the Articles concerns the respective presence or absence, not of an ontological presumption, but of an ontological intentionality. This is indicated by a lack of signs within the Articles that their framers intentionally understood Christian doctrine on the basis an ontological and creational thinking. The Articles emerge out of polemical situations. Nevertheless, they lack signs of a deeper ontological approach to doctrine. However, is the difference between Mascall's approach and that of the Articles a matter of incongruence or completion – a clash or fulfilment? This question will be taken up again in Chapter V. Chapter III will examine the relationship of the doctrine of existence to the existence of doctrine in the Church. Chapter IV will respond to an important criticism of the relevance of the doctrines of existence to Christian thinking.

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[206] E. L. Mascall, "Dogmatic Theology of the Mother of God" in E. L. Mascall (ed.), *The Mother of God. A Symposium by the Members of the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius*, (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1949), 49-50.

CHAPTER III

MASCALL'S METAPHYSICAL REALISM

Introduction

As we saw in Chapter II, a significant difference between three key doctrines of official Anglicanism and Mascall's approach is his insistence on a metaphysical and creational perspective. Consequently, this chapter will begin to examine the relationship of an underlying metaphysical realism to theological doctrines. We need to ask, for instance, in what sense are doctrine and realist ontology reciprocally determining. This chapter will recapitulate and extend our exploration of Mascall's metaphysical realism begun in Chapter I. But before proceeding to such questions we will discuss Mascall's account of metaphysical realism which is integral to his theological method. This account will conclude with a discussion of how metaphysical realism may be of support to Christian doctrine in general. It will develop further some of the aspects of Mascall's metaphysical approach presented in Chapter I. The material of this chapter will be set out under the following six headings:-

1. Mascall's Notion of Being;
2. The interpenetration of mind and world;
3. The knowledge of being;
4. The dependency of created being;
5. Metaphysical realism and Christian doctrine; and,
6. Summary and Conclusion.

1. MASCALL'S NOTION OF BEING

When we speak of Mascall's natural theology we may also speak of what he calls the "doctrine of existence".[1] As Mascall makes clear in *Existence and Analogy*, and as the chapter headings in this work indicate, the doctrine of existence encompasses the following aspects: "the nature of Christian Theism", "the existentialism of St. Thomas", the existential approach to Theism", "the doctrine of analogy", and "God and the creature". Of note is Mascall's discussion of "the essentialist approach to theism", often associated with St Augustine and St Anselm. In this chapter in *Existence and Analogy*, he concludes that such an approach fails for two reasons: "First, because it postulates an intuition of the divine essence which it is beyond the power of any finite being to acquire", and, "Secondly – and this is the fundamental objection – because it assumes that existence *ut exercita* [lit., "in order that it may be exercised"] can be included in the concept of an essence".[2] In our discussion here, we note how Mascall bases his natural theology in a realist metaphysic deriving from Aquinas in order to express an ontological or existentialist account of the doctrine of creation. In Chapter IV, as indicated above, a significant objection to the metaphysical character of Mascall's natural theology will be discussed, and this will lead into further determination of the philosophical and theological components of his approach.

Let us first outline Mascall's overall procedure. His doctrine of existence follows a clear path. It has three clear markers:-

- the starting-point: the question of "God";
- the account of *esse*; and,
- the account of perception.

First, he begins with the question of "God" – as Article I begins with God.[3] He notes that there is a "specific Catholic doctrine of God", and that this alone is able to provide the

[1] Mascall, *Existence*, ix. Mascall, *He Who Is*, 196: "The traditional attitude has considered the primary problem for investigation to be that of the *existence* of God, while the 'modern' attitude has considered the primary problem to be that of his *nature*".
[2] Mascall, *Existence*, 42.
[3] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 8.

"basis upon which all other Christian doctrine rests…".[4] We may be reminded that Mascall said that

> Logically, natural knowledge is prior to revelation, for grace presupposes nature…. But in the concrete world, revelation has priority over natural knowledge, for in a fallen world grace has not only to supply what lies outside the intrinsic powers of nature, but also to restore the powers of nature to their own integrity. [5]

And so, logically natural theology, in its priority to revelation, is ordered to the question of "God". In this way, it is congruent with doctrinal theology in which, as Mascall said, "Logically and essentially, the doctrine of God is the fundamental doctrine of the Christian Religion…everything other than God depends upon him and exists for his glory".[6] And so, logically and essentially, the question of "God" is the starting-point of natural and of doctrinal theology.

Mascall begins by insisting that God is to be understood as Being.[7] He is not thereby suggesting that Being is a formal definition based on our knowledge of God's essence. It derives, rather, from our knowledge of the world as God's creation, so leading to a notion of God as *ipsum esse subsistens* [lit., "very subsistent being"]. Mascall writes, "For if we experience finite beings as they really are we experience them as God's creatures and so mediately experience him, not, of course, *sub ratione deitatis* but *sub ratione creatoris* [lit., "under a concept of deity"/"under a concept of creation"] as the loving Creator of both them and us".[8] Here, the key is to acquire a knowledge of the world in its absolute dependence on God. For Mascall, this ontological dependence implies and requires an epistemological dependence. In their epistemological dependence our minds are capable of understanding God as Infinite Being because of their participation in the order of being based in God's own Being.[9] Consequently, an *analogia entis* [lit., "analogy of being"] is founded on this sense of dependence and relationship. The first task of theology is to

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[4] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 2.
[5] Mascall, *Christ*, 236.
[6] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 1.
[7] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 11: "The Thomist tradition has answered [the question of what makes "God" God] in the affirmative when it has asserted that the formal constituent of deity is Being". This is the "something [which is] even more fundamental [than love and other attributes]".
[8] E. L. Mascall, *He Who Is*, Second Edition, Appendix – "Faith and Reason: Anslem and Aquinas", (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 1943-1966), 226.
[9] Mascall, *Existence*, 57 and Chapter 5, "The Doctrine of Analogy".

formulate the meaning for "God" in this existential context,[10] so that further discussion about God can occur.

In this approach, Mascall is closely following Aquinas.[11] As he notes, the emergence of the doctrine of existence was a "work of the great tradition of Christian philosophy [that]…could only be performed over a period of centuries and it was one of extreme complexity and difficulty".[12] The mutual impact of Hebrew religion and Greek rationalism was "flint upon steel – and fire was kindled by it".[13] In this process, "God" was transformed both by and within Christianity, so as to become at once the object of religion and the first principle of philosophy.[14] The doctrine of God that emerged by the thirteenth century was not to be found in either Greek philosophy or Hebrew religion.[15] It consisted of the "final synthesis" of revelation and philosophy.[16] In the mutual stimulation of revelation and philosophy, *being* became the fundamental notion in philosophical thinking about God.

Doctrinal development occurs within the fertility of faith, or, as Mascall says, as it matures, doctrine is "revealed in its full power".[17] As such, development is capable of further development.[18] The developed doctrine of God, based on a synthesis of revelation and philosophy, is the "traditional" approach to Christian theism that Mascall calls upon Anglicans to adopt since it has been long present in Christian thinking.[19] As a doctrine about God and about the world as God's creation, it makes two main assertions, namely:-

[10] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 8 & *Existence*, 1.
[11] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 30 *passim*.
[12] Mascall, *Existence*, 15.
[13] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 7.
[14] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 5-7.
[15] Mascall, *Existence*, 1.
[16] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 7: "Not withstanding the work of the great Christian apologists and Fathers, the final synthesis did not appear until the thirteenth century, and then in the west of Europe…. In the 'baptism' of Aristotle by St. Thomas, Greek philosophy found its culmination and its true home".
[17] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 7.
[18] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 77, 78.
[19] Mascall, *He Who Is*, ix.

- that the human mind can, from the consideration of finite beings, arrive, without appeal to "religious experience" or "revelation", at a sure knowledge of the existence of a God whose primary character is that of self-existent Being; and,
- that the finite world derives its existence and its persistence from a free act of will upon the part of God, to whom it is altogether unnecessary and who would be in every respect complete without it, but whose concern with it is none the less a manifestation of the deepest condescension and love.[20]

Mascall's appreciation for Aquinas' account of God is clear. He writes that "The central importance which St. Thomas Aquinas holds in Christian philosophy is due primarily to his clear grasp of the fact that the name of God, "He who is", must be understood in a fully existential sense".[21] Quoting Gilson, Mascall accepts that "it is not the essence, but the act of existing, of a thing that is the ultimate foundation of anything true that we know about it…".[22] In regard to "God", existence and essence are identical. God's essence is to exist. Referring to Aquinas' account, Mascall notes that

> [Aquinas] himself says that the reason why the proposition "God is" is *per se nota* [lit., "known through itself"] is that God is his own *act of existing* (*Deus est sum esse* [lit., "God is I am to be"]), not that God is a particular kind of essence. He does not even argue that God is his own essence until he has proved that God exists. And when he maintains that in God essence and existence (*esse*) are identical, his assertion is not that existence is implied by God's essence, but that God's essence is the same as his existence…. In God everything is identical with the act by which he exists. [23]

As a consequence of this understanding of God, Christian theism interprets the contingent and finite world in relation to God's essential existence. The existence of the world, in dependence on God's existence, is made to share in *being*. This concept of being (*ratio entis*) is analogical in that it allows for an understanding of the kinds of being that make up the world as participations in the all-creative Being of God. Mascall writes, "[Aquinas] was indeed convinced that the existence of God rendered the world intelligible…. 'God' was not merely a name for the intelligible principle of the world, it was the name of the Being who…became incarnate…. [who is] *ipsum esse subsistens*…".[24] The intelligibility of the world and our understanding of "God" depend on the notion of *being*. With it, creation is to be understood as in an asymmetrical relation of absolute dependence. Being also implies knowing, since knowing is a mode of being.

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[20] Mascall, *He Who Is*, ix.
[21] Mascall, *Existence*, 16.
[22] Mascall, *Existence*, 57.
[23] Mascall, *Existence*, 42.
[24] Mascall, *Existence*, 16.

Secondly, following Gilson and Aquinas, Mascall interprets being in a dynamic sense, that is, as the act of existence, *esse*.[25] This is the basis of existential theism. An existential interpretation of the world is to be contrasted with a logical or conceptual description where the reality of extra-mental existence is accounted for merely in terms of its appearance to us or its impact on us. In contrast, the existential approach has a profound effect on our understanding of "God".[26] As we have seen, to be "to be" is the formal constituent of deity. It is known, however, not in itself, but only through the world as God's creation, that is, *sub ratione creatoris*. Even without a formal definition of "God" drawn from our knowledge of God's essence, we may acquire a real knowledge of who God is, as *ipsum esse subsistens*. The doctrine of existence gives a formal meaning to "God" as it is found in the community of faith.[27] It employs both arguments for God's existence and methods of analogical thinking. We are enabled to speak of God in conceptual terms drawn from our knowledge of finite existence.[28] As Aquinas says, we do not know what God is, only that he is. In the faith of the church, we may know, not only that God is "he who is", as proclaimed in Exodus 3:14, but also, by means of rational reflection, arrive at the affirmation that God exists.[29] Mascall's claim is that being and knowing mutually inter-relate.[30] On the basis of his understanding of *esse*, Mascall is able to rationally explicate a notion of "God" without any necessary help of revelation.[31] Hence, the doctrine of existence possesses a significant explanatory value.[32]

Thirdly, Mascall bases his natural theology on an account of perception. From a metaphysical perspective, the doctrine of perception describes the process of cognition, but

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[25] E. L. Mascall, "Introductory Essay" in *He Who Is*, Second Edition, xii: "I was heavily indebted to M. Gilson".
[26] Mascall, *Existence*, 10 & Chapter 3.
[27] A discussion of Gilson's "Exodus metaphysic" and whether a definition of "God" is to be based on revelation will occur in Chapter IV. It investigates criticism of either Mascall's or Gilson's approach, and its relevance to the integrity of Mascall's philosophical theology. Regarding the question of the definition of "God", see Mascall, *He Who Is*, 10-13.
[28] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 95 *et al*.
[29] Mascall, *Existence*, 11-14.
[30] Mascall, *Whatever*, 14.
[31] See especially Mascall, "Introductory Essay", xi & "Faith and Reason", 226. In Mascall, "Faith and Reason", there appears to be a contradiction between this and the first edition of *He Who Is*, 5. In the former and in *Existence and Analogy*, 11, Mascall seems to base his rational development of "God" on a definition from revelation. However, a more accurate reading of his position seems to indicate that while we know from revelation who and what God is – "I am how I am" – all that is needed for the doctrine of existence is that "God" is provided by the community of faith. See *Existence*, 17, which may be read in this way. As we shall see in Chapter 4, a definition deriving from revelation corroborates the rational understanding of "God". Mascall's essential position is in Mascall, *He Who Is*, 96: "The God that philosophy demands is thus nothing less than the God of *Exodus*, the God whose name is *I am*".
[32] Mascall, *Existence*, 1-9 *et al*.

not its goal. Its goal is the attainment of truth. In this sense, the doctrine of perception may be called the instrumental cause of truth and the doctrine of truth as its final cause. It concerns an intelligent understanding of extra-mental reality.[33] It also involves an account of the inter-relationship of all of the psychological aspects of a whole person which are involved and focused in contemplative wonder[34]– a striking aspect of Mascall's natural theology. Through contemplation, the mind comes to a unitive knowledge of existence through an intuition of transcendence in the world.[35] To Mascall, however, transcendence is not at a level above and beyond that of finite experience. It is to be found in an openness of being, and in an openness of knowing experienced within the world of finite existence.[36]

An implication of what we have so far presented is the inter-relation of the human mind and the existence of the world. The following section will treat this aspect of Mascall's doctrine of existence in some detail.

2. THE RADICAL INTERPENETRATION OF MIND AND WORLD

Mascall's account of the doctrine of existence presumes a certain correlation of mind and matter, and of the person and the world.[37] When Mascall affirms the interpenetration of mind and world, his approach is primarily metaphysical rather than epistemological, without the limitations of a particular cognitional theory.[38] In outlining what is meant here, we offer the following ten points.

The first concerns the aspect of *participation*. For Mascall, at the heart of all things there is an essential unity which the mind is able to perceive, and in which we are able to participate.[39] To expose this unity to rational reflection, Mascall turns to the Five Ways.[40]

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[33] Mascall, Whatever, 2 & 17 *et al*: "The Latin words *intelligentia* and *intellectus* [mean] to read beneath or within".
[34] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 80 & Mascall, *Openness*, 141 *et al.*
[35] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 99-102 *et al.*
[36] Mascall, *Whatever*, 26: "Reality is…intelligible, that is to say *meaningful*."
[37] Mascall, *Openness*, 100: "It is on the level of intelligence or spirit that this capacity to penetrate other beings…reaches its full manifestation…".
[38] E. L. Mascall, *Nature and Supernature*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1976), 12: "I have misgivings about taking cognitional theory as a starting-point. This may, however, mean nothing more than that there are more ways than one of building up a philosophical system, though I suspect that Fr. Lonergan himself would repudiate any method that did not conform to his methodology…".
[39] The *Intellectual Principle* encapsulates this idea.

The arguments, proceeding by way of distinctions, clarifications and explanations, lead to a cognitive insight concerning the cosmological relation. Written into the very structure of reality is an incompleteness and contingency that the mind can discern.[41] The mind apprehends the cosmological relation, not as the conclusion to a logical argument, but as an intellectual penetration into the ontological depths and true nature of things.[42] The Five Ways focus an intuitive process. They do not lead us by the path of logic to a conclusion, but draw us to a recognition by the path of insight.[43] Mascall terms this an apprehension of "the-creature-deriving-being-from-God and God-as-the-creative-ground-of-the-creature: God-and-the-creature-in-the-cosmological-relation".[44] As he says, the Five Ways are to be regarded as "monstrations" and not as demonstrations.[45] Understanding follows on our participation in the structure and dynamism of what is.

Mascall describes our relationship to God as one of *participation*. Created being participates in God's perfection.[46] He observes that created beings have a tendency to fulfilment and perfection. So creation is the power to exist, not the power to avoid non-being.[47] While dependent on God's creative energy, the world perseveres in being. God's sustaining is God's creation, and God's creation shows the tendency to find perfection in God. In this respect, creation is not the mere continuing in time of something once begun.[48] However, this participation in God's perfection means that we participate in creation in a finite mode. God's perfection is not limited, but the creature's participation in it is necessarily finite.[49]

Furthermore, nothing is ejected from God in creation.[50] The relation of God to the world is to be seen as the world's participation in Being itself. There is no opposition between Creator and creation, rather a relationship of unimaginable intimacy in which there are no intermediaries.[51] God is present in essence and power to the world,[52] and is at the

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[40] Mascall, *Openness*, 110.
[41] Mascall, *Openness*, 111.
[42] Mascall, *Existence*, 78.
[43] Mascall, *Existence*, 123.
[44] Mascall, *Words*, 85.
[45] Mascall, *Existence*, 90.
[46] Mascall, *Existence*, 122-123.
[47] Mascall, *Existence*, 146-148.
[48] Mascall, *Existence*, 147.
[49] Mascall, *Existence*, 151.
[50] Mascall, *Existence*, 152.
[51] Mascall, *Existence*, 124.

ontological root of finite being.[53] Likewise, in the teaching of Thomist Realism there is no disjunction within human intellectual experience between being in which we participate and its intellectual apprehension.[54] Our knowledge of being occurs because of our participation in the being of the created world. Significantly, therefore, Mascall points out that we experience extra-mental reality before we understand and will ourselves. This is the heart of the doctrine of perception to which we now turn.

The second issue concerns the aspect of *perception*. This may be described also as a process of participation in the world.[55] Mascall's doctrine of perception is a vital part of his existential approach. It concerns the nature of our perception of extra-mental existence. As noted above, for Mascall, metaphysics is prior to epistemology. His theory of cognition is, therefore, one aspect of a larger metaphysical approach. The metaphysical nature of the doctrine of perception cannot be established on the basis of something more fundamental in order to compare it to alternative approaches. Furthermore, Mascall supports his doctrine of perception by showing the incoherence of opposing views.[56] He attacks the epistemologies deriving from Descartes, that is, those that may be described as based on a turn to the subject. He rejects the accounts of Locke, Berkeley, Hume and Kant, together with the various twentieth century versions of this fundamental approach. Mascall also shows how his approach is justified by its coherence with non-philosophical aspects of life as experienced by philosophers themselves.[57]

Mascall believes the soul is not confined to one point in the body but is *tota in toto et tota in aliqua parte* [lit., "everything in all things and everything in all places"].[58] Embodied minds may penetrate the world.[59] The embedding of the mind in the world is seen in the way Mascall understands the participation of persons in being. In the following passage we read how Mascall verifies his approach to perception by giving it an empirical basis. We

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[52] The phrase is from Aquinas.
[53] Mascall, *Words*, 104.
[54] Mascall, *Existence*, 63.
[55] Mascall, *Whatever*, 22-23 *et al*.
[56] See Mascall, *Words*, 29-62 & Mascall, *Openness*, 95-98 *et al*.
[57] Mascall, *Whatever*, 7, says, in twentieth century Logical Positivism, " 'all acts of perceptions are isolated experiences at either subjective or objective poles' " was not proclaimed but it turned philosophy into a esoteric pursuit, and philosophers lived as if they were enduring entities.
[58] Mascall, *Whatever*, 4.
[59] Mascall, *Whatever*, 12.

note, too, the inter-relationship of internal mental reflection and extra-mental reality. He writes,

> We are conscious of the existence of other things before we become conscious of the existence of our own selves….We are aware of the existence of beings outside our own minds more immediately than we are aware of the existence of our own minds…. Nevertheless, the primary deliverance of perception is the extra-mental being….What in fact makes many philosophers reluctant to admit that we perceive extra-mental beings is the subjective character of what have been variously called sensa, sense data, sensibilia, sensible species or phenomena…. But this is in turn due to the assumption that the datum of perception is a purely sensory object….[60]

We see here that the mind is ordered to extra-mental reality.[61] And so Mascall's Thomist account contrasts with a modernist account wherein extra-mental objects are not accepted as the terminus of perception. Rather, in the modernist approach, it is the phenomena of sense-data, rather than extra-mental objects themselves, that are believed to be the terminus of perception. Furthermore, Mascall believes that in the development of modernist ideas from the time of Descartes, "something more than idealism is involved, namely, sensationalism".[62] Sensationalism was added to the initial idealistic accounts of perception and so intensified the subjective nature of it. Consequently, extra-mental reality could only be reached by inference, imagination, assumption or speculation.[63] In the development of philosophy from Descartes to Kant, and then in the twentieth century followers of Hume and that of the contemporary linguistic positivists, philosophy is seen to have turned away from a concern with the embodiment of mind in the world.[64] As a result, our understanding of knowledge was expressed as more and more a privatised and hidden quality, locked away in the corners of individual minds.[65] In the search for clarity and certainty, the mind retreated from the world. The alternatives seemed to be that mind became a function of mechanistic material forces, or, alternatively, it dominated the world

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[60] Mascall, *Openness*, 97-98.
[61] Mascall, *Openness*, 98: "And indeed the answer to both solipsism and to sensationalism is that, strange as it might seem *a priori*, we are aware of the existence of beings outside our own minds more immediately than we are aware of the existence of our own selves".
[62] Mascall, *Openness*, 95.
[63] Mascall, *Whatever*, 11, where he explains that the root of the trouble is that what is apprehended by the mind in the act of perception is taken to be a sensible particular, and whether anything lies beyond this is a matter of deduction, assumption, speculation, and that the sensible particular is a modification of the mind and is thus grasped by the mind infallibly and immediately.
[64] Mascall, *Openness*, 94.
[65] Mascall, *Whatever*, 2-9, 11.

so much that only mind was regarded as real.[66] Either way, humans were not at home in the world. And so it may be said that realism attempts to reappraise the human habitat.[67]

As we have seen, in Thomist Realism the attainment of knowledge is based on the apprehension of extra-mental reality rather than on a process of inference and speculation.[68] Mascall explains that while there is no perception without there first being sensation – *nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu* – the sensible particular is not the terminus of perception.[69] Rather, he describes it as the *objectum quo* and not the *objectum quod*. The sensible particular is the *objectum quo* [lit. "the object by which"] – through which the intellect grasps the extra-mental reality, the real thing, directly and in a mediated way.[70] The intelligible extra-mental reality is perceived to exist *in se*. Primary perception is of extra-mental reality. However, it may be accompanied by a "mysterious and fugitive awareness of [oneself] as the subject and not the object of the act, an unthematic and implicit admission that [one is] at the near end of the act…".[71] Therefore, while the sensible qualities are subjective, the real world remains.[72] Intelligence grasps intelligible beings by means of the sense object which is not intelligible except as it is made the object of a reflective act. So there is a reciprocal relationship between the intelligibility inherent in the world and that in the mind. To understand the world correctly is to understand its transcendent cause.[73]

Mascall believes that our perception may not be isomorphic with reality. He also believes that Aquinas may not have realised that the real world might not be isomorphic with

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[66] *Ct* Mascall, *Whatever*, 2: "Although the mind cannot become other things 'entitatively', it really and truly can become them 'intentionally, that is by *stretching out into them*. 'Intention' in this context goes far beyond its everyday connotation of a mere aspiration or a registration of a future volition; in Latin, *intendere* is *tendere in*".

[67] Mascall, *Openness*, 98-100. Mascall's discussion of L. Dewart's theological relativism shows how his doctrine of perception informs the Intellectual Principle which, in turn, shows Dewart's ideas to be also self-referentially incoherent. See Mascall, *Whatever*, 19-24 & *Openness*, 124-140.

[68] Mascall, *Openness*, 99.

[69] Mascall, *Openness*, 99.

[70] Mascall, *Openness*, 99. *Cf* J. P. O'Callaghan, *Thomist Realism and the Linguistic Turn: Toward a More Perfect Form of Existence*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 199-274 *et passim*: his discussion concurs with Mascall's approach to Aquinas' account of epistemological realism. O'Callaghan is clear that Aquinas understands that the primary object of knowledge is *res animam* and that the concept or idea is *that by which* the intellect knows something else, the *res animam*. He explains, 238 *et al*, that the *object* of the intellect is the quiddity of the *res animam* which moves the intellect to act. The *sensible* and *intellectual species* are nothing more than the formal cause of the actuality of the intellect, and so cannot be at the same time the object of the intellect, as many thinkers from Descartes to Wittgenstein have believed it to be, 235. The modernist "Introspectibility Thesis" reverses the Thomist order.

[71] Mascall, *Openness*, 99 & Mascall, *Words*, 34.

[72] Mascall, *Words*, 35.

[73] Mascall, *Existence*, 126.

sensible phenomena.[74] However, the adjustment of the traditional account of perception by the standards of modern understanding does not weaken the case for realism.[75] Mascall goes on to say that while scientific theories are to be understood as maps and models of the world, they are also to be understood as indirect statements about the constitution of the world. Consequently, if the world of sensible phenomena is believed to be the real world, then scientific statements are not about the real world. Rather, the real world is the intelligible world with a structure different from that of the sensible phenomenon.[76] However, reflection must conform to the real world. For example, the doctrine of universals and particulars has to conform to it. Analogical thinking and the empirical method of science are possible because the world is so structured with both contingency and rationality.[77] It is the *objectum quod* of our perception in which *ens et verum convertuntur* [lit., "being and truth converge"].[78] Both sense data and intellect working together within the one personal subject are necessary for us to understand perception.[79] As Mascall says, "This is the heart of the epistemology of St Thomas Aquinas and of such modern Thomists as M. Gilson and M. Maritain".[80]

The third aspect concerns a distinction of conceptuality and mental *judgment* in perception. Mascall follows Gilson in the doctrine of the second operation of the intellect, known as the judgment of existence.[81] Gilson has been criticised for this on the basis that it is inappropriate to affirm a judgment of the existence of anything while denying that it includes a conceptual grasp of its essence.[82] Nevertheless, Mascall follows Gilson's approach, as the following shows:

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[74] Mascall, *Words*, 41.
[75] Mascall, *Words*, 39.
[76] Mascall, *Words*, 41.
[77] Mascall, *Existence*, 62.
[78] Mascall, *Whatever*, 14.
[79] Mascall, *Openness*, 103.
[80] Mascall, *Natural Science*, 239 & Mascall, *Openness*, 105.
[81] Mascall, *Existence*, 50, 54, 55, 57, 62, 65, 88.
[82] J. M. Quinn, *The Thomism of Etienne Gilson: A Critical Study*, (No Place: Villanova Press, 1971), 53-75, who believes that existence can be conceived and that it can function as a predicate; to assign a theological origin (from Exodus 3) to the distinction of existence and essence is irrational; existence is an act and an act possesses attributes; and, *esse* reached by judgment is not the act of being. In any case, perhaps Quinn's criticism does not radically affect Mascall's approach.

> The Intellect, while it penetrates to the actual existent, knows it not in its individual essence in the concept which it abstracts from it; and no amount of concept-forming or concept-analysis does anything to tell us whether what is conceived exits outside the mind or not. Existence would seem to be radically unknowable, for existence is always of the particular. The sense can receive particulars but cannot know them; while the intellect can know but can only know universals…. We have seen already that existence – or, better, exist*ing* – is not abstracted in the concept but affirmed in the judgment.[83]

In this approach, the separation of existence and essence in finite being, and the identification of essence and existence in Infinite Being, is based in the distinction between a conceptual abstraction and an act of judgment in the activity of perception.[84] And so, in applying this approach to our understanding of God, Mascall says,

> Any attempt to prove the actual existence of God – his *existentia ut exercita* [lit., "existence in order that"] – from the consideration of his essence is bound to fail, since essences are grasped by the mind in the formation of concepts, while actual existence is asserted in the affirmation of a judgment.[85]

It is the composed nature of finite beings that enables us to affirm Self-Existent Being wherein its essence is to exist. In infinite Being, the separation of essence and existence is overcome in our minds in a judgment of the existence of such a Being.

This pattern of thinking also occurs in elaborating the attributes of Self-Existent Being, namely simplicity, perfection, goodness, infinitude, eternity, unity, and immutability. These are given in terms of finite being but are understood analogously, that is as supereminently possessed by Infinite Being. And so God is personal, omnipotent, omniscient, and is numerically and constitutionally one.[86] In each instance of finite being, essence and existence are separate, but the identification of God's essence and existence is the starting-point of the rational account of God. On this point, Mascall writes,

> [Aquinas] assumes that, although we cannot obtain by the exercise of reason an essential or quidditative knowledge of God, we can know certain of his attributes, by establishing first of all the fact that in God essence and existence are identical and then deriving the consequences of this identity.[87]

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[83] Mascall, *Existence*, 54 & 57.
[84] Mascall, *Existence*, 50-65.
[85] Mascall, *Existence*, 65.
[86] Mascall, *Openness*, 118.
[87] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 116.

God is known directly but not immediately because God is not "proportioned to the human mind".[88] Ontologism, which Mascall denies, is the blurring of the distinction between God and the creature, and leads to a denial of transcendence in immanentism.[89] Rather, God is known directly but not immediately in a cognitive act. As Mascall says, "God is not defined by forming a concept of him, but by affirming his mode of existence, and existence is not conceptualizable. God is…given to us in a concept of finite being which declares its dependence for existence on a transfinite cause".[90]

The fourth aspect concerns the relationship of being to *knowing*, and it follows directly from the location of the doctrine of perception within ontological thinking. Mascall agrees with Gilson that metaphysics is prior to epistemology. Gilson opposed the kinds of critical realism in which the order is reversed. He notes Gilson's many arguments concerning the incoherence of critical approaches.[91] Based on Gilson's *Handbook*,[92] Mascall affirms the incoherent aspects of critical realism. The following three objections are given as examples. The first objection concerns a confusion of terms. While an idealist objection to realism is formulated in idealist terms, the idealist confuses that which is given in thought with that which is given by thought. Indeed, idealists borrow realist terms and reconfigure them. The second objection concerns a foundational attitude of mistrust. The idealist begins by distrusting thought and the possibility of knowledge. Alternatively, the realist claims that we do not have to ask if something beyond thought is thinkable. While reality is inexhaustible, it is apprehended nevertheless. Consequently, "knowing is not apprehending a thing as it is in thought but, in thought, apprehending the thing as it is".[93] The third objection concerns an insufficiency in the idealists' method, for there is nothing in it to differentiate the illusory from the real. Existence is not to be explained after one has asserted self-awareness, but is the initial condition of self-awareness.[94] And so, Mascall believes that the realist approach is coherent, and that it provides the basis for the attainment of truth.

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[88] Mascall, *Existence*, 65 & 80.
[89] Mascall, *Existence*, 80.
[90] Mascall, *Existence*, 88.
[91] Especially Gilson, *Thomist Realism*, & Gilson, *Methodical Realism*.
[92] Mascall, *Openness*, 92-96. Gilson, *Methodical Realism*, Chapter 5, "The Realist Beginner's Handbook", 127.
[93] Mascall, *Openness*, 92-95.
[94] Mascall, *Whatever*, 13. Mascall is quoting Chirico.

The fifth aspect concerns a *verification* of Mascall's ontological epistemology. Alternative models of perception are found to be incoherent, and are often in contradiction to our experience of the world:[95] they are denied by life situations. Mascall reduces such theories by arguments of the *reductio ad absurdum* kind, as well as by pointing out their denial in the life situations of philosophers who teach them.[96] Three examples follow. Some scientists claim not to be able to know the world at the same time as they act in it as if they did.[97] Idealist and sensationalist accounts of perception logically reduce to solipsism, yet this is denied by their proponents in the course of their defence.[98] Those who hold non-substantialist accounts of the mind affirm the existence of their own minds as a repository for such theories.

The sixth aspect concerns the *arguments for the existence of God* and *contuition.*[99] These arguments direct the attention of the mind to certain features of finite beings.[100] These features could be overlooked; but they provide data for the affirmation of the existence of God in a way that does not rely on a discursive process of argument. They dispose us to a "frame of mind in which [the person]...will be able to apprehend finite beings as they really are…",[101] that is, as "the-creature-deriving-being-from-God and God-as-the-creative-ground-of-the-creature: God-and-the-creature-in-the-cosmological-relation…. [where] there is a *contuition* of God, 'the apprehension of the presence of the cause in a perceived effect' "[102]

For Mascall, *intuition* suggests the non-discursive nature of cognitive insight,[103] while *contuition* denotes the mind's achievement of insight through the ontological contemplation of finite being.[104] In this regard, the Five Ways stimulate the attainment of

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[95] Mascall, *Openness*, 108 *et el*.
[96] Mascall, *Existence*, 82: "Perhaps the most obvious weakness of the positivist school in its rejection of the notions of substance, existence and causality lies in its failure to explain satisfactorily why such notions have been held by intelligent people".
[97] Mascall, *Whatever*, 11.
[98] Mascall, *Whatever*, 3.
[99] Mascall, *Words*, 85. This has been discussed in Chapter I.
[100] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 40-56 & Mascall, *Words*, 84-87.
[101] Mascall, *Words*, 85.
[102] Mascall, *Words*, 85.
[103] Mascall, *He Who Is*, Ch. 7, esp. 73-82.
[104] Mascall, *Openness*, 111, 108,111,155: Contuition is the mental grasp of both the contingency of the material object of perception and the necessity of its ground in one mental act: "a contuition of God-and-the-world-in-the-cosmological-relation"; but a "dialogue" may be needed for the mind to grasp what contingency really means.

one act of insight.[105] Such an attainment is to be found in the mutuality of intuition and argument. However, as Mascall says, this will not come easily to anyone not trained in the habit of contemplation – especially when the culture of industrialized societies causes it to be atrophied.[106] God, however, supplements our natural knowledge by supernatural revelation.[107] And so the mind penetrates reality and is capable of various functions, including both logic of *ratio* and the insight of *intellectus*.[108]

The seventh aspect concerns an account of *truth*. Truth is the conformity of the understanding and reality to each other – *veritas est adæquatio rei et intellectus* [lit., "truth is an adequation of reality and intellect"].[109] Mascall points out that such conformity is not between idea and reality as in Cartesianism; nor is it between understanding and idea as in Berkeley and later idealism; neither is it between understanding and the name, nor between name and reality (as in logical and linguistic positivism).[110] Rather, both the idea and the name are important media in attaining and communicating truth, but not as substitutes for "mind" and "reality". Indeed, mind and reality become identical in the order of knowledge.[111]

The eighth aspect concerns the *nature of knowledge*. Realism argues that statements about knowledge are descriptions of what knowledge really is, rather than theories designed to account for the possibility or actuality of knowing anything.[112] Knowledge cannot be compared with something simpler, for there is nothing more fundamental or more simple.[113] Verification is possible only by showing that counter-positions are self-referentially incoherent or that their defence calls upon theories they reject formally.[114] Knowledge uses words as instruments, an *objectum quo* of intelligence, where thinking and knowing are the significant activities of the intelligence. Truth consists in the

[105] Mascall, *Words*, 85.
[106] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 80 *et al.*
[107] Mascall, *Words*, 87.
[108] Mascall, *Words*, Chapter 4.
[109] Mascall, *Whatever*, 19.
[110] Mascall, *Whatever*, 20.
[111] Mascall, *Whatever*, 21.
[112] Mascall, *Openness*, 100.
[113] Mascall, *Openness*, 100.
[114] Mascall, *Openness*, 100.

conformity of the mind with reality; and not, therefore, in a schematic or logical correlation of words with phenomena, or in labelling an object correctly.[115]

In knowing, the knower is really united to another finite being, and made one with it on the level of intentional being. And so the mind has the capacity to embrace other beings.[116] Mascall affirms in accordance with Scholastic principles that there is *nihil in intellectu quod non fuit prius in sensu* [lit., "there is nothing in the intellect which was not first in the senses"], and that the *mens convertit se ad phantasmata* [lit., "the mind turns to the imagination (in its act of understanding)"]". He adds, however, that *mens quodammodo fit omnia, non entitative sed intentionaliter* [lit., "the mind in some measure becomes all things, not essentially, but in the realm of knowledge"].[117] The mind stretches out into the ontological depths of extra-mental reality.[118] Concerning a linguistic understanding of knowledge, Mascall writes,

> Unless you can affirm that words acquire their meanings from minds which use them you may be forced into holding that words are a kind of self-subsistent entity that generate their meanings for themselves…. But we ought not perhaps to be surprised if it turns out to be difficult to make intelligibility intelligible without believing in intelligence.[119]

Consequently, language becomes an instrument of mind and communication rather than the reverse.[120] Mascall predictably opposes the logical and linguistic positivisms he found in his intellectual environment, just as his approach runs counter to coherence theories of truth. In these ways, Mascall opposes our attainment of truth to linguistic convention.

The ninth aspect concerns the nature of *meaningfulness*. The meaningfulness of language is to be found in its usage in a community of intelligent humans.[121] Truth does not consist

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[115] Mascall, *Whatever*, 20-23.
[116] Mascall, *Openness*, 100.
[117] Mascall, *Whatever*, 1 & *Openness*, 100.
[118] Mascall, *Whatever*, 2.
[119] Mascall, *Whatever*, 9.
[120] *Cf* O'Callaghan, *Thomist Realism*, 1-39, where he explains that for Aquinas words analogously and less properly signify concepts, but the *what* of the *modus significandi*, is ultimately concerned with the *res extra animam*; so words are about the *means by which* they signify the concept.
[121] About the views of the linguistic and empiricist philosopher, A. J. Ayer, Mascall writes that the meaningfulness of language is limited to its capacity to describe empirical sense-phenomena. The inadequacy of Ayer's approach led to the later inclusion of ethical and religious statements as meaningful to some extent, but it restricted investigation to the structure and the conditions under which utterances were made by the people who uttered them, that is, concerning their linguistic behaviour, but reference to external extra-linguistic reality was ruled out as meaningless. However, Mascall replies that if it is held that words are associated with phenomenal objects because those objects are what they mean, then where does the meaning

in the conformity of language and reality, which only loosely fit each other, but between understanding and reality; and it is in the understanding that meaning is found.[122] We assert truth in language, but truth is not the assertion. Truth is not the "ever-changing vocalization of man's subjective experience as a changing inhabitant of a changing world".[123] Rather, truth is insight into reality, and not the assignment of vocal labels. And so, "*meaning* can be the same under a variety of linguistic and conceptual vehicles".[124] To discover if a statement is meaningful is to see if it conveys meaning, and to do this is to test if it can be understood.[125] There cannot be an extrinsic criterion of meaningfulness. Linguistic philosophers have made this a study of the conditions under which certain types of humans utter certain types of utterances, and have identified the meaning of sentences with the conditions of their pronouncement, instead of seeking meaning in the mental life of the users; but they do not apply this to their own writings. Idealists identify metaphysics and logic, but metaphysics is something more, and truth cannot be identified with self-consistency of logical propositions.[126]

The tenth aspect concerns the *Intellectual Principle*.[127] The Intellectual Principle encapsulates all the aspects of the doctrine of existence. It is derived from ontological thinking, a realist theory of perception, the doctrine of truth, and the theory of meaning. It is affirmed even when it is denied.[128] It accords with the account of mind we have been presenting. Mascall writes,

> The doctrine that the human mind, simply as mind, as *mens*, *intellectus*, *Geist*, or spirit, in contrast to lifeless beings and sub-human animal, is capable (a) of knowing truth and (b) apprehending realities other than itself – not perfectly, exhaustively or infallibly but nevertheless authentically – and of correcting its own error.[129]

The Intellectual Principle resides in the mind's ability to become intentionally other things, and so to know reality and truth.[130]

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come from? It is not possible to have a doctrine of meaning with a Humean doctrine of the subject. See *Whatever*, 9.

[122] Mascall, *Whatever*, 21-25; also *Openness*, 25-28.
[123] Mascall, *Whatever*, 24.
[124] Mascall, *Whatever*, 26.
[125] Mascall, *Whatever*, 21.
[126] Mascall, *Openness*, 102.
[127] Mascall, *Whatever*, 1-27.
[128] Mascall, *Whatever*, 1.
[129] Mascall, *Whatever*, 1.
[130] Mascall, *Whatever*, 2, 26-27.

This account of Mascall's existential approach is indeed radical in that it appeals primarily to pre-philosophical experience. It explicates the realist ontological presumptions inherent in our lived experience.

3. OUR KNOWLEDGE OF BEING

In a post-Cartesian world, it is not automatically acceptable to contend that the notion of being is fundamental in theology. The separation of being and knowing tends to be presumed. However, the fundamental significance of the notion of being is essential in Mascall's theological approach. The following seven propositions indicate the depth and range of his existential orientation.

First, God creates – but has no need to do so. This proposition emphasises the absolute dependency of the world of finite, contingent being on its creative source, namely, the Being of God. From it follows the radical intimacy of God's essence, presence and power, in and for the world's real but derived existence. Such a position is in sharp contrast to the doctrines of emanation, immanentism,[131] pantheism, atheism, deism, or absolute monism. Moreover, such alternatives conflict with scriptural revelation.

Secondly, since God's being is the source of all being, created beings analogically participate in God's perfection. God is the cause of this participation, and not merely the exemplar, as the fourth of the Five Ways affirms.[132] On the point, Mascall writes,

> If a being possesses perfection and yet possesses it only in a limited degree, it must receive it from a being which possesses it unconditionally and without limitation. Thus, the fact that beings exist with limited perfection declares their immediate dependence upon a being that is absolutely and infinitely perfect.[133]

In Mascall's existential approach, we see that we must first understand the nature of finite being in order to apprehend and understand Infinite Being. So Mascall argues that the Five Ways significantly increase our understanding of finite being. In following Aquinas, he explains this in the following quotation:

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[131] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 195: "the logical outcome of unbalanced immanentism is the moral relativism which…is so evident at the present day".
[132] Mascall, *Existence*, 77-79.
[133] Mascall, *Existence*, 77.

> [The] primary function [of the Five Ways], is not to provide us with five different proofs of God's existence…. [but] to exhibit to us five different characteristics of finite beings, all of which show that it does not account for its own existence. In the last resort St. Thomas has only one datum for an argument for the existence of God, namely the existence of beings whose existence is not necessitated by their essence; That is, beings in which essence and existence are really distinct.[134]

Mascall is careful to point out that such arguments for God's existence are not proofs based on logical procedures. As he says, "Our arguments are *demonstationes quia* not *propter quid* [lit., "demonstrated because"/not "according to what"]. They answer the question *an sit*, not *quid est* [lit., "of the fact whether it is"/"is it so?" not "what is?"]".[135] And he emphasises the importance of a prior understanding of finite being as follows:

> The Five Ways are not so much syllogistic *proofs* that finite being is of this type[that is, that the existence of beings is such that their existence is not necessitated by their essence] as *discussions* of finite being which may help us to apprehend that it is. Considered as proofs they may well seem to be circular… The existence of being in which essence and existence are really distinct does not *logically* imply the existence of a being in which essence and existence are really identical.[136]

When the notion of being is fundamental to philosophical theology, the experience of our participation in the world resonates with the affirmations of the arguments for the existence of God by giving us a sense of the contingency of finite existence and a sense of the intelligibility of the real world. And so, we may find that an existential approach to theology finds that the scriptural doctrine of creation has a certain "empirical fit" with such an understanding of finite being as is exhibited by the Five Ways.[137]

In such an understanding, finite existence is real but not self-existent, and being and knowing are congruent. So from the real being of the world we are able to form concepts of God. However, if the being of the world is conceived as a shadow of something more real, then it puts a rational understanding of God in jeopardy and so the fundamental significance of the notion of being as an essential element in Mascall's theological approach is denied. As we have seen, the problem of a lack of reality accorded to finite

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[134] Mascall, *Existence*, 77-78.
[135] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 69 *et al.*
[136] Mascall, *Existence*, 78.
[137] The notion of an "empirical fit" is based on but different from McGrath, *The Open Secret*, 15.

being was the problem of the essentialist approach to existence, as found, according to Mascall, in Augustine.[138]

Thirdly, God's Being must be infinite, otherwise finite being has no explanation.[139] If Self-Existent Being did not exist, nothing could exist. Finite being exists, but provides no explanation of its existence from within itself. It is absolutely dependent on Being to exist. Atheism represents a complete rejection of this idea of dependency. But it is the very imperfection, incompletion, and finitude of the world, together with the absolute impassibility, freedom and independence of God that undermines any atheistic view of the world as self-existent or self-explanatory. Still, in both theism and atheism, *being* is fundamental to a discussion of each account.[140]

Fourthly, the free will of God is the only explanation of creation.[141] God does not need to create. The world is totally dependent on God's creative freedom. If God were bound to create, God and finite being would be linked together in such as way that the radical contingency of the world would be in question. It would not have the qualities of both contingency and intelligibility in order to be discoverable by science.[142] In this case, the fundamental significance of the notion of being which is essential in Mascall's theological approach would be placed in jeopardy. Necessity resides in God's knowing and willing himself, and not in the creation of the world.[143]

Fifthly, there is no *petitio principii* to claim that the Five Ways would fail if the notion of being were absent. The Five Ways do not of themselves establish that being is fundamental, only that without a notion of being, they are subject to logical objections. Mascall's employment of the Intellectual Principle encapsulates an existential conviction regarding the notion of being and the way it figures in the ontological reading of the Five Ways.

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[138] Mascall, *Existence*, 45-46.
[139] Mascall, *Existence*, 125-130.
[140] Mascall, *Existence*, 78.
[141] Mascall, *Existence*, 127-133.
[142] Mascall, *Existence*, 125.
[143] Mascall, *Existence*, 127: "For the only being that *can* create is the one that *need* not do so; only a God who is the fullness of being, and whose own beatitude is therefore incapable of augmentation or diminution, can give existence to other beings".

Sixthly, the notion of being implies the absolute perfection and infinity of God. From the apprehension of finite being, in which existence and essence are separate, the mind rises to the apprehension of Self-Existent Being, where God's essence is to exist. Thereby follows a rational clarification of the meaning of "God". The idea of God is defined by Anselm as *aliquid quo nihil majus cogitari potest* [lit., "thou art something than which no greater can be thought"].[144] However, Anselm's definition fails in that it does not link the order of thought with that of real existence. God is not a biggest possible idea, but the limitless instance of real Being.

J. F. Ross draws attention to the priority of the philosophical and cultural context of Anslem's argument for God's existence when he says that

> To say that their premises [that is, Christians who believe they possess knowledge through faith] would not be accessible and methodically accessible would not be unequivocally true. Such premises were accessible to the entire community of believers to whom Anselm spoke….[145]

Consequently, we cannot say such premises as Anselm uses are not objects of knowledge for those who employ them. However, as Mascall says, Anslem was endeavouring to be a "whole-hearted intellectualist" arguing from his *rationibus necessariis* [lit., "necessary reason"]. He was trying to construct a purely rational argument, and was "not preaching or appealing to revelation or testifying to mystical experience". Nevertheless, "in providing Anselm with the definition of God from which he starts", the argument is based in faith.[146] His definition of God does not reach out into finite being. It is based on a communitarian consciousness that enabled him to believe the concept of God entailed God's existence. Whatever truth about God Anselm's argument provides, it does not give us enough to know that God exists. In the Thomist approach, to think of God as existing is to think of God as existing necessarily even though we do not know God in himself. Mascall observes that if "we could see fully the way in which God exists, we could see that he was bound to be the sort of being that he is. The fundamental truth about God is that he exists self-existently…".[147]

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[144] The translation is given in Mascall, *Existence*, 22.
[145] J. F. Ross, *Philosophical Theology*, (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1969), 32.
[146] Mascall, "Faith and Reason", 203-204.
[147] Mascall, *Existence*, 43.

The problem, then, with Anselm's approach is that it demands a knowledge of God's nature "which the very notion of God denies us".[148] His argument, in distinction from the argument from finite being, "claims to tell us not merely *that* God exists, but *how* and *why*". But according to Aquinas, we have no such insight.[149] Anselm's argument is contextualized to such an extent that it does not communicate in intelligible terms what God is. As Mascall says, it is not clear that the perfections suggested by Anslem's argument are compossible.[150] God communicates in the act of creation, and is known by his effects. Mascall asks whether Anselm's definition provides us with an intelligible content concerning "God".[151] Although in some sense God can be thought, Anselm avoids the suggestion that God is conceivable like the existence or being of finite things.[152] His definition of God lacks intelligible content, failing to make clear any correspondence between beings and Being. Anselm's God is not the source of creation, nor Being as it is known in an intelligible and contingent world.[153] Rather, only a self-existent act of Being, *Ipsum esse*, could create.[154] Aquinas, on the other hand, is able to offer a cognitive and conceivable understanding of God insofar as he does not approach "God" in independence from creation or finite being. When being and knowing form a unity, being is fundamental. If knowing were basic, then it may be possible to know the existence of God as contained in a concept. As Mascall says, although Anslem includes existence *ut signata* [lit., "in order to mark"], we need existence *ut exercita* [lit, "in order to exercise"].[155] Such a definition is based on God's effects, but it is nevertheless to know God "in a very close and intimate way".[156] Being, not knowing, is the point of departure. And so, in contrasting Anselm's approach with the Thomist approach, we see

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[148] Mascall, *Existence*, 27.
[149] Mascall, *Existence*, 28; 27: "We must…distinguish between the *perfection significata* and the *modus significandi*; even the Thomists, who reject the ontological argument, do this, and they have indeed constructed a portentous theory of analogical predication in order to validate it".
[150] Mascall, *Existence*, 22.
[151] Mascall, "Faith and Reason", 221: "Anselm…avoids the word…*concipi*".
[152] Mascall, "Faith and Reason", 221.
[153] Mascall, *Existence*, 7, quoting Foster: "the reliance upon the senses for evidence, not merely for illustration, is what constitutes the empirical character peculiar to modern natural science; and the conclusion follows that only a created nature is proper object is an empirical science". Mascall, *Natural Science*, 94: "We are concerned with here…the question [of] what sort of world will the God of Christian theism create if in fact he creates one: and the point [is] that it will be both contingent and orderly, since it is the work of a God who is both free and rational. It will embody regularities and patterns which it embodies cannot be predicted *a priori*, since he is free; they can only be discovered by examination".
[154] Mascall, "Faith and Reason", 223.
[155] Mascall, *Existence*, 41-43.
[156] Mascall, "Faith and Reason", 225-226: "St. Thomas's doctrine, because it is rooted in the act of being which is analogically common to God and his creatures, gives us a process by which we can transform the *via negative* into the *via eminetiæ* and, without trying to escape from our creaturely status, can achieve a real knowledge of God in this life".

again the fundamental significance of the notion of being as an essential element in Mascall's theological approach.

Finally, the most profound explanation of "God" is found in terms of being. Gilson's emphasis on the fact of existence – he understood this as clearly based in Aquinas' thought – means that "the basic fact about God is the fact that he, and he alone, supremely and perfectly exists…".[157] To speak of God in existential terms such as *ipsum Esse subsistens* may seem unnecessary and somewhat foreign to some who derive a notion of "God" only from a community of faith. However, the knowledge of God we have by way of faith is notably supported and expanded if it is set in the context of an affirmation of God's Infinite Being: the special character of divine revelation is more deeply appreciated when it is understood as coming from the infinite depths of God's creative Being. This is what Anselm's argument was trying to reach. However, in the cosmological approach, we may know God as *quod Deum esse per se necessarium* [lit., "that God *to be* (is) necessarily through himself"], as *ipsum esse subsistens*, and as *maxime ens* [lit., "maximal being"]. The power of the concept is meant to lead to God's actual Being, the divine *Esse in actu*. Thus faith is rooted in the experience and reality of what is and its ultimate source.

These seven propositions converge as key elements in Mascall's metaphysical realism, based as it is in pre-philosophical experience. They show the fundamental significance of the notion of being in Mascall's theology.

4. The Dependency of Created Being

At the heart of Mascall's metaphysical realism is the relationship of created being to the Creator. This can be further elaborated by calling attention to six aspects of what is involved in our knowledge of being.

The first concerns our knowledge of absolute dependency. It helps give a fundamental direction to our thought concerning an insight into the existence of Infinite Being. This notion is an example of an entelechy, that is, a becoming actual of what was potential in

[157] Mascall, *Existence*, 10.

our thought. It grows into a positive realization from an incipient and fundamental suggestion concerning the nature of finite being. This idea may be seen to be based on Mascall's proposition that there is ultimately in our thinking a "crucial moment…in which we apprehend finite being as what it really is [that is] as existent and yet not self-existent, as effect-implying cause".[158] In the crucial realization, when we begin to see the relationship of created being to the Creator in terms of the notion of absolute dependency, our fundamental outlook on the world is changed. And so, the notion of dependency becomes a significant theme in how we configure the various concepts and aspects of the arguments for the existence of God. It this way it enlightens our "*discussions* of finite being" by such means as the Five Ways in that it provides us with a sense of coherence in the various aspects of the arguments. Mascall's notion of contuition points to such a mental growth and realization of the fundamental insight – perhaps, as he says, in a sudden moment of realization – of the absolute dependency of finite being and of Infinite Being in our thinking.[159] As we have seen, Mascall argues that the "crux [of such arguments] consists not in a process of logical deduction but in an apprehension, namely the apprehension of finite beings as effect implying (or, better, manifesting) a transcendent cause".[160] Our knowledge of being is congruent with the prior existence of being where being implies knowing, since knowing is a mode of being.

As being is a fundamental aspect of existence, so our knowledge of being is a fundamental category of thought, as Mascall's account of perception indicates. However, in this account, being is perceived as that which is dependent on Infinite Being. And so, the insight of absolute dependency may be described as both the metaphysical and the epistemological "crux" of metaphysical theism. We may say that it is a kind of fundamental faith upon which we are enabled to grasp the rational processes of arguments of the existence of God. That is, in the apprehension of Infinite Being, we may find that there also is a reciprocal process in operation. The insight of dependency may be seen to reciprocally inform the cogency of the arguments as it becomes more evident as a result of the argument. In quoting E. I. Watkin, Mascall says that "The existence of God is not demonstrated, as demonstration is usually understood, namely as a process of cogent but

[158] Mascall, *Existence*, 122.
[159] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 79: "From time to time…and very often, after long and painful consideration of mere chains of reasoning, the form suddenly becomes evident in a flash…".
[160] Mascall, *Existence*, 89.

non-intuitive reasoning. It is monstrated to contemplative intellection".[161] Lest it be thought that "argumentation has no place in the matter", he explains that it can put us in the right frame of mind for an apprehension of dependency to occur, that this apprehension is not an illusion, and that it can "elucidate its nature and content…".[162] The reciprocal nature of argument and apprehension is seen in this quotation. In an analogous sense, the insight of dependency emerges from argumentation and reflexively draws the elements of the argument into a unified whole. And so, we understand being as that which is dependent or Infinite.[163] In this understanding, insight and argument are one.[164]

Secondly, the nature of the kind of cognitive processes inherent in the Five Ways must be appreciated if we are to understand the notion of the fundamental dependency of created being. As we have seen, Mascall rejects any suggestion that the Five Ways are a set of arguments based on self-evident truths that will convince all fair-minded people of God's existence.[165] But he also rejects the idea that they are discursive expressions of a commitment based in the faith of a Christian community.[166] As we have seen, he accepts that, in the *Summa Theologiæ*, the Five Ways are an example of a process of *manuductio*. Aquinas was "leading by the hand" a reader who already possessed faith in God. Step by step, his argument exhibits in metaphysically intelligible terms what was already known by faith in revelation.[167] In Mascall's approach, the division between what may be considered to be Christian philosophy and what is theology seems somewhat blurred. We may see the reason for this because the knowledge of God we have by way of faith is notably supported and expanded if it is set in the context of an affirmation of God's Infinite Being, and that the special character of divine revelation is more deeply appreciated when it is

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[161] Mascall, *Existence* 90.
[162] Mascall, *Existence*, 90.
[163] *Cf* Mascall, *Openness*, 110: "If we say that there is no logical necessity that a being should exist, we imply that, if it does exist, it must either be the ground of its own existence or have the ground of its existence in something else. And, in spite of the very telling criticisms which some writers such as Dr Kenny have levelled at St Thomas's formulation of the first three of his Five Ways, it seems to me that the Angelic Doctor quite validly makes this essential point".
[164] R. W Prevost, *Probability and Theistic Explanation*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 171-181, has criticized Mascall for basing his natural theology on both argument and *contuition* and argues that this makes his account unstable. A reply to Prevost is to be found in Chapter IV.
[165] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 81-82 & *Openness*, 111.
[166] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 80 and Mascall, *Existence*, 17.
[167] Mascall, "Introductory Essay", xi. Regarding a confusion concerning the relationship between revelation and reason, see Note 24 *supra*. *Cf* Kerr, *Contemplating Aquinas*, 74: Philosophy is *manuductio*, that is, it has a mediating role, so that the intelligibility of the proper object points to the principle of intelligibility surpassing intellect; thus reason shows the first truth which fulfils reason, and reasons fulfils faith; theology is the subtle interplay of poles.

understood as coming from God conceived as Infinite Being. Nevertheless, Mascall does not object to the notion of Christian philosophy.[168]

Once the notion of absolute dependency at the heart of finite being is grasped, it appears that the Five Ways are certainly intent on arguing for the existence of Infinite Being, but, at the same time, they are stimulating the mind to come to an intuitive sense of the dependence of finite being on Infinite Being. As we have seen, Mascall denies that the arguments for the existence of God are to be understood in logical terms. They cannot be reconstructed as a conditional syllogism in the *modus ponendo ponens*. This "is really misleading. For it is only through perceiving contingent being that we can be brought to affirm the major premiss; and the minor premiss having been given, the conclusion is given too".[169] And, while the Five Ways are "*discussions* of finite being", also to be seen as arguments, they do not rest on logical processes based on the Principle of Contradiction, but on the metaphysical grasp of the Principle of Sufficient Reason.[170] Therefore, in a significant passage Mascall writes,

> When I ask why any particular being exists I am not led to do so because I cannot derive the existence of the object from its definition: I should never expect to do that in any case. I wonder why it exists, because my immediate apprehension of it is of something which *need not be there*; and this 'need not' is a metaphysical, not a logical, 'need not'. That there are certain analogies between logical and metaphysical entities is not surprising, for we can hardly suppose that a world might be metaphysically existent and logically incoherent…. it is clearly ridiculous to ask for the explanation of a self-existent being.[171]

The arguments concern cognitivity – but not without imagination – and they do so without denying the necessity of a significant development of the virtues of humility and contemplative wonder in the thinker. On the other hand, this style of cognitive thinking does lead to a conceptual coherence within this kind of metaphysical realism.

Thirdly, the Five Ways lead to a distinctive outcome. As we have seen, they represent five different expositions of finite being in its radical dependency.[172] Their explanatory value is

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[168] Mascall, *Existence*, 15, for Mascall's understanding of *Christian philosophy*: "To combine transcendence and creation in one coherent system was the work of the great tradition of Christian philosophy…".
[169] Mascall, *Openness*, 111-112.
[170] Mascall, *Openness*, 117. Also 102: "The principle involved in arguing for the existence of God is the principle of sufficient reason and…this cannot be simply reduced…to the principle of contradiction…. Metaphysics is more than logic…".
[171] Mascall, *Existence*, 117.
[172] Mascall, "Introductory Essay", vii.

found in the way the true nature of finite existence is brought to the mind in a "contuition" of Being and beings, and of the dependence of all things on their creative source. As we have seen, the Five Ways may be taken to point to a definition of "God".[173] The point of the first three Ways is to show that God sustains not only the members of a series of causes as they relate to each other, but also sustains the causality of the series by being outside the secondary causality of the series. What is at stake is the divine causality involved in all being and becoming.[174] Since God is at the ontological root of a being, the relationship is the most intimate possible.[175] Consequently, the immediate relation of God to the world is without intermediaries, as finite, contingent being depends upon absolute Being.[176] In this relationship of dependency, created being is neither manipulated nor manufactured from something else.[177] To be created is to exist; and the basic feature of created being is its relationship of dependence on the Creator.[178] Given the incompleteness and finitude of created being, we are able to argue from it to the necessity of absolute, infinite, self-existent Being. On this point, Mascall quotes Maritain:

> Leibniz pretended to justify God by showing that the work which proceeded from the hands of that perfect Workman was itself perfect, whereas in reality it is the radical imperfection of every creature which best attests the glory of the Uncreated.[179]

The finitude of created beings suggests that they do not essentially exist. In them, essence and existence are necessarily distinct, and this means that they must derive from absolute Being whose essence is to exist. For Mascall, the Aristotelian form of the arguments is not a hindrance to our understanding of the composite nature of finite being.[180] But in any case, we must apprehend the nature of the contingency of finite being in an attitude of contemplative wonder.[181]

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[173] Mascall, *Existence*, 88.
[174] That is, Mascall, *Existence*, 31: "…the first three of St. Thomas's Five Ways, with their rejection of the possibility of an infinite regress and their final assertion that the first cause to which they lead is not merely the initiator, at a past moment in time, of a temporal process but the source of a present existence", and also 70-76.
[175] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 101-102.
[176] Mascall, *Existence*, 124.
[177] Mascall, *Existence*, 143-145.
[178] Mascall, *Existence*, 146.
[179] Mascall, *Existence*, xiv.
[180] Mascall, *Existence*, 85.
[181] Mascall, *Openness*, 141: The awareness of God's existence is "closely linked with the capacity for contemplative wondering. Nevertheless, without it argumentation for theism almost inevitably has the character of circularity of which its critics accuse it, and…it all too easily leaves us with the concept of a remote and glacial deity. In the very act of affirming God's existence it tends to lose that hold upon the intuition of God and finite being together without which the argument could never begin".

A fourth aspect concerns the reach of ontological thinking. From our knowledge of finite being we are able to give a definition of "God" in that the "The essence of the true Christian God is not to create, but to be".[182] The *ordo cognoscendi* is correlated to the *ordo essendi*,[183] and in that regard, not only is the Being of God an essential mystery for our minds, but also the existence of the world – why should there be being rather than nothing?[184]

In the realization of absolute dependency, we are enabled to examine the relationship of Creator to creation in such a way that we may begin to understand more of God's nature. Mascall writes that "Creatures… manifest God's nature as well as declaring his existence, and we can thus assert with confidence that all the perfections that are found in creatures are also formally, though *eminentiori modo* [lit., "in a most eminent mode"], in God himself".[185] And so, Mascall addresses a number of questions arising from our understanding of dependency. Significantly, these include the question of whether the reason for God's creating may be explained. Mascall is clear, however, that "the very contingency of the world declares that there is no necessity for its creation antecedent to the creative act itself".[186] Therefore, Mascall addresses the question of the necessity of God's creating and the relationship of his knowing to his willing, and concludes that "there is no necessity for creation [and so] the will of God is its cause. And the reason why God's will itself has no cause is that, being identical with God's essence, it needs none".[187] Nevertheless, Mascall points out the difficulties in our understanding of the nature of God's knowing and willing of himself and the creation.[188] He explains that "When we assert that the act by which he wills and knows the world does not augment the act by which he wills and knows himself, we do not imply that his willing and knowing of the world is illusionary or fictitious…".[189] God is self-sufficient, and yet the world exists. Mascall posits that God's creation is an act of an impassible God but that God's love is nevertheless able to be reconciled with God's impassibility within the terms of metaphysical theism and the notion of dependency.[190]

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[182] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 97.
[183] Mascall, *Existence*, 1.
[184] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 95.
[185] Mascall, *Existence*, 123.
[186] Mascall, *Existence*, 126.
[187] Mascall, *Existence*, 128.
[188] Mascall, *Existence*, 130-134.
[189] Mascall, *Existence*, 133.
[190] Mascall, *Existence*, 133-145.

Fifthly, there must be an appropriate application of the Five Ways. Mascall warns that the concern with the world's character rather than with its existence results in blurring the radical distinction between Creator and creation. On the other hand, a metaphysical gulf is established between God and the world if revelation is understood to be the only source of our understanding of God. Mascall cites the case of Karl Barth as an example of the latter. Mascall understands that Barth claims that *finitum non capax infiniti* [lit., "finitude is incapable of infinity"], that is, the finite order of creation has no capacity for the infinite. Consequently, in this approach, there can be no natural theology or rational understanding of revelation. For his part, Mascall would argue that we have no ability to speak of God without using language based on the analogy of being. Our language about the Creator is rooted in creation. The language derived from creation already points to a relationship between God and creation. In this relationship, radical dependency does not mean that a gulf exists between the Creator and creation, for the Creator is present at the ontological root of creation. By using the analogy of being, speech about God becomes possible.

On this point, it may be objected that no term can apply to both the infinite God and the finite world. In response, Mascall argues that the very difference between God and the world does not negate the *analogia entis* but paradoxically places both terms in the most intimate relationship. Both ontologically and epistemologically, the radical dependency of creation on the Creator is one of a direct causal relationship.[191] The following quotation expresses Mascall's rejection of Barth's approach:

> Such an extreme view is…quite untypical of the historic tradition of Christian thought, which has recognised that the very insufficiency of finite beings to maintain themselves involves that God is intimately present to them and active within them. It is thus in no way surprising if man is able to acquire a genuine knowledge of God as the creative ground of the beings which surround him and of his own self. Admittedly this knowledge will be extremely obscure…in his recognition of God as God, man will recognise that God exceeds the grasp of both his imagination and his intellect…. It is our complete dependence upon God as our creator that provides the basis in our nature for the possibility of the supernaturalisation of our being…only a being which was entirely dependent on God could have that radical openness to him which Catholic theology describes as the *potentia obedientialis* [lit., "obediential potential"] of nature for the supernatural.[192]

[191] Mascall, *Existence*, 115; *Openness*, 122.
[192] Mascall, *Words*, 104-105.

Finally, there is a sixth aspect. It concerns the relationship of dependency in contrast to such metaphysical extremes as those of immanentism and deism. As a commentary of Mascall's approach, we may say that the notion of absolute dependency functions as a *lucus a non lucendo* in our thinking, that is, it is a paradoxical derivation in our thinking as it is an explanation by contraries.[193] We see many aspects of the paradoxical nature of the relation of dependency and of creation. The following seven points – as suggested by Mascall – are offered as significant examples:-

- created being exists, but is not self-existent;
- God's presence is most active in our freedom;
- created being is most real as it is most dependent;
- the world is most itself in its dependency on God;
- God is most loving in his impassibility;
- God's love is most strong in its non-necessity; and,
- in the non-necessity of creation is its greatest security.[194]

Furthermore, the notion of dependency allows for a congruence of revelation and reason because created being is open to revelation and is being renewed by God in Christ.[195] In immanentism and deism, the paradoxical nature of the notion of dependency is somewhat diminished. Mascall's account of metaphysical theism, by exploiting an explanation by contraries, aims to establish a balanced *via* between extremes.

The respected Thomistic commentator, Herbert McCabe, clarifies the significance of the relationship of dependency:

> Creatures are autonomous not by being independent of God but because their dependence on God is *total*, so that the activity of the creator is not an interference in their lives which sets a limit to their own activity; rather it is by God's activity that they are and behave as themselves. We are free not in spite of God's power but because of it…. Thus, freedom is not a manifestation of distance from God….[196]

McCabe's understanding points to the fundamental significance of the notion of dependency when it is seen as "*total*" in terms of being itself and of our knowledge of being. The creator's action is not "an interference in their lives which sets a limit to their

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[193] J. B. Sykes (ed.), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, Sixth Edition, (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1976), 649: *lucus a non lucendo* means a "Paradoxical derivation; reference of effect to paradoxical cause, explanation by contraries. [L, = *lucus* (grove) is derived from *lucere* (shine) because there is no light there]".
[194] See especially Mascall, *Existence*, Chapter 6.
[195] Mascall, *Existence*, 138-143.
[196] H. McCabe, "Thomism" in A. Richardson and J. Bowden, *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology*, (London: SCM Press, 1983), 568.

own activity". On the basis of this thought, we suggest that we may find in the notion of total dependency a fundamental congruence with the reality of dependency – if we realize it – and a further congruence with a possible experience of dependency – again, if we realize it – that makes the notion of creation, understood in terms of the notion of dependency, fundamentally significant and meaningful to us.

These seven aspects arise from a radical sense of creation. They illuminate our lived experience by leading to the explication of the ontological presumptions of realism inherent in our existence as intelligent beings.

5. METAPHYSICAL REALISM AND CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

What Mascall has termed "the doctrine of existence" presents a realist account of the meaning of God and creation. He argued for the possibility of relating this realist approach to the renewal of creation in Christ. We now move on to the discussion of how Mascall's metaphysical realism can be related to doctrinal positions. The question of relativism is raised in Chapter IV, where a longer discussion of this important issue occurs.

In our presentation of Mascall's account of existence, it seems we have good reason to assert the following two propositions:-

- an ontological, realist presentation of Christian doctrine may possess the kind of systematic structure and verification that most fulfils the intentions of such doctrinal statements as we see presented by the Anglican Reformers; and,
- in the contemporary catholic and ecumenical context, a more unitary statement of Christian doctrine may be served if it conformed to a more traditional realist approach.

These two propositions would seem to be implied in Mascall's theological method. This is developed in the following considerations.

Concerned with a realist account of the meaning of God, Mascall opted for the existentialist approach of Aquinas over the essentialism of Anselm. He points out that the question of God necessarily presumes the existence of God. And so with reference to Anselm's argument for the existence of God, he explains: "Because the quiddity of God is

not known to us the fact that God exists is not *per se notum* to us, but needs demonstration".[197] This is the point of Aquinas's rejection of the Anselmian position. Furthermore, he says, "if we define God as Anselm defines him…then the idea of God which we have in our mind will be that of a being that really exists; but whether in fact it really exists is quite another matter".[198] The *quid est* [lit., "what is"] of God is to be known in the Beatific Vision. Until then, we can know God *quia est* [lit., "who is"] but not *quid sit* [lit., "what he might be"]. " 'God exists' is not *per se nota* to us because 'we do not know [in *via*] concerning God *quid est*'…".[199]

And so, the approach of Thomist Realism has significant implications for contemporary theological choices. With reference to Barth, Mascall points out that he finds sympathy with the Ontological Argument and Anselm's definition of God "because Anselm's definition refers to God without apparently saying anything about him…. All [the Argument] says is that we cannot think about anything greater [although] we are thinking about him in *some* sort of way". However, in the Thomist approach, this is the weakness of Anselm's definition. It may have "no intelligible content at all; it might not refer to anything that *could* exist in reality".[200] A metaphysical and realist approach to the question of God may be seen to supply for doctrine a necessary intelligible and existential content. This begs the question of the relation of revelation to reason within doctrinal discourse.

Concerning this point, Mascall summarizes his view of the relation of revelation to reason in saying that both Anslem and Aquinas "begin…with a definition of God…from Christian revelation, but that the definition is of such a character that the existence of the being to which it corresponds would seem to be capable of a purely rational proof; the definition comes from revelation, the argument does not…".[201] Accordingly, our thought about God must be given a conceptual content and a real reference. However, as we have seen above, it does not follow that while the definition is capable of rational proof, the only source of a premise for such an argument is revelation, as we will examine further in Chapter IV. But a generic discussion of the nature of Christian doctrine must include the following propositions.

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[197] E. L. Mascall, "Faith and Reason", 212-213, where Mascall is quoting Aquinas in *De Veritate*, x.12 resp.
[198] Mascall, "Faith and Reason", 211.
[199] Mascall, "Faith and Reason", 213.
[200] Mascall, "Faith and Reason", 214. *Cf* Mascall, *Existence*, 27: "Anselm bears toward agnosticism as Descartes bears towards anthropomorphism…".
[201] Mascall, "Faith and Reason", 226.

Doctrine enables discussion about Christian beliefs. As David Tracy says, a doctrine is a reflection incorporating the "measured clarity" essential to the genre *doctrine*.[202] He explains that the emergence of doctrine is rooted in an appreciation for our participation in the world and our need of ordered communal experience.

> [The] honouring of the everyday may be found in new forms in the phenomenon of early Catholicism. That respect is at the heart of the world of early Catholicism and its preferred carriers of meaning to the everyday: through doctrine rendering certain clear, explicit and in that sense ordinary meanings…through an ordered institution rather than a charismatic community….[203]

Doctrine exists to "refine, formulate, clarify, explicate certain central beliefs of the Christian community…".[204] It answers the community's need to explain and understand.[205] Consequently, we need a conceptual content and realistic reference in our understanding of God. A societal characteristic of the church is the need to provide a linguistic arena where teaching and discussion may occur. As Mascall says of the doctrine of God, it allows discussion of the existence of God "as a purely rational problem, with a directness…denied to the non-Christian, whose definition of God always remains more or less in suspense…".[206]

Mascall's approach is corroborated by McGrath and Williams. Alister McGrath's account of doctrine is congruent with Mascall's metaphysical approach to theism. McGrath sees doctrine possessing four essential dimensions.[207] These dimensions include the function of doctrine as a social demarcator, as the product and interpreter of Christian narrative, as an interpreter of Christian experience, and, as that which makes truth claims.[208] These dimensions converge in the nature of doctrine as a mark of orthodoxy. Similarly, Rowan Williams sees the emergence of orthodoxy in the necessity of positive communal and institutional interchanges in the early church. In this situation, orthodoxy is concerned with initiation into the life of faith and for a further education of the faithful within it. As Williams observes, "There *is* a single decisive moment of transition from darkness to light…in baptism [taking place in] a new world [where] learning and exchange must also

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[202] Tracy, *Analogical*, 266.
[203] Tracy, *Analogical*, 267.
[204] Tracy, *Analogical*, 294.
[205] *Cf* A. E. McGrath, *The Genesis of Doctrine: A Study in the Foundation of Doctrinal Criticism*, (Grand Rapids: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990), 12: doctrine is an activity, that is, a process of transmission; it represents the communal experience of the risen Christ.
[206] Mascall, *Existence*, 17.
[207] McGrath, *The Genesis*, 37.
[208] McGrath, *The Genesis*, 37.

continue, and progress needs to be checked against original inspiration, individually and collectively".[209] Doctrine is necessary for communal identity and formation within the social and institutional life of the church, and especially for identifying orthodoxy in changed cultural settings.[210] As Mascall says, "*Theologizandum est in Fide*, and I would now add the words *in Ecclesia, in Liturgia*".[211]

Thus, we may agree with McGrath that there is at least a "genuinely cognitive dimension, component or element to doctrinal statements…".[212] To take this further, we may argue that the doctrine of existence is a doctrine *par excellence* since it bears so directly on our knowledge and definition of God. It exemplifies in a fundamental way the qualities that go into the making of a doctrine. In contrast to such an approach, as Mascall pointed out, Anselm's definition of God lacked the necessary content to become a doctrine that could provide social demarcation. It was not conceptually rich enough to enable it to be developed into a statement of truth as the basis for discussion in a community, although it emerged in the community.

Consequently, while a doctrine may be based on the Christian narrative it may lack intelligible content. Mascall pointed to such a lack in Anselm's argument on the basis that "it attempts to approach God in total independence of any of his works".[213] Furthermore, although a doctrine may act as an interpreter of Christian experience in the spirit of *credo ut intelligam* [lit., "I believe in order to understand"], it may lack the incisive quality to refer outsiders to anything that corresponds to reality, or a shared knowledge of reality. Mascall applied this point to Anselm's argument as follows:

> Thus, in the conceptual order in which Anselm's argument moves, it is just not possible to compare existence-in-reality-and-in-the-intellect with existence-in-the-intellect-only by adding existence-in-reality to the latter; all that you can add is a purely conceptual substitute for existence-in-reality….[214]

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[209] R. Williams, "Does it Make Sense to Speak of Pre-Nicene Orthodoxy? in Williams, *The Making of Orthodoxy*, 15.
[210] Williams, "Pre-Nicene Orthodoxy", 16-17, where he explains that the Christian relationship with Jesus is "*constituted* by historical mediations – gospel and canon, sacrament, succession, communion, debate and exchange… [with] problems of power and guilt and forgetfulness"; and, 17-18, he explains that any attempt at narrating the Gospel message is always somewhat provisional; and so debate and self-criticism is needed for the church's "accountability to the past and to the present".
[211] Mascall, *Saraband*, 383.
[212] McGrath, *The Genesis*, 20.
[213] Mascall, "Faith and Reason", 225.
[214] Mascall, "Faith and Reason", 208-209.

And so, in lacking an intelligible content and a realistic reference, a doctrine may fail to supply adequate truth credentials (in and for a community). Mascall criticizes Anselm's definition on this point.

However, in contrast, the doctrine of Being and of existence supplies this lack. It sets the doctrines of the faith and of the community in the context of fundamental human experience which may be rationally discussed, linking them with universal human experience of bodily finitude. It links all doctrine to valid and shared principles of thinking. It provides for the formal principle of a theology of grace, perfecting but not destroying nature. At least, this is the hope and intention of those who advocate it. If true, the doctrine of existence is the doctrine *par excellence*.

At this point, we note a serious objection to Mascall's employment of the doctrine of existence through his reliance on Gilson. This objection is presented by Wayne Hankey. Mascall is criticised for relying too heavily on what Hankey judged to be Gilson's flawed historical epistemology which the latter employs to counter alternative twentieth century subjectivist epistemologies. Hankey's point is that by granting a high level of significance to Aquinas's doctrine of existence, Gilson used one particular historical position to reject another.[215] Gilson claims that Aquinas was the first to see the fundamental truth of existentialism and believed this doctrine may be used as an epistemological weapon against the subjectivist and relativist ideas of later centuries. Hankey explains that

> The aim of [Gilson's] historical work was metaphysical. But history serving metaphysics is distorted by lifting weights beyond its strength…. Gilson said that he found this new philosophy [of *being*] by a textual study of Aquinas. And since this Thomistic metaphysics of *esse* began with a simple seeing, he would lead thinkers to this philosophy by means of dialectical experiments with the alternative philosophical beginnings and methods he found in history. Though, fatally, Gilson's dialectical reasoning and the act of existence as the object of metaphysics were kept apart, the mixture of history and philosophy was essential to his philosophical position…. We must believe that all philosophy before Aquinas had misunderstood not only the act of existence, but a fact of revelation and so missed the philosophy which these facts give.[216]

Hankey considers, then, that Gilson and his supporters, Joseph Owens and the contemporary philosopher J. F. X. Knasas, read into Aquinas' philosophical notions – in

[215] See W. Hankey, "From Metaphysics to History, from Exodus to Neoplatonism, from Scholasticism to Pluralism: the Fate of Gilsonianism in English-speaking North America", internet article – http://www.dal.ca/~claswww/GILSON.htm, 2004.
[216] Hankey, "From Metaphysics", 3.

this case, salient and significant existentialist understandings – ideas that are not necessarily found in his works, and that such notions derive from their own philosophical concerns. As Hankey goes on to say,

> It seems to escape Owens, Knasas, and the continuing defenders of Gilson, that their way of using the hermeneutical circle polemically against their enemies would make it impossible to call Gilson's, or any, Thomism historically founded. One's history of philosophy is a projection of one's notion of being.[217]

Gilson, and so Mascall, are charged with a failure to observe the relativist basis of their metaphysical realism and philosophy of being. What may be said in Mascall's defence? The following two points are relevant.

First, Mascall is clear that the doctrine of existence is the result of a synthesis of revelation and philosophy. In this sense, it is possible to regard the emergence of the doctrine in Aquinas as the result of at least an historical dependence of existentialism/metaphysical realism on revelation. Even if variant interpretations of Aquinas are possible, Mascall insists that metaphysical theism is well-founded.[218] He also claims that a natural theology based in metaphysical thinking is applicable to anyone who is willing to follow its arguments. Its late historical emergence need not detract from its acceptability by Mascall or anyone willing to fulfil certain moral and intellectual conditions. Indeed, Mascall does not deny that a certain relativism accrues to Christian philosophy, namely, that it owes its being to revelation to the point of an historical dependency.

Secondly, Mascall is able to distinguish between historically relevant aspects of Aquinas' account and other aspects of continuing relevance. For example, he says that "I have argued at some length in this chapter that the highly Aristotelian form which St. Thomas gives to his arguments for the existence of God is not essential to it and moreover that, for us at the present day, it clouds to some extent the real issue".[219] Mascall finds in Aquinas an existentialist approach that he believes will be able to counter the adverse effects of modernism that prohibit people from being able to view finite reality in other than

[217] Hankey, "From Metaphysics", 11.
[218] *Cf* F. Kerr, *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 15: "Current readings of Thomas's work are so conflicting and even incommensurable, that integrating them into a single interpretation seems impossible".
[219] Mascall, *Existence*, 85.

relativist and subjectivist ways. He believes Thomist Realism is a rationally well-founded approach. (A discussion of the essence of these two points is the subject of Chapter IV.)

And so, we may say at this stage, while Mascall believes Gilson accurately presents Aquinas' existentialist understanding, criticism of Gilson may not be ultimately relevant to Mascall's approach.[220] His presentation of the doctrine of existence must be assessed on its own merits. As we have seen, he insists on a flexible and open approach to metaphysics, and a willingness to be led by the hand. He writes, "If a man persists in limiting his gaze to the phenomenal surface of reality there is nothing that can be done about it on the purely human level…. In our time this sort of metaphysical myopia has become a habit and almost a disease."[221] As we have seen, cultural myopia is a repeated theme in Mascall and it leads to the atrophy of cognitive faculties. This was the prevailing atmosphere in which Mascall presented his ontological thinking. There existed an unsympathetic cultural environment. He concedes, "…since the time of Hume at any rate, the assertion that the existence of God can be known from the existence of the finite world has been, to say the least of it, unpopular in philosophical circles".[222]

Nevertheless, he is aware that while there is a certain level of cultural relativity inherent in philosophical positions, this aspect of philosophy need not fatally undermine a useful employment of Thomist Realism in his own work. He believes the Thomist approach is able to transcend any essential relativity implied by the historical emergence of it in Aquinas' writings. Our Anglican Thomist distinguishes between the Aristotelian concepts which are employed by Aquinas in the thirteenth century, and the emergence of sound rational processes from within Aquinas' philosophy of realism that may be employed by thinkers in the twentieth century. For instance, the form and style of the Five Ways reflects the specific cultural and intentional circumstances of Aquinas' audience, but as a way of thinking, Aquinas' approach is perennial. For example, the exposition of the cosmological argument in the third article of the *Summa Theologiæ* represents "St. Thomas's own exposition…adapted to the circumstances of his time and was deeply influenced by the

[220] See for example E. Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, Second Edition, (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediæval Studies, 1952), 221, where Gilson upholds his right to re-interpret for our situation the intention of Aquinas: "The [critical] remarks of Fr. Regis are fully justified…. Historically speaking, our own formulas are inaccurate, and had we foreseen the objections of Fr. Regis, we would have used another language, or made clear that we were not using the language of Saint Thomas".
[221] Mascall, *Existence*, 90.
[222] Mascall, *Existence*, 81.

sources from which he derived it".[223] He points out that it is our task to translate this into a conceptuality relevant to the present times.[224]

We concede that if serious objections to the emergence of Thomist natural theology in history are not able to be answered, then criticism such as Hankey's may seriously detract from the value of both Gilson's and Mascall's approaches. Does the historical dependence of natural theology on Christian revelation vitiate Mascall's claim that such natural theology can be universally accessible? In Chapter IV, as we have said, we answer an objection of this kind raised by the theologian J. B. Cobb. For the moment, we note that there is a significant difference in what Mascall and Gilson respectively intend. At least we may affirm that Mascall's employment of Thomist natural theology was to provide rational support for traditional doctrinal statements so that Anglican theology may be more loyal to revelation as he understood it. It has to be judged on that basis.

6. CONCLUSION

The various aspects of Mascall's presentation of the doctrine of existence need to be held together if the coherence and cogency of his theological method is to appear. The following seven points summarise his position:-

- an understanding of *being* as the dynamic act of existence;
- a realist account of perception based on the empirical notion that the mind is ordered to extra-mental reality before it reflects on itself;
- an understanding of the nature of our participation in the world;
- a metaphysical understanding of the nature of mind and of the human as embodied spirit where *mens quodammodo fit omnia, non entitative sed intentionaliter*;
- an account of *being* as a fundamental notion in all thinking;
- a way of understanding arguments for the existence of God as "*discussions* that may help us apprehend that it is",[225] and where an intuitive insight into the nature of finite beings occurs "as effect…manifesting…a transcendent cause";[226] and,
- a definition of "God" in terms of finite concepts and where God's essence is identical with his existence.

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[223] Mascall, *Existence*, 66.
[224] *Cf* Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 145: "The best account in English of Thomas's theology of nature and grace is by Eric Mascall".
[225] Mascall, *Existence*, 78.
[226] Mascall, *Existence*, 89.

As a commentary on this approach, we may add the following three points. They are:-

- an account of the dependency of the world on God in which the mind achieves insight by a mental process of *lucus a non lucendo*;
- our mental activity here is also an example of an entelechian principle of thought concerning natural theology which thus enables us to denote finite being as creation; and,
- the doctrine of existence as a basis for doctrinal expression.

If any of these salient aspects are neglected in Mascall's doctrine of existence, it will be misconstrued. Each aspect lends mutual support to the others and leads to an integrated insight where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Conjointly, Mascall's metaphysical realism suggests real support for doctrinal expression.

If Mascall's account is cogent, then it may be significantly related to Anglican doctrinal accounts where history has shown that various and perhaps incompatible interpretations of the Articles have arisen.[227] Our discussion so far suggests that the metaphysical question of "God" is relevant to Anglican doctrine because it implies a realist presumption in theology and doctrine which can be given added philosophical support.

Mascall's Thomistic approach may well appear out of touch with contemporary views on perception and natural theology. For example, Alister McGrath recently wrote:

> The understanding of human perception that we have explored in this work does not sit well with the idea of systematic theology as an allocentric, static representation of truth…. The egocentric nature of human perception suggests that if God is to enter our categories, God needs to encounter us dynamically in a place in which we will see God from our perspective. Yet although this approach exists in an uneasy relationship with neo-scholastic approaches to theology, it fits well with those approaches to theology which emphasize the provisionality of its formulations….[228]

McGrath is concerned to emphasize that since "nature" is unable to interpret itself, "the insight that nature has the capacity to disclose God is only given from the standpoint of knowing God…".[229] As we have seen, McGrath's approach to natural theology also raises the question of the relationship of nature and of revelation in natural theology. But in

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[227] For example, in the impact and consequences of *Essays and Reviews*, see A. O. J. Cockshut, *Anglican Attitudes: A Study of Victorian Religious Controversies*, (London: Collins, 1959), 87: The essayists had turned the Protestant right of private judgment against the Bible and some leading Protestant doctrines – a thing not done in the 16th century – but by the 19th century times had changed.
[228] McGrath, *Open Secret*, 105.
[229] McGrath, *Open Secret*, 139.

doing so, it also calls up the spectre of relativism – perhaps for different reasons to Hankey and for the critics of Anslem. J. B. Cobb accuses Mascall of misunderstanding the significant question of epistemological relativism. Chapter IV takes up this latter question.

CHAPTER IV

NATURAL THEOLOGY AND HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

INTRODUCTION

If the knowledge of God we have by way of faith is to be supported and expanded by an affirmation of God's Infinite Being, then we must be assured that Mascall's insistence on an ontological perspective does not rest on a fundamental error of judgment. As we have seen, one protestant theologian, R. H. Nash, has argued that Mascall presents natural theology as "a necessary first step in establishing the credibility of theism".[1] He adds, "This approach is positively wrong-headed in its capitulation to the evidentialist-foundationalist model of rationality",[2] because Mascall believes that "natural theology is necessary, not optional" if "the Christian's faith is to be rational".[3] For Mascall, as we have seen, "[reason] is itself the instrument by the use of which the problem of God's existence is to be investigated."[4] An implication of Nash's criticism is that Mascall neglects what may be considered a place for such relativism as faith legitimately allows. However, a more significant objection to Mascall's approach is presented along a similar line by J. B. Cobb. Cobb claims that Mascall has over-stated the role of reason, so missing the relativities inherent in cultural situations. It is to Cobb's objection that we now turn.

This chapter will examine Mascall's claim that reason has a "rightful, if limited" place in theology.[5] For instance, what place would Mascall's natural theology have in doctrinal theology if Cobb's charges were upheld? And, what would be the result for Mascall's criticisms of liberal and modernist theologies within Anglicanism? However, before we

[1] Nash, *Faith and Reason* 94.
[2] Nash, *Faith and Reason*, 94.
[3] Nash, *Faith and Reason*, 94.
[4] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 30.
[5] Mascall, *He Who Is*, xii.

attend to such questions, we will discuss some significant aspects of the relation of faith and reason in Mascall. The material presented in this chapter will be set out under the following five headings:-

1. Reason and the Existence of God;
2. Escaping the Bounds – When is Reason Natural?
3. Enticing the "Everyman";
4. Conclusion; and,
5. Coda.

1. Reason and the Existence of God

Reason's Role in Mascall's Theology

Cobb offered a serious criticism of Mascall's approach to natural theology on the basis that reason is not able to rise above cultural relativities.[6] Before we address Cobb's criticisms in detail, let us first outline Mascall's understanding of the place of reason in theology and of the role of reason in the world. It expresses two clear points:-

- that there is a demarcation of revelation and reason and of their operation within their own proper sphere while they profitably and mutually inter-relate; and,
- that reason has a power to convince "anyone" who may follow the arguments of the existence of God.[7]

Then, we will outline Cobb's criticism and compare it with an alternative account of faith and reason by Lubor Velecky. Finally, we will investigate the significance of Cobb's criticisms before asking the question, when is reason "natural"?, and how the "everyman" may be enticed by reason.

First, as we have seen, Mascall is clear that faith and reason have their own "proper sphere" of operation in theology.[8] However, an important question concerns whether reason has a universal application or whether it is relative to various cultures. Is it possible that Mascall has over-looked what has become known as "historical consciousness", which may imply an epistemological relativity. When we speak of historical consciousness, do we mean the claim that "reasonable thinking" is to be related to an underlying cultural and

[6] Cobb, *Living Options*.
[7] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 80.
[8] Mascall, *Christ*, 233.

historical relativism? If this is the case, then Thomist Realism cannot lay claim to transcend the relativities of the linguistic communities wherein it was formed. So it is important to consider whether Mascall rightly claims that Thomist Realism is the basis of a significant and possible universal application of natural theology and so may become a significant resource for Anglican theology.

We have seen in Chapter I, natural theology is the result of abstracting some rational processes inherent in Christian belief. In the concrete world, natural theology is done by believers where reason is open to the influxes of revelation and where revelation masters reason and transforms it without destroying it. Mascall also made the point that grace may accompany reason as in the experience of *contuition*. On this point he wrote that God "will communicate himself to us in deliberate activity, whether that activity is subsequent to our rational recognition of him or whether it is an occasional, frequent or possibly even an invariable accompaniment of it".[9] As we have seen in Chapter III, our knowledge of being is a fundamental category of thought and is logically prior in the process of Christian theology since being itself is prior. But also we have seen that creation is logically prior to redemption. In the priority of an ontological understanding of the Creator, the special character of divine revelation is more deeply appreciated when it is understood as coming from the infinite depths of God's creative Being. And so, in Christian doctrine, "Logically and essentially, the doctrine of God is the fundamental doctrine of the Christian Religion, for, according to its teaching, everything other than God depends upon him and exists for his glory".[10]

However, it is a significant aspect of Mascall's approach that a demarcation of revelation and reason does not imply a separation of faith and reason. Mascall is able to point to the inadequacy of a purely revelationary approach to theology,[11] and also of the inadequacy of a liberal approach on this basis as he upholds a rightful yet limited place for reason. As we have seen, Mascall is insistent on a fruitful and mutual inter-relationship between faith and reason. On this point he writes,

[9] Mascall, *Openness*, 141-142.
[10] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 1.
[11] See Chapter 3 *supra*. *Cf* Mascall, *He Who Is*, 23-29.

> [I]n discussing the existence of God we shall be relying primarily upon arguments based upon human reason. Nevertheless, in view of the close connection which we have seen to exist between natural and revealed theology, we shall, even in discussing the existence of God, make frequent reference to the Christian revelation; that is to say, we shall follow the line of Aquinas rather than that of Aristotle…. One of the grounds on which traditional theism has refused to base belief in God simply upon the fact of revelation is that revelation itself needs rational justification…. To accept something on the authority of revelation is to accept it because one is convinced that God has said it; and this involves a previous conviction of the existence of God.[12]

From this passage, we may see why Nash objected to Mascall's method – it seems to make natural theology a necessity, not an option if "the Christian's faith if to be rational". Nevertheless, Mascall is not following a program rejected by Nash. Rather, Mascall is insisting on a fruitful inter-relationship of faith and reason. In the concrete world, Mascall insists that "revelation has priority over natural knowledge".[13] A demarcation of revelation and reason need not mean a separation of faith and reason – nor indeed, as we shall argue, an invariably constant causal relationship between grace and revelation.

Alternatively, some critics, while not rejecting an important place of reason in theology, nevertheless reject the need of a metaphysical theism in theology. They may also reject a belief in the soundness and the significance of arguments for the existence of God, even when these are conducted by Christians.[14] A fundamental claim of some such critics is that there is no need for natural theology based on metaphysical realism in Christian doctrinal theology because rational processes in Christian believing are systematically tied to our faith in revelation. They wish to separate faith and reason rather than simply to demarcate them in theology. On the basis of a priority of revelation in theology, we are presently able to proceed to Cobb's criticisms of Mascall.

Secondly, Mascall is insistent that the arguments for the existence of God may be able to convince anyone who may follow them. On this point he writes,

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[12] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 26.
[13] Mascall, *Christ*, 236.
[14] See, for example, Ross, *Philosophical Theology*, 158; see also V. Preller, *Divine Science and the Science of God: A Reformulation of Thomas Aquinas*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).

> The arguments for the existence of God are not fallacious, and to anyone who understands what they are about and is capable of following them they can carry complete conviction…. Nor are they unnecessary, for without them…our belief will not be explicitly rational.[15]

Mascall is clear that the Five Ways may help people in general – the "anyone" or everyone? – and not simply Christian believers. He insists on significant moral and operational conditions that anyone must follow if complete conviction is to occur. Nevertheless, natural theology may have a role outside of the community of faith. It is this aspect that Cobb questions. We now turn to outline his objections more thoroughly.

COBB'S OBJECTIONS

Cobb accepts that Mascall's natural theology has the merits of an internal consistency and cogency while he believes Mascall has mistakenly understood reason to have a greater significance in theology that it may actually have. He appreciates Mascall's placing of reason and natural theology between two alternatives. The first alternative concerns a natural use of reason "given for human experience independently of historical consciousness", and the second concerns "human experience [as] historically conditioned... [and where] Christian arguments from philosophy presuppose distinctively Christian data".[16] Cobb believes that this is a correct way to place reason. Nevertheless, the problem is that Mascall says natural theology may be understood by anyone who fulfils certain conditions. While Mascall's position is a *tertium quid*, it is nonetheless misplaced. While Mascall acknowledges the impact of Christian revelation on Greek philosophy, and believes that the "vision of existence from which his natural theology arises…is not…simply part of the truth that is given in revelation",[17] he smuggles into his account an unwarranted assumption about reason. This assumption allows reason to have a universal application and relevance. And so, it is not to be thought of as historically conditioned. Cobb accepts that a natural theology may have an appropriate place within the Christian faith and so profitably support the faith of Christians. He also believes that within a Western culture influenced by Christianity, natural theology may continue to resonate with many people today. On this point, which was published in the 1970s, Cobb writes as follows:

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[15] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 80. Thus, Cobb, *Living Options*, 3: "What [Mascall has] said indicates that special revelation cannot constitute the sole basis of our knowledge of God…. Faith cannot dispense with this prior knowledge".
[16] Cobb, *Living Options*, 12.
[17] Cobb, *Living Options*, 12.

> Emphasizing more consistently than Mascall the historical relativity and conditionedness of the data upon which he builds his thought, let us still acknowledge that for many of us such data are nonetheless very real and important. Let us further acknowledge that, although this vision has dimmed considerably from Western mentality, much of it remains latent in such a way that a vivid presentation of its importance still has widespread effectiveness. We can then consider whether the implications that a Thomist like Mascall draws from these data actually follow with the necessity that he claims.[18]

With this thought in mind, Cobb calls the position advocated by Mascall "*Christian* natural theology". He explains: "By Christian natural theology I mean the attempt to justify certain Christian beliefs rationally on the basis of data that, though historically conditioned by Christian revelation, are widely held by persons who are not self-consciously Christian".[19]

Having presented Cobb's fundamental criticism of Mascall, we may question whether such criticism of Mascall's account of natural theology is as cogent as he claims it to be. We have reason to raise this question on the basis of a third account of the role of reason in theology presented by the Catholic philosopher Lubor Velecky. By placing Velecky's account alongside Cobb's, we may be given reason to doubt Cobb's view of the relationship of reason to faith. Velecky's account complements Mascall's and provides us with concepts to help us support Mascall's understanding. Specifically, Velecky offers us an apt way to understand the role of reason in Aquinas' theology as indicated by the Five Ways, and of the relationship of reason and revelation.[20] Velecky is able to do this without compromising a legitimate aspect of relativity in our understanding of reason. In addition, Velecky's account has the advantage of being written after Anthony Kenny's negative but influential account of the Five Ways. It sheds helpful light on Mascall's presentation and on the contention regarding reason at hand. To Velecky's main points we now proceed.

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[18] Cobb, *Living Options*, 12.
[19] Cobb, *Living Options*, 12.
[20] L. Velecky, *Aquinas's Five Arguments in The Summa Theologiæ 1a, 2, 3*, (Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1994);
A. Kenny, *The Five Ways. St. Thomas Aquinas' Proof of God's Existence*, (No place: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969).

VELECKY'S ACCOUNT OF FAITH AND REASON

Velecky's point about the Five Ways – which he calls the *Five Arguments* – is that they cannot be used to show that natural reason is able to prove the existence of God. As he says, Aquinas does not attempt to demonstrate "God's existence" – *Dei esse* – but only shows "God is" – *Deum esse* – is capable of a realistic reference in human discourse because it can be known from his effects.[21] Velecky believes that it is not possible to demonstrate God's existence by the Five Ways, only more modestly to show that "God exists" is able to be integrated into human discourse – even for those who do not address God and for whom "God" may be a meaningless term – and so is an ontological commitment of the Christian Faith. Velecky believes that without a worship of God, "God" can have no existential or practical meaning, and so possesses no relevant conceptual meaning for such people because it lacks incisive cognitivity.

Velecky offers us a way to relate faith and reason without denying that they are somewhat related to the experience and linguistic expression of the Christian communities. He believes, however, that such relativity is not to be thought of in absolute terms, but that the boundaries of these communities are epistemologically porous. The communication of interlocutors within a specific community – in Aquinas's case, a community with strong Aristotelian commitments – is able to be profitably translated into the linguistic expression of alternative historical communities.[22] We may say that historical relativity is an example of the analogous character of being where the richness of the "sameness-in-difference" manifests itself to our advantage.

Velecky gives the individual language user a primary significance in an understanding of the nature of philosophy. As he says, the philosopher is a person who philosophises.[23] He means that philosophical procedure arises out of a personal valuation made by individuals. Such a personal valuation is to be seen as a starting-point of debates and it provides a philosopher with what is considered to be good reasons to be used in arguments. Such decisions are relative to the historical situations of each philosopher.[24] Reason is not to be

[21] Velecky, *Five Arguments*, 36.
[22] *Cf* E. Sillem, *Ways of Thinking About God. Thomas Aquinas and Some Recent Problems*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961), 59: "[Aquinas] is philosophizing against theologians and in a theological context…".
[23] Velecky, *Five Arguments*, 23.
[24] Velecky, *Five Arguments*, 24-25.

seen as a supra-temporal human ability – as Descartes hoped – but within the limitation of a specific cultural context. It is somewhat culturally-bound. Therefore, the meaning of "God" is related to the activities of those who address God within a community of faith.[25] If there are some who do not address God yet also borrow "God" and so import it into their language, they act with a certain level of incoherence. For those within a community of faith, lack of faith is not only to be seen as a failure of those within such a community; it also represents a particular rational commitment by such people. Therefore, only certain types of philosophy are compatible with theism, and they must be rooted in certain fiducial commitments.[26] God's existence cannot be demonstrated in all possible circumstances. Velecky accordingly rejects Anthony Kenny's hostile assessment of the Five Ways as an example of an attempt to give reason a power it does not possess outside the community of faith.[27]

While Cobb finds fault with Mascall's natural theology because it claims a non-relative objectivity, Velecky allows for the relativity of Aquinas's exposition of God's existence without closing off a connection with non-believers. He shows how Aquinas' approach to reason possesses a certain relative quality. An important question is whether Velecky's understanding may eventually lead to a radical cultural relativism, or perhaps to agnosticism about God, or to a radical fideism.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS QUESTION FOR MASCALL

Both Cobb's assessment of Mascall and Velecky's approach to the Five Ways concern the problematic issue of the relationship of faith and reason and so implies the question of relativity. In this context, the question of the role Mascall gives to reason is a significant issue for the following two reasons, namely:-

- Mascall has misappropriated the role of reason and his claims are inconsistent and so may be self-referentially incoherent; and,
- natural theology has no real place in a protestant account of faith.

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[25] Velecky, *Five Arguments*, 30.
[26] Velecky, *Five Arguments*, 32.
[27] Velecky, *Five Arguments*, Chapter 5. Velecky has reservations about Anthony Kenny's criticism of the Five Ways. *Cf* A. Kenny, *The Unknown God: Agnostic Essays*, (London: Continuum, 2004), 13: "In my view the Five Ways of Aquinas are unsuccessful forms of the cosmological argument precisely because they depend, more than at first meets the eye, on particular outdated theories of physical explanation" and16: "…we cannot speak literally of God …" *Cf* Mascall, *Openness*, 30: "Since meaningfulness means the capacity to be understood, the only way in which to discover whether a statement or a concept is meaningful is to see whether people can understand it".

As we proceed to discuss the significance of this question, we shall examine more deeply Cobb's criticisms.

First, if Cobb's criticisms of Mascall are accepted without remainder, then the doctrine of existence and the doctrine of creation become a relative aspect within the discourse of one faith community. And so, it is an exaggeration to suggest that natural theology may have a wider application in the general human community and so take a place within a general human discourse. Moreover, Mascall's claims that reason has a rightful yet limited place in theology are inconsistent and so may be self-referentially incoherent. This throws doubt on his theological project within Anglicanism.

In any case, if natural theology is to be so relativized to Christian communities, then it may not be so surprising that some theologians may neglect a place for it or, alternatively, consider its arguments to be either unsound and/or a denial of the primacy of revelation and faith even if its arguments were considered to be sound. Were it to be true that the knowledge of God we have by way of faith is notably supported and expanded by theology, natural theology may yet find no place in Christian discourse, and no place in a wider discourse. Some may ask if the *ordo religionis* is to include necessarily an ontological understanding of creation and a role for natural theology. Is not the credal affirmation of creation sufficient for Christian faith? Furthermore, if arguments of natural theology were believed to be sound by some people namely those influenced by Christianity– as Cobb claims – it still may have no place within or without the community of faith.

As we have seen, in Thomist Realism, being and creation are fundamental categories of thought. Mascall gives logical priority to natural knowledge in the *ordo essendi* while revelation is prior in the *ordo cognoscendi* in the concrete world. In the *ordo essendi*, creation is logically prior to redemption. Velecky makes the point that no-one comes to Christian commitment on the basis of an argument for God as the First Cause.[28] Nevertheless, Mascall is insistent that the arguments for the existence of God have a somewhat universal application and relevance. If it is in the community of faith that the

[28] Velecky, *Five Arguments*, Chapter 7 *et al*. Compare 120: "For "God" is not primarily the name of some purely theoretical entity which may or may not 'be there'. It is primarily the word for addressing the allegedly ever-present healing power which alone can cope with the many moral and intellectual defects of human beings".

ordo essendi is uncovered and seen to be the basis of Christian doctrine where an ontological understanding of creation is essential, then the rich resources of Christian thinking may be shared with those outside the community of faith.[29] Consequently, the adequacy, sufficiency, and necessity of Mascall's approach to faith and reason within Christian theology may be in jeopardy if Cobb's objection is upheld. However, if Velecky is correct, the reality of personal valuation as a starting-point of argument need not detract from a significant role for philosophy in theology.

A second reason for the significance of this question follows the first and concerns the nature of Protestantism and a protestant objection to natural theology on the basis of the doctrines of *sola fide* and *sola scriptura*. On this point, Cobb believes that the thought of the Bible is in tension with Mascall's version of catholicism. Mascall, he believes, wants to re-instate Thomist natural theology in a way that avoids its "religiously and logically unsatisfactory conclusions".[30] He rejects Mascall's doctrine of the impassibility of God, which he believes is a significant aspect of natural theology and which causes a tension with the thought patterns of the Bible. He believes catholicism places ecclesiastical tradition at the centre of gravity in matters of Biblical interpretation and theology. And so Cobb demurs from Mascall's support of catholicism as the following shows.

> The same problem of the relation of Mascall's philosophy and Biblical thought should be stated in a distinctively Protestant way… [given that] the Catholic basis for denying this tension lies in the argument that Scripture must be read as interpreted in the ecclesiastical tradition. If this principle is followed…one will not find in the Bible the univocally personalistic thinking about God that many Protestants suppose they see….The Protestant objection is that we can in fact gain a more objective view of the Bible by direct study and can criticize the traditional interpretation from this point of view…. Is it true that the Bible is open to a virtually unlimited number of interpretations [as Mascall claims that it may be]? The Reformers thought that its message was quite clear…. Is the Catholic traditional interpretation of the Bible one of those which can be known on the basis of our present study of the Bible to be in serious error?... If it is, then the Reformers were right in demanding a choice between the Bible and Catholic tradition….[31]

[29] Luther's contrast of the *theologia gloriæ* and the *theologia crucis* reflects the intention to keep "doctrine" within the faith based on revelation. Thus McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*, Vol. II, 8, writes, "For Luther, the 'righteousness of God' is revealed exclusively in the cross, contradicting human preconceptions and expectations of the form revelation should take. This insight is essentially methodological…".
[30] Cobb, *Living Options*, 18.
[31] Cobb, *Living Options*, 18.

Of significance we may note here that Cobb appears to agree with Velecky that reason is for "interpreting and developing [of] the starting point given in faith".[32] As Cobb maintains, the data of philosophical reasoning cannot be understood as naturally "given for human experience independently of historical conditions…".[33] Consequently, on this basis, Cobb believes that Mascall's theology should be stated in a distinctively protestant way, based solely upon and upholding the thought patterns of the Bible.

However, if we use Velecky's point about philosophy as a catalyst to help us re-configure Cobb's approach to natural theology we may see that we may not have to reject necessarily Mascall's approach to the power of reason. As we have seen, Cobb appreciates Mascall's *tertium quid* – that natural theology is derived from revelation yet has relevance to believers. While he agrees with Mascall's "clear distinction…between natural theology and revealed theology",[34] he only accepts its relevance for cognate cultural communities. Cobb appears not only to uphold the importance of the thought patterns of the Bible, which conflict with Mascall's account of impassibility, but also bases Christian thinking on faith.

Having noted the main aspects of both Cobb's and Velecky's approaches, and having noted the significance of this question of a positive assessment of Mascall, the following discussion will investigate Cobb's account in greater detail.

2. Escaping the Bounds – When is Reason Natural?

The Problem of the Pre-Christian Thinkers

Cobb makes the point that natural theology today cannot claim a universal attention since most people do not accept that it "intends to embody only those ideas upon which all reasonable men in fact agree".[35] Consequently, it is self-defeating when its supporters claim for it a universal relevance while its true provenance is located in a community of faith.[36] Cobb thinks Mascall solves this difficulty by pleading for correct habits of mind and virtues of character in those readers of the Five Ways who find the data of natural

[32] Cobb, *Living Options*, 12.
[33] Cobb, *Living Options*, 11-12.
[34] Cobb, *Living Options*, 12.
[35] Cobb, *Living Options*, 2.
[36] Cobb, *Living Options*, 2.

theology seemingly real in a secularized world.[37] Cobb thinks that the lack of a natural theology such as we find in Mascall in pre-Christian thinkers denies its universal relevance. First, we need to address the problematic nature of pre-Christian thinkers, and then ask if there is a problem with post-Christian thinkers.

Cobb suggests that if natural theology were of universal significance it would have emerged among pre-Christian thinkers – "[those] who devoted themselves with requisite patience and concern to the discovery of ultimate truth".[38] In fact, he claims, "History shows us that this is not the case."[39] Rather, history shows a *systematic* connection between revelation and the emergence of natural theology. Although Cobb agrees with Mascall that revelation has made possible the achievement of natural theology, as we have seen, he disagrees with him that it has universal significance. His problem is Mascall's insistence that those who may reject revelation but who are open and interested "can be led to see the decisive cogency of the reason that is employed".[40] The reason is simply that, as Cobb says, there is a "systematic relativism of every position".[41] Cobb cannot believe that natural theology escapes the confines of cultural relativism despite Mascall's insistence that revelation is prior in the concrete world. That "nature is healed by grace [so] reason [can] function properly" makes no significant difference to Mascall's case.[42] In other words, Cobb rejects the logical priority of natural knowledge. Strangely, however, he also does not explore the possibilities of meaning in the Scholastic axiom, *Grace perfects nature but does not destroy it.*

We have seen that Cobb believes Mascall smuggles in a doubtful assumption concerning reason so as to escape "the relativism of philosophic positions". In more detail, this assumption is "that the perception of things as finite existents is the natural perception for man". Cobb acknowledges that if we assume this, then "we may assert with Mascall that what inhibits this vision blinds us to what is as it is".[43] Nevertheless, the essential point is

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[37] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 76-80 is the first statement of a theme Mascall repeats in his works, that is, that culture, in this case, the culture of secularism, is to blame for stultifying the mind.
[38] Cobb, *Living Options*, 2.
[39] Cobb, *Living Options*, 2. Compare J. Owens in J. R. Catan (ed.), *St. Thomas Aquinas on the Existence of God: The Collected Papers of Joseph Owens*, (Albany: State University of New York, 1980), 24: "This [i.e., Aquinas's understanding of *esse*] is very new in the history of Western philosophy…".
[40] Cobb, *Living Options*, 2.
[41] Cobb, *Living Options*, 2.
[42] Cobb, *Living Options*, 9. Cobb cites Mascall, *Christ*, 233.
[43] Cobb, *Living Options*, 11.

that "the absence of the Christian understanding of God in pre-Christian religion indicates that the vision of things as finite existents was virtually absent for common sense as well as for philosophy until the impact of Biblical thought caused it to prevail".[44] Therefore, natural theology logically and systematically depends on the data provided by Christian revelation.

However, a point to be noticed is if Mascall is to escape Cobb's criticism, all he needs to provide is a logical possibility that in the concrete world for those of the appropriate disposition, anyone may attain a natural knowledge of God. Mascall says that while logically, natural knowledge is prior to revelation, for grace presupposes nature, and in the concrete world revelation has priority over natural knowledge, he does not say that revelation is logically prior in the concrete world, that revelation only ever accompanies grace, or that "revelation" only denotes the content of the scriptures and the doctrinal teachings of the church.

There is an important distinction to be made between the systematic and the historical dependency of natural theology on revelation. This distinction is essential to Cobb's assessment of Mascall. On the basis of a systematic dependency of natural theology on revelation he says that

> the systematic dependence of natural theology on revelation [is to be seen as the basis of the idea that] in fact in the common vision of reality apart from revelation [the] element [of the vision of things as finite existents] has been subordinated to other elements or entirely lacking [and that] revelation creates the data on which natural theology reasons.[45]

Natural theology occurred subsequently to revealed theology and in a systematic dependence on it. [46] However, an important question concerns the definition of nature. Cobb seems to possess a univocal view of the natural. This is seen in his approach to historical study. By checking extant historical writings for evidence of the vision of reality as espoused by Mascall, he may overlook the possibility of an analogical understanding of naturalness. Consequently, this strategy may expose Cobb to the criticism that our own cultural presuppositions are relative while Cobb seems to presume them to be less than

[44] Cobb, *Living Options*, 11.
[45] Cobb, *Living Options*, 11.
[46] Cobb, *Living Options*, 9, cites Mascall, *Christ*, 234-236 as the relevant reference. Mascall writes, 235: "Christian theology, then has a twofold material on which to work – namely, the deliverances of natural knowledge, and the revelation given by God in Christ…".

relative. Perhaps Cobb has decided in advance what are to be the criteria for our understanding of naturalness. We may ask whether this prior decision is to be accepted on either a universal or a relative basis. If it is the latter, then there may be a structural deficiency in Cobb's argument.

Alternatively, in Mascall's approach, an ontological understanding of creation is logically prior in Christian doctrine where it is accepted that revelation restores reason to its natural function as it elevates it to higher levels.[47] In the restoration and advance of nature, it is not destroyed but perfected. As Mascall points out, the Creator does not start afresh in the new creation, but uses the material of the old as its basis. And so we see again that Mascall demarcates revelation and reason as he does not separate faith and reason. This distinction is not accounted for in Cobb's criticism.[48] As Mascall explains on the basis of Dom John Chapman's thought, the supernatural and the natural are "warp and woof from which our whole experience is woven".[49] On this point he explains,

> I do not believe that any religious awareness is a purely natural or purely rational thing, from which specific intervention by God can be excluded *a priori*. Therefore I do not think that religious experience can be sharply classified into definite types…. Nevertheless, because I believe that God has created man as a rational animal and has endowed him with natural powers, of which reason itself is one of the most significant, I hold that in religious experience there is a common element which is highly important and which with proper precautions can be brought under rational examination…. It may well be that in all religious awareness there are, closely intertwined, both a natural and a supernatural element….[50]

It is obvious that the word natural may be used in different ways – as both something that makes "no appeal to revelation",[51] and as something that is abstracted from a whole which includes revelation and a "supernatural element". Nevertheless, the inherent ambiguity of the term allows for an analogical approach to nature. To Mascall, nature is an analogical

[47] Mascall, *Christ*, 235, where he names "the deliverances of natural knowledge, and the revelation given by God in Christ…" as the two sources of theology.
[48] Mascall, *Christ*, 233: "While in principle there is a certain limited knowledge of God which is accessible to the human reason as such, in practice it is only in the light of revelation and under the assistance of grace that the human reason can function adequately and can obtain, even within its own proper sphere, a knowledge of God which is free from error…. in the concrete a true philosophy can only be developed in the light of Christian revelation".
[49] Mascall, *Openness*, 1.
[50] Mascall, *Openness*, 4.
[51] Mascall, *Openness*, 4.

term and is that which has the capacity for the supernatural while remaining essentially itself.[52]

The significance of our approach to nature is illustrated in Mascall's account of natural theology. For example, Mascall's doctrine of the openness of being encapsulates his approach to the natural. It is explained by Mascall in the following three quotations.

> At some stage or other the finite must be *capax infiniti*. Unless there is some *Anknüpfungspunkt*, however small, between God and man in human nature, unless man has, by nature, some *potentia oboedientialis*, some receptive capacity, however minimal, for the supernatural, God will be unable to communicate with man because even if God speaks, man will be unable to hear him.[53]

> A self-communication may indeed be expected on the part of a personal God…. Furthermore, it may well be doubted whether such self-revealing activity will be altogether absent from any occasion in which a man contemplates God's creatures in such as way as to discern his presence in them as their creator….[54]

> I also argued that it is possible, and is indeed likely, that a personal God will not merely restrict himself to the status of a passive and unresponsive object for our consideration and investigation…but will communicate himself to us in deliberate revelationary activity, whether that activity is subsequent to our rational recognition of him or whether it is an occasional, frequent or possibly even an invariable accompaniment of it.[55]

In these quotations the question of the personal element in rationality, the fundamental vision or fundamental faith understood in an epistemological sense, is present. In addition, we may say that Mascall's understanding of the epistemology of faith relates well to Velecky's, especially if his point about the need of appropriate personal dispositions is included. Mascall never denies the factual priority of revelation and faith, nor of the historical dependence of natural theology on revelation. We may agree with Cobb that "natural theology receives a basis on which to operate only as a gift from revelation".[56] Mascall would also agree. Consequently, that the pre-Christian thinkers did not write as did Aquinas, should not cause concern to Christians who believe an ontological understanding of creation is logically prior.

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[52] Mascall, *Openness*, Chapter 9.
[53] Mascall, *Openness*, 143.
[54] Mascall, *Openness*, 123.
[55] Mascall, *Openness*, 141-142.
[56] Cobb¸ *Living Options*, 11.

The problem of pre-Christian thinkers is not a significant problem for the adequacy of Mascall's account of faith and reason. The question of present-day accounts of relativity follows from this discussion.

THE PROBLEM OF THE POST-CHRISTENDOM THINKERS

Cobb's point that the "data [of natural theology] may be created for some who do not acknowledge the revelation as authoritative, and [that] for this reason natural theology may have a wider basis of acceptance than revealed theology" among those influenced by Christian culture may also be granted, but with qualifications.[57] Such people are not – as Mascall suggests and as Cobb rejects – those who may have no attachment to Christian culture yet are convinced by natural theology. An important question concerns the soundness of Cobb's assessment of the place of natural theology in a post-Christian world. Cobb believes in the relativizing force of cultures that renders Mascall's claim of the universal significance of natural theology void.[58] But Cobb accepts Mascall's position on natural theology as a *tertium quid* between what is of universal significance, and what is conditioned. As we have seen, this is what Cobb calls "*Christian* natural theology", and it applies to a specific group of people. However, Cobb seems not to have noticed that the very people for whom the vision of finite being leads to an apprehension of Infinite Being are people for whom this is not a rationally based cognitive insight. On Cobb's own pre-suppositions, this group of people is only psychologically influenced by this vivid presentation. The group cannot obtain such a cognitive insight to be genuine since, as Cobb says, its culture is relative to Christendom and influenced by "special revelation".[59] It is an insight based on an inherited or borrowed faith. Since Cobb has already declared that all cognitivity is conditioned, the so-called acceptance by "the many of us" turns out to be nothing more than a purely relative acceptance, more radically relative than for which Cobb allows. For the group which seems to benefit from a vision of finitude, this realization is not natural. Rather, it possesses only a pseudo-naturalness. If this is the case, then so-called "*Christian* natural theology" is simply theology. Therefore, if these people find the vision of finitude in any sense natural, they are deluded. Natural theology can be of no real help to such people after all. It is not *natural* in Cobb's terms. All positions are

[57] Cobb, *Living Options*, 11.
[58] Cobb, *Living Options*, 11: "Although [Mascall] tends at times to obscure the dependence of natural theology upon revelation, he is not unaware of it, and his arguments do not depend on the occasional oversight".
[59] Cobb, *Living Options*, 12.

simply radically relative for post-Christendom thinkers. If this is the case for everyone and anyone, then Mascall's assignment of natural theology as a *tertium quid* can only be regarded as unstable – as Cobb in his own view does so regard it.

This may not matter to Cobb, but it cannot but be "very real and important" to "many of us" since it achieves nothing beyond what "special revelation" already has declared. Nevertheless, he applauds Mascall's "intermediate position" as "eminently sensible".[60] However, in this approach by Cobb, "*Christian* natural theology" is either to be seen as an oxymoron, or the notion of "natural" is an ambiguous concept.

THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

As we have seen, Cobb is concerned with a "marked tension with Biblical personalism" he sees inherent in Mascall's natural theology.[61] Mascall's approach, Cobb believes, implies an alternative understanding of the church to which Cobb objects. He explains that "Mascall…assumes that theology is concerned with the truth itself and that the received dogma embodies that truth. This presupposes an understanding of the church as a supernatural community in which truth is authenticated".[62] In Cobb's theology, truth is not to be attained by reference to the church, but through the study of the Bible.

Cobb's picture of the church according to Mascall is as follows. It expresses the doctrine of God in Aristotelian terms rather than in the personalist terms of the "Bible". Hence, there are "assertions that, when taken univocally, must be regarded as mutually contradictory".[63] Cobb believes that much energy has been expended on trying to reconcile the disparities between the metaphysical language and the Biblical language where "approved theologians" guide "ordinary Christians". Such theologians have developed the doctrine of analogy to make the church's theological language possible, but it has little to do with truth.[64] The church too was misguided in thinking natural theology was based on nature. And so it diverged "from the Biblical understanding of God".[65] The church understood literal metaphysical terms for God – sufficiency, necessity, simplicity, immutability, and infinity – to be univocal, but in the process, made Biblical terms

[60] Cobb, *Living Options*, 12.
[61] Cobb, *Living Options*, 13, 16 &17 *et al.*
[62] Cobb, *Living Options*, 10.
[63] Cobb, *Living Options*, 17.
[64] Cobb, *Living Options*, 17.
[65] Cobb, *Living Options*, 18.

analogical in character. Cobb laments that it is the Biblical terms that have given way.[66] In this way, natural theology turned Biblical common sense on its head. The ecclesiastical situation is based on two questionable hypotheses, that metaphysical language is meaningful, and that the philosophical procedures of natural theology are correct. We see in a requiring of analogical discourse a sign of ecclesiastical defeat – both hypotheses are doubtful. However, says Cobb, all this activity is not worthwhile since univocal language about God is more meaningful in the long run.

Cobb is consistent in that he believes natural theology is based on revelation, a gift from God. However, he is inconsistent in believing natural theology is relevant to many people at the same time as rejecting a role for analogical language. The reason he rejects analogical language is because he finds univocal language to be more meaningful. The basis of this is that he finds contingent elements in God.[67] He explains this by reference to questions concerning God's life. In this explanation, he agrees that if God is immutable, then there must be an analogical description of God. However, he says that

> if we define life in terms of the capacity to respond selectively to events, a conception of God that allows some contingent elements in his experience will permit us to apply the term 'life' to God univocally…. Furthermore, if we quite univocally call God living in this way, this does not imply that God's life is in other respects like ours.[68]

How may this approach be assessed? One answer is that it is strange that Cobb expresses any appreciation for natural theology at all. If meaningful language about God is derived from univocal Biblical and poetic terms, then there seems to be no reason to start a natural theology project in the first place. And so, in this way, Cobb seems to undercut any appreciation of natural theology he may have had. The question concerns the nature of doctrinal theology which does not merely repeat Biblical terms. Furthermore, there is a more far-reaching question involved. It is about whether the relation which we call creation is one of radical dependence, or whether God is some how immanent in creation.[69] It would have been better had Cobb explored the basic Thomist categories of

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[66] Cobb, *Living Options*, 15.
[67] Cobb, *Living Options*, 15.
[68] Cobb, *Living Options*, 16.
[69] Compare J. F. X. Knasas, *Being and Some Twentieth-Century Thomists*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003), 135-136: "Analogy is a type of conceptualization….The analogous concept is contrasted to the univocal concept. Characteristic of a univocal commonality is that it is picked out *apart* from the differences of the instances in the multiplicity. Hence, what makes the instances the same will not be what renders them

the doctrine of existence concerning the *esse*,[70] such as that God is *ipsum esse subsistens* and *actus essendi* [lit., "act of being"], that being is more fundamental that relating, that we intelligently participate in the world, and that God's impassibility does not mean God's passivity.[71]

To declare that "the attribution to God by Thomists of immutability" – that is, to a God with personal characteristics – is "an inconsistency", is to fail to understand that immutability is a not a positive univocal concept but a boundary-setting concept. It does not pretend to know God's essence and the nature of God's life.[72] The test of God's love is not to be found in a univocal description of God's life. Neither is it possible to say that God does not have the "capacity to respond selectively to events", as Cobb says.[73] Furthermore, in Mascall's approach, it may be said that the experience of finitude is not an experience of finality, but an experience of openness to infinity. On the point of analogy, Knasas says,

> The analogon of *ratio essendi* [lit., "concept of being"] does not express determinateness. Hence it is not under the restriction of having analogates that are always finite and determinate instances and never the analogon itself. As act that is not itself *forma*, the *ratio essendi* admits the possibility of an analogate that is the analogon. If that analogon exists, then the possibility of a vision of the transcendental analogical richness of the *ratio entis* [lit., "concept of a being"] exists.[74]

So by denying the analogical character of being, Cobb ultimately is not speaking about the same "God" as Mascall. Therefore, it is not clear how revelation has supplied "the data on the basis of which natural theology reasons".[75] And so we may say that Cobb's arguments need not prohibit Mascall from finding a universal meaning in natural theology.

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different…. With the analogical concept, however, one possesses a commonality that is grasped within the very differences of its instances".

[70] *Cf* Owens in Catan, *Thomas Aquinas*, 63: "It [being] seems like an act that is wrapped in its own subject".

[71] Knasas, *Being*, 294: "When one realizes that being is the nature of the First Cause, one realizes that the richness of being is more than the richness of an abstraction, but of a reality".

[72] Thus, in *ST* I, q3, a4, ad2: "Existence can be understood in two senses, one signifying the actuality of being and the other signifying the affirmative judgment by the mind, which joins subject to predicate. In the first sense, God's existence can be known no more than his essence can; but in the second sense we may be able to know that the proposition we form, namely, that he exists, is true" – in M. T. Clark (ed.), *An Aquinas Reader*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972), 116.

[73] Contrast Cobb, *Living Options*, 8: "Compassion does seem to imply that the one who feels it is affected by the fortunes of the one for whom it is felt. If so, then God's impassibility is incompatible with his love".

[74] Knasas, *Being*, 212.

[75] Cobb, *Living Options*, 11.

CONCLUSION: THE PROBLEM OF RELATIVISM

Metaphysical terms may be both literal and analogical. Therefore, it is not the case that metaphysical terms overtake the Biblical terms, but that the relationship between them is more subtle than Cobb allows. So, in the end, it is strange that Cobb's assessment of Mascall's natural theology is such that it is and as shown in the following quotation:

> This rather lengthy criticism of Mascall's Christian natural theology, however, is not intended to show the necessity of its radical rejection. Quite the contrary, its purpose is to argue that the fundamental Thomist vision of finite existence as pointing to its self-sufficient cause is fully compatible with a doctrine of God that can embody the real strengths of the Thomist position without entailing its religiously and logically unsatisfactory conclusions. This has been shown in the philosophical work of Charles Hartshorne.[76]

This assessment is strange in that Cobb rejects of necessity a Thomist natural theology and relegates the benefit of Mascall's approach to a definite yet a culturally relative group of people.

In addition, it may be said that Cobb's groups of people are too sharply defined. One is not simply a believer in revelation, or one of the "many of us" still influenced by Christian culture, or simply a non-believer. Christians too may struggle with belief. As Cobb recognizes in the following quotation,

> Mascall, like Thomas, moves back and forth in his discussion between natural and revealed theology. He is much clearer than is Thomas that the actual practice of natural theology depends historically upon revelation…. Indeed, only as nature is healed by grace can reason function properly…. Hence, natural and revealed theology are quite inseparable.[77]

For many Christians, faith may take the form of a dialogue between positions. A believer may approach the question of faith and reason dialectically in his or her own life in the church. Indeed, in the formation of Christian doctrine, the church may also experience a dialectical process of thought. For instance, as Richard Hanson says of the achievement of fourth century doctrinal orthodoxy, "It is clear that the way in which orthodoxy was achieved was a *process of trial and error*".[78]

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[76] Cobb, *Living Options*, 18.
[77] Cobb, *Living Options*, 9
[78] R. P. C. Hanson, "The achievement of orthodoxy in the fourth century AD" in Williams, *The Making of Orthodoxy*, 151.

Finally, it may be said that Cobb's claim that historical relativity is fundamental does not help his case for an univocal language about God. It undermines both the relative affirmation of Thomism which he wants to retain, and the rejection of the "religiously and logically unsatisfactory conclusions". Univocal language implicitly claims a realistic reference. But if the relativism of revelation is upheld in line with the acceptance of a systematic dependency of natural theology on revealed theology, univocal language remains radically relative, unless Cobb wants to affirm a revelationary positivism and a notion of the self-authentication of Biblical language. In any case, there is no need for any kind of natural theology, and anything natural about pre-Christian thinkers is simply a case of unbelief. To Cobb we may pose the following two questions:-

- is your own approach a universally realistic and relevant one, or is it relative only to twentieth century privileged appraisals of relativism?;
- on your own presuppositions, if Thomist Realism cannot transcend its context, then can the Bible do so without help?

As we observed, the only way out is a revelationary positivism and a belief in the self-authentication of Biblical language.

Cobb limited the relevance of Mascall's *tertium quid* to those with one foot in Christian culture, but Mascall understands that the grace of restored reason may appear in any culture. The following section discusses Mascall's view of a possible universal application of natural theology formed on the basis of ontological thinking.

3. ENTICING THE "EVERYMAN"

NATURAL THEOLOGY FOR WHOM?

Cobb places natural theology as a subdivision of Christian theology. In any case, it is worth asking what the purpose of natural theology is and for whom is it addressed. In this discussion, Velecky's approach provides us with some helpful conceptual tools.

Velecky is insistent that personal presumptions lie at the starting-point of debates about God. Thus, "Whether one is a believer, a non-believer or dis-believer, one's personal presumption is the soil in which one's procedural presumptions are rooted…because what

they see as 'good reasons' depends on what they value as persons".[79] Given the historical priority of revealed theology, natural theology which is part of Christian theology will need to ask the meaning of "God" and how it relates to "Infinite Being" as the latter concept emerges in the doctrine of existence and natural theology. If natural theology is designed to provide a rational support for belief in God for Christians rather than a device to entice non-believers or to convert disbelievers, the task of explicating the meaning of "God" will be different in each case. So Velecky reminds us that "good reasons" depends on personal values in all cases. In this context, the question of God's existence, the question of what "God" means and for whom it is meaningful, and, who God is, are all integrally connected with each other. Furthermore, as Velecky points out, if we cannot know God's essence, then there cannot be mutual agreement about finding God as a fact of existence, as would be the case in determining the existence of a proposed entity in the world. Therefore, natural theology must find a rational meaning for "God exists". As we have seen, Velecky says that "**either** one uses "God" as a form of address but then one cannot wonder whether there is a being that can so be addressed; **or** one can wonder whether there is being that could so be addressed".[80] The meaning of "God" is not person-neutral and it depends on whether one engages in the activities that give the word meaningfulness. If "God" is meaningful, then it is rational and true, and those who engage in a discourse including "God" indicate that they speak on the basis of faith. Alternative approaches to that of Velecky question the essential link between addressing God and believing in an ontological account of God.

For example, an alternative approach is presented by Anthony Kenny. He says that "There is a God" may be "meaningful and false: (positive) atheism".[81] However, if what Velecky says is correct, then it would be more accurate to say that "God" is not meaningful as it appears at first sight. On examination, "God" fails a test of reason, and so indicates that after all there is no faith in God in the one who uses this phrase. If "There is a God" is true,

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[79] Velecky, *Five Arguments*, 25.
[80] Velecky, *Five Arguments*, 30: the emphasis is Velecky's.
[81] Kenny, *Unknown God*, 10. A study of Kenny's views in this work seem to indicate that "God" means an aspect of the person who addresses God. For example, 13, as noted *supra*: "In my view the Five Ways of Aquinas are unsuccessful forms of the cosmological argument precisely because they depend, more than at first meets the eye, on particular outdated theories of physical explanation". Also, 13-14, where agnosticism must remain final: "God is then that which accounts for what, in the motion [or causal or contingent, etc.] series, is left unexplained by previous [members] in the series". Thus, 16: "…we cannot speak literally of God …", who seems to become an aspect of the individual in Kenny's account in18-22. That is, Kenny does address "God', but as a man stranded on a mountainside, "who cries for help though he may never be heard…", 20.

it is because there is God and God's existence can be known, but not as a fact in the world. Velecky insists that God's existence is known on the basis of a personal awakening of faith. He explains as follows:

> If there be such a thing as the God who can be articulated theistically, mankind could not have come to know much about this God without His initiative and its own acceptance of that initiative. Nor can any progress be made by any individual's reason alone from the initial recognition that the word "God" could be used as referring to some thing real, to the actual use of that world in an act of personal recognition and commitment.[82]

So, applying Velecky's understanding of faith to Kenny's approach, we may say that if "God" is to be seen as both meaningful and false, then it must have been borrowed from the community of faith by someone who is not a member of that community. Therefore, while at first it appeared meaningful, it is in fact not meaningful after all, and so cannot be "meaningful and false". In this case, the meaning of such a borrowed term is not to be sought in the community or in personal commitment for someone who believes "There is a God" is simply false. Rather, for such a person, its meaning is to be found in a certain facticity of "God" as it may appear in human discourse. If a certain facticity is in fact found, then this is taken to point to the existence of God.

Alternatively, for some within the community of faith, however, there may be a question about remaining in that community unless there is to be found a realist reference for "God" in human discourse. Such a reference, if found, may allow an address of God and a personal commitment, to continue. In this case, such a reference is a way of avoiding making "There is a God" a proposition with an appearance of meaning. In any case, we may agree with Velecky that reflection begins with faith of some kind. For some with faith, they may find that there is a concrete dependence of natural theology on revealed theology, but nevertheless without such a systematic dependence of it on revelation as Cobb claims there to be. This is the challenge presented by the question of natural theology.

Velecky says that Aquinas argues for the factuality of an entity on the basis of its *actus essendi* – act, not fact, is prior – where the meaning of "God" becomes clear. In the doctrine of existence, to reach *esse subsistens* by argument requires a cognitive

[82] Velecky, *Five Arguments*, 122.

acknowledgement of the *ratio entis* as *habens esse* [lit., "having being"] for all things in the world. As we have seen and as Knasas explains, a judgment of *esse* in finite things is a basis for a conceptual understanding of finite things and subsequently also of God: "The Thomistic effect by which the human intellect reaches God is the judgmentally grasped *esse* of a sensible thing. But Aquinas does more that judge this *esse*. Along with all other instances of it, he conceptualizes it."[83] So Aquinas provides the meaningfulness of "God" by starting from extra-mental reality. However, in this process, the meaningfulness of "God" and the reality of God are integrally linked with each other. And so, the factuality and meaningfulness of "God" is to be understood in terms of the affirmation of God's existence. If the proposition "There is a God" is meaningful, it is because it is true.

Knasas reminds us of how this is achieved within metaphysical realism. He explains that it is achieved, not by providing a comprehensive and definitional understanding of God's essence, but by crafting a mental picture of the *ratio entis* wherein the *ens commune* [lit., "common being"] is given positive meaning on the basis of the *analogia entis* where "God" is known as *ipsum esse*. Thus, "attained as subsistent being, God is an analogate of being that embodies the very analogon of being".[84] Our knowledge of God is *cognitio confusa* [lit., "confused knowledge"], where "the imperfect and confused knowledge of God…makes sense when one realizes that Aquinas is representing what God is by *esse commune*. The imperfect and confused knowledge is a case of the imperfection and confusion found in analogical conceptualization".[85] By prescinding the non-*esse* aspects of things and by separating out whatever belong to sense and imagination, we attain a meaningful knowledge of God as the perfection of being, known not through form but through effect.[86]

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[83] Knasas, *Being*, 240. Knasas, 214-236, uses Aquinas's *De Ente et Essentia* proof to show the process from *actus essendi* in finite things to *esse subsistens*. The proof is based on the distinction of passive potency of a subject to accidental change, where it has total potency to its *esse*, and that *esse* is the fundamental, prime, and most profound accident of a subject. The subject must be dependent on another subject for its being. Only *esse subsistens* is able to fulfil this role where *esse* is not an accident. The *Five Ways* echo this proof. *Cf* Owens in Catan, *Thomas Aquinas*, 37, explains that *judgment* is the awareness or knowledge that a thing exists, the cognitive grasp of existence, where every act of sensation grasps both the thing and existence, and where objects present themselves under both aspects.

[84] Knasas, *Being*, 297.

[85] Knasas, *Being*, 245. Knasas, 245, adds that "Since an analogon is a sameness in difference, the differences carry the sameness…".

[86] Knasas, *Being*, 236-241. He quotes Aquinas, *In de Trin.*, I, 2, ad 5m: "When something is not known through its form but through its effect, the form of the effect takes the place of the form of the thing itself, for from the effect itself it is known that the cause exists".

The implications of this approach may be delineated as follows. The analogical understanding of *esse commune* of the *ratio entis* establishes the meaning of "God" imperfectly. But however dimly the concept of "God" is in human knowledge, a meaningful understanding is achieved in existential theism. In existential theism it is possible to make the meaningfulness of "God" coterminous with its truthfulness. If "God" is meaningful, then there must be adequate conceptualization in realistic language. Otherwise, it is not clear whether the "God" that is found to be false has been identified as God. Since it would not be clear which "God" is being regarded as meaningful but false, it is not possible to understand the nature of meaningfulness as person relative, or understand in what sense it is false. That it is false is a realistic claim. While it is correct to say, as Aquinas says, that if we think of God in this way we cannot but think of God as existing,[87] the opposite is not correct. And so we cannot deny God's existence in either atheism or agnosticism and maintain the meaningfulness of "God". Looking for God as a fact means that the falseness of the factuality of "God" is contained in the pseudo-meaningfulness of the term God. Consequently, in this alternative approach, there is no real definition of God after all.

In any case, as we have seen, Velecky explains that Aquinas does not try to prove God's existence in the *Five Arguments*.[88] The context of the Arguments in the *Summa Theologiæ* indicate that Aquinas is not proving God's existence, but rather showing Christian teachers how to interest non-believers in the possibility of feasible God-talk. The question is not to show *Dei esse* but *Deum esse*. The latter is known in a "proposition about God which we clearly know to be true…from his effects".[89] What is interesting about this procedure is that Aquinas has recognized that non-believers need to believe that theistic language is capable of relating to reality. Aquinas will show that factual language is acceptable, but it is so on the basis of the *actus essendi* of anything in the world, and of the *actus essendi* of God, where we understand the analogical nature of *ratio entis* as *habens esse* and where it is possible to focus on the *ens commune* in such a way that the analogon becomes *ipsum esse subsistens*. By the process of negation and separation, a positive conceptual language emerges of the alleged God. Since Exodus 3:14 presents a positive name for God, the

[87] Mascall, *Existence*, 23: Anselm's argument "only attributes to God existence *ut signata*, not existence *ut exercita*".
[88] Velecky call the *Five Ways* the *Five Arguments*.
[89] Velecky, *Aquinas*, 36, quoting *ST* Ia, 2, 2, esp. ad 2.

languages of revelation and of reason concur.[90] As Sillem points out, arguments for the existence of God occur in more than one question in the *Summa Theologæ*.[91] They are not narrowly based on the Five Ways alone. And so, while "God" is found in the community of faith, natural theology is not necessarily systematically dependent on revelation.

For whom, then, is natural theology conceived, and to whom is it to be addressed? If the Five Ways are taken as an important indication of an answer to this question in the history of Christian thought, the answer is not a simple one. On the one hand, Cobb's point about the dependency of natural theology on revelation is to be granted, but with qualifications. Velecky's point that philosophy begins with person-relative evaluation may also be accepted. Natural theology may become a part of church doctrine. But while we may see it as the outcome of a faith seeking understanding, it is nevertheless, possible to see it as an attempt to share its realistic language with both believers and non-believers, since some non-believers are seeking to include realistic references in their discourse. Velecky believes Aquinas wanted to entice non-believers to appreciate such a commonality. As we have seen, the procedure follows a definite order. It begins with the propriety of linking *Deum* with *esse* in the one proposition. While the arguments are both feeble and feasible, they are for anyone who has not closed his or her mind to the possibility that "There is a God" may be at first a meaningful statement, but also a true statement when considered at

[90] As we have seen in Chapter III, Mascall appears to be equivocal regarding the role of Exodus 3:14 in providing the fundamental data of natural theology. Mascall says revelation provides the meaning of "God" and the basis of its rational understanding. In *Existence*, 11-15 he points to the whole Biblical account of revelation as providing a metaphysical background for Aquinas's understanding of God as *ipsum esse subsistens* rather than the Exodus account alone. His statements in *He Who Is* indicate that he thinks Aquinas derives his understanding of God as *esse subsistens* from Exodus. As we have seen, it is clear in the way he understands natural theology, in particular the *Quinque Viæ*, that "God" was able to be rationally explicated irrespective of its revelatory origin. Knasas, *Being*, 221-236, discusses Gilson's understanding of Exodus as a source of Aquinas's understanding of "God". Also, a more general discussion of the relationship of Aquinas's metaphysical understanding of "God" is in 222-224. The charge against Gilson that Aquinas depends on Exodus and revelation to form an understanding of God as *actus essendi* and *esse subsistens* is not sustained. Gilson is not saying that *actus essendi* is philosophically unknowable, 230; indeed, the Christian philosopher can "philosophically elaborate *via* the *secunda operatio intellectus*…". Gilson sees Exodus 3: 14 as "a *psychological* prerequisite for interpreting a thing's existence as a unique act of the thing…" However, "Psychological requirements can become unnecessary. The detective who solves a case on the basis of a hunch ends up with a body of evidence that has a life of its own, so that in court the evidence will convince others who never shared the hunch.... Why cannot this dynamic also be true of the development of Aquinas' metaphysical ideas?... [J]udgment's grasp of *actus essendi* can …[provide] sufficient philosophical luster to stand on its own so that even those philosophers of goodwill but who do not share the theological prompt can be made to understand the thesis. Because of what I said [*supra*] I am obviously of this opinion, and I also am of the opinion that such was Aquinas' mind".
Cf T. McDermott (ed.), *Summa Theologiæ: A Concise Translation*, (Allen: Christian Classics, 1989), 35.
[91] See Sillem, *Ways*.

depth. Accordingly, it is not possible to say under the tutelage of metaphysical theism that "There is a God" is both meaningful and false.

NATURAL THEOLOGY *IN ABSTRACTO* AND *IN CONCRETO*

Mascall believes that anyone so minded may come to believe in the existence of God by means of natural theology. This seems to contradict his understanding that natural theology is the result of abstracting the rational processes inherent in concrete Christian belief.[92] It does not contradict his approach to natural theology if all humans possibly share a common concrete realistic language, or may be enticed to see that they do or may do. However, as Velecky points out, to change a person's outlook at a theoretical level, represents in fact a practical and concrete change.[93] Consequently, the meaningfulness of "God" and whether it can refer to something real may be part of a personal quest of any person concerning choices about human destiny. If "God" is meaningless in the concrete world, God does not exist for such people.

The starting-point of philosophy done by atheists, agnostics or Christians is not neutrally chosen, but represents the acceptance of "certain epistemological presuppositions of [the] arguments. But these presuppositions, just like the contrary presuppositions of theists, are not compulsory starting points for every human being: they are chosen".[94] Consequently, the question of God's existence is answered at the beginning of philosophy. Nevertheless, "An apersonal description of God achieved by reason alone can become available only after one has learned to address God but cannot precede this learning process and be wholly independent of it".[95] This is similar to the approach Aquinas adopted in the *Summa Theologæ*, and it accords with Mascall's understanding. Natural theology is for practical purposes in the concrete world while it is at the same time an abstraction from Christian believing. We never leave the concrete world of our own valuations and experience but we may share realistic reference with others on the basis of shared existence.

And so natural theology aims to give intelligible content to "God". As Velecky says, "Should this prove impossible, one could not explain to all human beings (whether they are believers or non-believers) what the teachers of Christian doctrine are trying to refer to

[92] Mascall, *Openness*, 1-5 *et al.*
[93] Velecky, *Aquinas*, 121.
[94] Velecky, *Aquinas*, 130.
[95] Velecky, *Aquinas*, 129.

when they use the word 'God' "[96] If there is no explanation, "God" remains either a fantasy or an aspect of an individual's consciousness.[97] Mascall's point is that if anyone could see that Christians use "God" intelligently, they could begin to see that such language "could be used as referring to something real",[98] and could then be enticed to "the actual use of that word in an act of personal recognition and commitment",[99] where God is addressed in the context of worship and is thus experienced as a "power affecting personal lives".[100] But both Mascall and Velecky agree that the arguments are feeble.[101]

Yet, a non-believer, a secular linguistic positivist or humanist, a Christian revelationary positivist, or an agnostic, may all possibly be enticed to begin a new faith-experience after studying natural theology. To say this may seem to be asserting a kind of epistemological *fideism*, but it also suggests that rational thinking has a capacity to re-form and re-shape whatever may be the fundamental fiduciary commitment of anyone.[102] And so, the suggestion is that when the language of metaphysical theism/the doctrine of existence is studied and learnt, it may stimulate a new faith into existence, which in turn allows "God" to become meaningful, and furthermore, allows the God of the creeds to be addressed. Such an educative experience refers to a dialectical process whereby both reason and faith inter-relate and are interwoven so that a new philosophy may be a catalyst for a new faith to begin. A new cognitive apprehension may involve a personal re-alignment.[103] It seems to be clear through observation of human behaviour that faith-positions may change over

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[96] Velecky, *Aquinas*, 38.

[97] D. Cupitt, *Taking Leave of God*, (London: Xpress Reprints, 1993), 82 *et al*. See also S. R. Sutherland, *Atheism and the Rejection of God. Contemporary Philosophy and The Brothers Karamazov*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977).

[98] *Cf* Mascall, *He Who Is*, 26, as *supra*: "One of the grounds on which traditional theism has refused to base belief in God simply upon the fact of revelation is that revelation itself needs rational justification". Unless interpreted correctly seems to imply that Mascall is saying that arguments for God's existence are prior to faith. But this is not so. See Mascall, *Existence*, 86-89.

[99] Velecky, *Aquinas*, 123.

[100] Velecky, *Aquinas*, 115.

[101] *Cf* Mascall, *He Who Is*, 81: "We may… admit at once that natural theology is woefully insufficient to supply the religious needs of man; this is one of the reasons why it is supplemented by revelation". Velecky, *Aquinas* 113-114: "it is no coincidence that those who do not use the word ["God"] as a form of address in their personal lives are those who write books and articles to show that God neither can exist nor can be even sensibly talked about".

[102] If Aquinas is to be called a *fideist*, he is a fideist of a particular type, that is, where reason supports our knowledge of God.
Cf Velecky, *Aquinas*, 122: "The position which, as I have argued, Aquinas occupied and which I think I share, is liable to be characterised by some people pejoratively as 'fideism' ", and, "the disapproval [of fideism] is linked to the rightful recognition that individual believing in God logically presupposes that the meaningfulness of "God" may be established in ways which do not yet involve adopting a position of belief."

[103] As Sillem, *Ways*, points out, Aquinas places the Five Ways are presented in a larger context in which the argument takes shape. *Cf* Mascall, "Faith and Reason", 218.

time.[104] As Mascall suggests, those of us who "put ourselves in the right frame of mind for seeing things as they really are…[with] a real effort of moral and intellectual integrity…", may be able to find "God" meaningful.[105] An address of God and the meaningfulness of "God" are not in principle wholly independent aspects of thought.[106] As Mascall said about argument for the existence of God,

> it can, if it is rightly conducted, do something to put us in the frame of mind in which the apprehension of finite beings in their dependence upon God is possible; it can convince us that such apprehension, when it has occurred, is not to be dismissed as an illusion, and it can elucidate its nature and content so far as that is possible.[107]

It is not that we possess our own discrete and untouchable personal experience, but that culture informs, shapes, interprets and transforms experience. We may be educated into knowledge and faith. And so, the culture of theism may shape experience.[108] This idea is an extension of Velecky's position which, in turn, sheds light on Mascall's approach.

WHERE IS THE DATA OF REVELATION?

A brief examination of Aquinas's exposition of the *ratio entis* indicates the lack of the influence of revelation in its development. The development of these aspects of the doctrine of existence depends neither on revelation nor on Christian faith, but on rational and "natural" processes. This is illustrated by the following three examples.

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[104] *Cf* A. Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), who argues that warranted belief in God is the result of the proper functioning of our cognitive equipment. Believers find themselves with faith in which they address God. Also, A. Plantinga and N. Wolterstorff, (eds.), *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983).

[105] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 75. Also, 81: "We have already seen that a certain moral integrity is needed for understanding the arguments for Christian theism: now we have seen reason to believe that a readiness simply to sit down and look at things [a contemplative and reverent attitude to finite beings] in order to penetrate into their nature is no less indispensable". There is a "threefold moral activity involved: diligence in investigating the question, humility in recognizing the data, and courage in acting upon the conviction when required", 77.

[106] *Cf* Velecky, *Aquinas*¸ 69, who says that Kenny in his book *The Five Ways*, "read[s] Aquinas through Cartesian spectacles" and that "he never provides any justification for viewing Aquinas in this respect as a Rationalist philosopher…".

[107] Mascall, *Existence*, 90.

[108] A. E. McGrath, *The Renewal of Anglicanism*, (London: SPCK, 1993), says that theology is not about ideas, but derives from a wrestling with God. It is based on the experience of coming face to face with God. Since individual experience is given epistemic power in today's culture, it can be transformed by theology. From this, it follows that it retains its personal basis, but is brought into line with reality through the doctrine of existence, which, if Mascall is to be believed, entices the individual into worship, and prepares for the Beatific Vision.

A first example concerns the notion of the *actus essendi*. This is based in the invasion of the real by means of sensation.[109] Aquinas builds the concept on the basis of distinctions.[110] This doctrine may be justified today by showing the incoherence of other approaches, especially those deriving from modernism and post-modernism. The concept of *ens* as *habens esse* does not seem to need Christian faith nor the data of revelation to give it meaning. Of course, a hostile attitude to Christianity may diminish the significance of this discovery as any hostile attitude to education diminishes the possibility of knowledge.[111] Nevertheless, it seems to stretch credibility to say that any philosopher is rendered incapable of making such distinctions by virtue of his or her presupposed fundamental faith or vision which lacks a commitment to, or experience of, Christian revelation.[112] Of course, it may be objected that any philosopher is capable of grasping these distinctions, only that they fail to see their significance. While this is true of an intentional faith-position, it is still possible that one's grasp of one's fundamental faith is not so strong that new significant concepts may not be learnt and a new faith-position emerge.

A second example concerns the concept of analogy and its operation *in concreto*. That sameness-within-difference is discerned in our response to things of the world does not seem to be dependent on Christian faith or the data of revelation. The discernment of commonalities within an act of existence and through each act enables the mind to see that every act is composed of its act in distinction from it itself. Form and matter, and potency and act, are further distinctions which lead the mind to an understanding of *ens* as *habens esse*. The mind sees that each is an analogate within the *ratio entis* where *ens commune* is found in each. Again, it stretches credibility to suppose that any philosopher cannot

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[109] Knasas, *Being*, 227, speaks of the judgment of the act of being in these terms – "Judgment is an act of the human intellect, an intellect common to believer and unbeliever".

[110] *Cf* Knasas, *Being*, 176-177: "Aquinas regards existence as a distinct principle composed with the individual substance to render the substance a being (*ens*), an existent…. Just as a runner is a man plus his act of running, so too a being is something plus its act of existing. But the act of running is something distinct from the man, hence a thing's act of existing should also be distinct from it…. But as an act, or actuality, substantial and accidental forms are distinct items composed with another item that is in *potency* to the act. Hence, calling *esse* an act and an actuality should indicate on Aquinas' part similar thinking".

[111] *Cf* Mascall, *Existence*, 90, as noted *supra*, "It must be repeated that the positivist cannot be converted to theism on his own terms. If a man persists in limiting his gaze to the phenomenal surface of realty there is nothing that can be done about it on the purely human level…. [This is] metaphysical myopia…. In the last resort it can be cast out only by prayer and fasting", and with which no doubt Velecky would concur.

[112] Kant's exclusion of *esse* as a predicate relates to the acculturated and limited state of his fundamental epistemological vision which does not seem to have included a detailed study of the so-called *Cosmological Argument* in Aquinas as it is related to the judgment of existence as a consequence of the *duplex operatio intellectus*.

understand an analogical knowledge of "God"/God, or see its significance without Christian revelation or Christian faith.

A third example concerns the acceptability of the language of "God" as characterized by the things of the world. *Esse* is an accident of a thing where the thing is in total potency to *esse*. Therefore, the efficient cause of the thing must be another subject where essence and existence are one. As Aquinas says,

> Because everything that exists through another is led back to that which exists through itself as to its first cause, there must be one thing which is the act-of being; otherwise there would be an infinite series of causes, since everything which is not existence-only would have a cause of its existence….[113]

Here, the meaningfulness of "God" enables a cognitive grasp of God as creator. It stretches credibility to say that any philosopher is incapable of achieving these ideas without Christian revelation or Christian faith. Therefore, it is possible to say with Mascall that anyone could be brought by natural theology to an understanding of Infinite Being. That is, if *could* is understood to mean that *in principle* and in the *concrete* world. Grace may accompany reason as in the experience of *contuition*. At least in principle anyone could understand them. And, all philosophers today operate under the historical influence of the data of revelation on philosophy provided by the church's experience of the "flint upon steel" and the "fire… kindled by it".[114] The grace of God in the church overflows into the secular world.

With the help of Velecky, we have seen that faith is a vital part of philosophy while also we have seen that anyone's epistemological fundamental faith is not an impregnable bulwark of defence against education. However, we need to ask Velecky whether his understanding of the personal and linguistic basis of philosophy relativizes this understanding even as it appears to be a meta-proposition. Meta-linguistic accounts often pose as descriptions, but by their own criteria partake of the relativity they impose on other propositions. As mere descriptive accounts, they simply register a state of affairs. As arguments, they face the problem of the infinite regress of positions. Radical relativism means that the discourse of one linguistic community is unable to be translated into another's discourse. If this is not found to be the case in the world, then there must be a

[113] *De Ente et Essentia*, 2.c.4 in Clark¸ *An Aquinas Reader*, 42.
[114] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 7.

commonality across linguistic communities, where new faith-visions may be generated and tradition continue to expand. The language of "God" taken from Christian faith-communities may be capable of translation into other linguistic communities by a process of education in which epistemological faith and reason may dialectically inter-relate so that new epistemological faith positions may emerge which are open to Christian revelation and a faith in such a revelation.[115]

4. CONCLUSION

Mascall's procedure regarding natural theology is to abstract from concrete Christian believing the rational components that affirm a natural knowledge of God. Consequently, this catholic approach to theology means that logically an ontological understanding of creation is prior to Christian doctrine and is a basis for its formation. It is the foundation of Christian thought. That theology is concerned with the *ordo essendi*, but occurs on the basis of the *ordo cognoscendi*, Mascall makes clear in *He Who Is.*[116] In the concrete world, natural theology is historically dependent on revelation, but faith and reason have their own spheres of operation while being inter-dependent. The grace of revelation extends the natural power of reason – since grace perfects but does not destroy reason – so that it is possible to say with Mascall that "The arguments for the existence of God are not fallacious, and to anyone who understands what they are about and is capable of following them they can carry complete conviction…. Nor are they unnecessary, for without

[115] Theologians are always aware of the changes that may occur in thinking as a result of many influences. For example, in the Anglican tradition E. J. Bicknell, *A Theological Introduction to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1928), 97, points out how a belief in the historicity of the Virgin Birth may emerge. What comes first is appreciation of the uniqueness of Christ, and this opens the mind to appreciation of the Virgin Birth: "Only so far as we have learnt for ourselves the uniqueness of Christ are we able to approach the evidence with the right presuppositions". Thus, "The Virgin-Birth came first in the order of time but last in the order of appreciation." Furthermore, rational thinking may not be based on clear logical procedures. For example, it is sometimes pointed out that the rules of formal inference are accepted by intuition and not by demonstrated rational procedures in order to avoid the infinite regress of rules. Likewise J. H. Newman's *illative sense* points to the complex nature of judgment. But, for example, compare R. Sykes, "Soft Rationalism" in *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 8 (1977): 51–66, who argues that while there is a place for intuitive judgment in argument, it must reach the level of epistemic evaluation in public canons of rationality. J. H. Newman, *The Grammar of Assent*, New Edition, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1891). *Cf* J. Newman, "Epistemic Inference an Illative Judgment" in *Dialectica: International Review of Philosophy of Knowledge* 35, (1981): 327-339. J. Newman rejects the foundationalist R. Chisholm's concern to limit assent to that "based solely on directly evident propositions and logical principles…[but] if [J. H.] Newman is right, then assent, being unconditional, requires more than just inference; it requires some kind of illative *judgment*". J. Newman shows us how.

[116] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 1.

them…our belief will not be explicitly rational".[117] Furthermore, grace and reason have a universal reach. Richard Bauckham, for example, corroborates Mascall's confidence in a somewhat universal accessibility of reason. He says that

> [The] recognition of the historical particularity of all reason – its rootedness in a particular cultural tradition – does not imply absolute relativism. The most diverse cultural traditions share a common world to which all human reasoning relates, as is evident from our ability to understand, learn from, communicate with and even convert to traditions of thought quite different from those in which we have learned to understand the world.[118]

Historical consciousness does not imply an absolute relativism. It does imply development and the importance of context, but this is not to say that a theology or philosophy cannot transcend its context nor have some claim to universality.

The combination of both a universal and a relative aspect in reason is not such a contradiction as Cobb thinks – although it is a paradox. As Velecky reminds us, reason operates as the result of personal valuation and faith. Furthermore, as Polanyi says of faith in general in its relationship to reason, "Our heuristic cravings imply the existence of answers, and only by relying on the anticipated solution can we successfully line up the data".[119] Natural reason is not a neutralized and mechanically objective process separated from what persons consider good reason to be. Faith heuristically directs reason so that both faith and reason join in the one quest for truth. Reason is also heuristic, uncovering or building up a confidence in faith's quest. Faith and reason mutually inter-penetrate; or rather, they are aspects of the one human quest. As Avery Dulles wrote of the relationship of epistemic general faith and reason,

> As Augustine himself recognized, the priorities between faith and reason are mutual. If reason is nourished by faith, faith is made possible by reason. "No one believes anything unless he [*sic*] has first thought that it is to be believed".[120]

And so, a general, epistemic faith or an unthematic faith may become Christian faith in the process of discovery and search.

Ontological thinking is not an exercise in formalised thinking. As Mascall says,

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[117] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 80.
[118] Bauckham, *Scripture*, 133.
[119] Quoted in Dulles, *The Survival*, 41.
[120] Dulles, *The Survival*, 57, quoting Augustine.

> We can, of course, formalise the process in a conditional syllogism in the *modus ponendo ponens* but this is really misleading. For it is only through perceiving contingent being that we can be brought to affirm the major premises [if there is contingent being, there is necessary being]….Everything depends on our capacity to apprehend the objects of our perception as they really are, in their radical contingency.[121]

Since epistemologically speaking, faith and reason are integrally related, there is no reason to doubt that, paradoxically, a thinker who approaches the doctrine of existence in the right mind and taught by the arguments for necessary being, may find his or her epistemological faith mature into a theistic faith, as nature is elevated by grace.[122] Grace supplies both the restoration and the advance of nature so that in the *ordo cognoscendi* the *ordo essendi* becomes evident. It is not too much to suggest that any thinker is capable, in principle, of understanding the doctrine of existence in its own terms. All things depend on the Creator who is not of the world, and there is no ontological opposition between Creator and creation. Nature is not opposed to supernature nor separated from it.

It also is not too much to claim that the historical dependence of natural theology on revelation is an example of a gift of grace from the Creator in the concrete and natural world. Perhaps, as J. Owens said, the relationship between revelation and reason is practical and not logical:

> The difficulties and admixture of errors in human cognition of God do make the revelation in Exodus a practically necessary condition for focussing attention on judgment as the cognition by which being is originally grasped… and can go philosophically unnoticed without the light from revelation.[123]

In any case, the relationships between revelation and reason, and between reason and faith are complex and involve the inter-relationships of a logical, psychological, practical, historical, systematic and cultural kind. Likewise, it is easy to see that misunderstanding may arise when theologians of various catholic and protestant persuasions confront alternative accounts. To a protestant, it may appear that Mascall gives reason an unwarranted and independent status in relation to faith. In any case, in a similar way to the

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[121] Mascall¸ *Openness*, 111-112. Revelation and Christian culture also has the power of being a psychological prompt to reflection. Perhaps, there was no psychological prompt for pre-Christian thinkers to develop natural theology. *Cf* Owens in Catan, *Thomas Aquinas*, 190, refers to Gilson's view that "being, as the light in which all the rest is seen, would itself pass unnoticed did not another source of knowledge, divine revelation, call attention to it".

[122] *Cf* Mascall, *He Who Is*, vii, where the doctrine of God is said to have political consequences.

[123] Owens in Catan, *Thomas Aquinas*, 191.

relation of creation, the relationships between revelation and reason, and faith and reason are not symmetrical.

Of all criticisms of traditional natural theology, the charge of relativism is the most serious. If upheld, it would deny not only the soundness of Mascall's metaphysical arguments, but also any significant relevance natural theology may have for doctrinal theology, especially in the troubled era of the twentieth century. We have found that the claim that reason is radically bound to a historical relativism is self-referentially incoherent. Mascall's claim of a universal relevance for traditional doctrinal theology is an important contribution to Anglican theology in this era.[124]

This lengthy focus on one critic of Mascall is justified because in it is implicated the following four issues:-

- the question of the coherence of Mascall's natural theology and so of the relevance of Thomist Realism to Anglican theology;
- the question of whether the Anglican Church at the Reformation lost touch with the great tradition of Christian philosophy which incorporated metaphysical realism;
- the question of the place of protestant tendencies in the Anglican Church, and especially those that unbalance the synthesis in favour of what may be called "scripturalism"; and,
- how may theology acknowledge the relationship of believer to unbeliever within creation and within contemporary culture.

[124] Prevost, *Probability*, 171-181, offers a different kind of criticism of Mascall's natural theology. He argues that the strength of theism lies in the explanatory power of its arguments, where such power lies in the integrity of the underlying metaphysical scheme. If the arguments are sound, then there is not need of contuition. Mascall's account is an unstable mixture of argument and contuition. Prevost, 179, sees Mascall's argument resembling "the argument from religious experience in the sense that it is the apprehension of this sustaining relation which leads one to affirm the existence of this sustainer…". In it, everything depends on our having an apprehension of Infinite Being and does not depend on a sound argument for this. But in Thomism, an understanding of God as Self-subsistent Being depends on argument, not apprehension. The God reached by argument may not be the same as the God which is apprehended. In reply, it may be noted that Mascall does not mix argument and contuition nor replace argument with it. The argument which is not a syllogism is the basis/cause of the contuition. Its explanatory power is secondary to the insight. Secondly, as we have seen, Mascall does not include either argument or contuition on the basis of a neutral rationality. As we have seen in this Chapter, the situation is more complex than that for which Prevost allows.

5. CODA

The relationship of Aquinas's exposition of creation to Aristotle's understanding of motion and the eternity of the world has been investigated by Knasas.[125] The following exposition bears on the question of the pre-Christian thinkers.

According to Knasas, Aquinas finds a belief in creation in Aristotle. Knasas concludes that "the Aristotle to which Aquinas ascribes creation is not the historical Aristotle but the textual Aristotle as mediated through Aquinas' own metaphysics of being".[126]

However, the historical Aristotle did not develop Aquinas's notion of *esse* so as to arrive at the concept of a *primum principium essendi* [lit., "first principle of being"]. But "Aquinas is intent upon a theologically congruent Aristotle".[127] Aquinas is not manipulating the evidence in his ascription of creation to Aristotle, but he is developing a "figurative assertion…. [which] is possible because words can carry a number of meanings".[128] Also, Aquinas is not clarifying ambiguities in Aristotle nor making explicit what is implicit. Rather, he is interpreting Aristotelian texts in such as way that they are able to carry his own meanings.

Specific questions include how "Aristotle" presents the eternity of the world as a hypothetical strategy to demonstrate the existence of a first principle by showing that an argument from the eternity of motion is incoherent, and, how "Aristotle" knew the principle that wisdom is the science of truth. Aristotle spoke of the *existentia semper* [lit., "always existing"], the principles of which are most true, and he understood that wisdom is the science of truth and the highest science of truth. However, Aquinas interpreted *existentia semper* as celestial bodies, having *esse*. Since for Aquinas truth is known in being, knowing a truth is to know its cause. The explanation of a thing must be being in the highest degree, the cause of all things is the highest truth. Consequently, Aquinas is able to read Aristotle's remarks about truth as about being.[129]

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[125] J. F. X. Knasas, "Aquinas' Ascription of Creation to Aristotle" in *Angelicum* 73 (1996): 487-505.
[126] Knasas, "Aquinas' Ascription", 489.
[127] Knasas, "Aquinas' Ascription", 505.
[128] Knasas, "Aquinas' Ascription", 503.
[129] Knasas, "Aquinas' Ascriptions", 496-499.

Perhaps, then, Aquinas' point is that pre-Christian thinkers could have developed the metaphysics of *esse*, and that they virtually did so. As Gilson said of Aquinas,

> He knew very well that Aristotle does not teach [creation], but what interests him is to see and make clear that, although Aristotle did not grasp this capital truth, his principles, while remaining precisely what they are, are perfectly capable of bearing its weight.[130]

[130] E. Gilson, *The Spirit of Mediæval Philosophy*, A. H. G. Downes (tr.), (London: Sheed & Ward, 1936), 424.

Chapter V

MASCALL AND ANGLICAN THEOLOGY: A RESOURCE FOR THE FUTURE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will claim that metaphysical realism may be of vital significance for Anglican theology. The proposal is for an existential intentionality based in metaphysical realism. Such an approach need not be seen to negate the gains of an ecclesiology seeking balance, moderation, reconciliation, and a dispersal of authorities. Nevertheless, metaphysical thinking may help enrich our understanding of "God" by notably supporting and expanding the knowledge of God we have by way of faith as it is set within a context of an affirmation of God's Infinite Being. The special character of divine revelation is more deeply appreciated when it is understood as coming from the infinite depths of God's creative Being. And so, such a project helps to fulfil the Anglican concern to seek catholicity through apostolicity. It may strengthen the case for an orthodox and traditional approach to doctrine, especially in diverse historical and cultural situations. Mascall's approach indicates that the ontological question of "God" is relevant to Anglican doctrine because it implies that an ontological presumption concerning God may be given added support by philosophy.

The material presented in this chapter will be set out under the following six headings:-

1. Mascall's Metaphysical Realism: a Recapitulation;
2. The Range of Mascall's Metaphysical Thinking;
3. An Anglican Neglect of Ontological Intentionality;
4. Five Elements in a Creation-Based Pattern of Thought;
5. A Development of Mascall's Approach in Three Doctrines; and,
6. Conclusion.

1. MASCALL'S METAPHYSICAL REALISM: A RECAPITULATION

In reflecting on the state of Christology within Anglican theology, and especially in reference to the humanity of Jesus, Paul Avis draws the reader's attention to Mascall's contribution in *Christ, the Christian and the Church*. "The method of E. L. Mascall, whose early doctrinal works still repay study…is, it must be said, largely deductive, philosophical and dogmatic – though the focus remains on Jesus Christ."[1] Avis clearly has reservations about the kind of theology which is based on deduction, philosophy and dogmatic definitions. What place, then, would Mascall's existentialism have in theology?

In order to answer such a question, we must first of all note that Mascall always pointed to the differences between natural and revealed theology. In *He Who Is* and in subsequent works, he is at pains to assert that "the distinction between natural and revealed theology was universal in traditional Anglicanism",[2] although, as we have seen, this distinction does not seem to have been intentionally reflected in the Articles. In Mascall's thought, the two factors of philosophy and revelation are to be distinguished in theology, "though it is of course necessary to recognize their interrelations".[3] But, as we have seen, in separating revelation and reason, Mascall does not separate faith and reason.[4] While he stresses the importance of the theologian as an ecclesial thinker – a sacramental and liturgical Christian – in practice, he upholds the influence of metaphysical realism on all doctrine, including the doctrine of the Trinity.[5] In upholding the influence of metaphysical realism, Mascall also reminds us that "traditional theism…can assure us of the existence of God [but] is powerless to give us any quiddative knowledge of his interior essence…[because] the Doctrine of the Trinity falls outside the proper sphere of natural theology".[6] Here, he agrees with Aquinas, that "God can[not] be known as Trinity from the consideration of created things". However, he adds that Aquinas "has nevertheless admitted that reason can

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[1] P. Avis, *The Identity of Anglicanism: Essentials of Anglican Ecclesiology*, (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 177.
[2] Mascall, *Christ*, 234.
[3] Mascall, *Christ*, 235.
[4] Mascall, *Christ*, Chapter 8, 228-257. *Cf* Mascall, *Existence*, 129: "I am not…claiming to *deduce* the eternal generation of the Son from the fact that God is self-existent love, still less shall I attempt to demonstrate from natural theology that there are in the Godhead three Persons rather than two or four. But I do maintain that revelation confirms and illuminates reason…".
[5] Mascall, *Christ*, 238-239.
[6] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 184.

confirm that God is Trinity, when this has already been accepted on other grounds".[7] In insisting on these conditions, he proceeds to discuss the nature of the Trinity in its relation to creation.[8] Thus, he says that

> the traditional view of creation stands or falls with the contingency of the world [and] it is because the creation of the world is contingent, whereas the procession of the Persons are necessary, that we can at the same time assert that God without the world is still God, and that the three Persons are not three Gods.[9]

From this quotation we see again that while revelation and reason are to be separated, faith and reason need not be so separated. In following Aquinas, Mascall relies on both faith and reason and their mutual inter-relationship in his exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity. In this exposition, the notion of the simplicity of God, derived from the philosophy of metaphysical realism, does not inhibit our understanding of the Trinity.[10] Rather, it requires it.

In explaining Aquinas' exposition of this doctrine, G. Emery points to the need to follow three steps in a rational approach to the doctrine of the Trinity. These three steps are as follows:-

> (1) the discovery of the mystery of the Trinity, by faith…as taught by the Scriptures;
> (2) a speculative reflection on the being and properties of the divine persons; and,
> (3) a speculative reflection on the creative and salvific action of the persons in the world….[11]

Mascall's account exemplifies this approach and so indicates that the doctrine of the Trinity employs metaphysical realism in its support and clarification. Since, in the words of Emery, "Trinitarian doctrine provides the key to reality…[and] to the organization of theology",[12] we may again affirm that a confluence of faith and reason is at the heart of all

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[7] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 185, where the reference given is *ST* I, 32, 2c, et ad 2.
[8] Mascall's comment in Mascall, *He Who Is*, 190 should be noted however, as follows: "Thus, it may be suggested, the doctrine of the Trinity may be seen to be directly relevant to cosmology, although it is not itself to be deduced from the consideration of the created realm".
[9] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 186.
[10] See of example, G. Emery, "The Doctrine of the Trinity in St Thomas Aquinas" in T. Weinandy, D. Keating and J. Yocum (eds.), *Aquinas on Doctrine: A Critical Introduction*, (London: T & T Clark, 2004), 45, and A. J. Kelly, "A Multidimensional Disclosure: Aspects of Aquinas' Theological Intentionality" in *The Thomist* 67 (2003): 335-374.
[11] Emery, "The Doctrine of the Trinity", 62.
[12] Emery, "The Doctrine of the Trinity", 62.

theology. Mascall's accounts of this doctrine conforms to this traditional pattern of the inter-relationship of faith and reason.[13]

A further illustration shows how Mascall's approach to doctrinal theology finds the inter-relationship of faith and reason to be a significantly fertile one.[14] As we have seen, Mascall points to the implicit possibility of metaphysical and ontological thinking in Christian doctrine:

> If Philosophy (of which natural theology is a part) is the work of reason and not revelation, how can it make any difference to a man's philosophy whether he is a Christian or not?… It is that grace not only supplies perfections that lie above the level of nature, but restores nature to its own integrity…. It follows…that, while in principle there is a certain limited knowledge of God which is accessible to the human reason as such, in practice it is only in the light of revelation and under the assistance of grace that the human reason can function adequately and can obtain, even within its own proper sphere, a knowledge of God which is free from error.… in the concrete, a true philosophy can only be developed in the light of the Christian revelation.[15]

From this passage we may infer the following points. First, that faith is an important basis for philosophy. In line with Velecky, we may say that Mascall implicitly denies that philosophy may begin on the basis of an objective and neutral reasoning capability of the mind. And so he insists that being a Christian may make a difference to the development of a person's philosophy. Without grace, reason fails to attain its true purpose. But with grace, reason is restored to "its own integrity" in the concrete world. As we have seen, Mascall's emphasis on the influence of the Christian revelation on philosophy has led Cobb to claim that natural theology is to be understood as a product of Christian culture. However, since in Mascall's approach a rational process in its own right may be abstracted from faith to be seen as a somewhat discrete process, operating "within its own proper sphere", and logically, a knowledge of God as Creator is prior to Christian doctrine, then the arguments of natural theology are able to be understood and appropriated by those who may not initially believe in the existence of God. Moreover, since our knowledge of God the Holy Trinity is explicated, confirmed and clarified by metaphysical realism, we may

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[13] See for example E. L. Mascall, *The Triune God: An Ecumenical Study*, (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 1986), Mascall, *Via Media*, 47-78, and Mascall, *He Who Is*, 184-190.

[14] See Mascall, *Christ*, 236: "the relation between the…two…is both intricate and delicate [and] is simply one of the many instances of the relation between nature and grace". In addition, "in the concrete, revelation has priority over natural knowledge…grace…has to restore the powers of nature to their own integrity".

[15] Mascall, *Christ*, 233.

say that it is not only reason *simpliciter* that enables us to speak of the Trinity, but a rational process as it is derived from a specific type of metaphysical realism, one that supports and expands the doctrines of creation, and that enables our exposition and understanding of this doctrine. So, while it is not surprising that Avis should find Mascall's Christology "largely deductive, philosophical and dogmatic", the nature of metaphysical realism demands that it should be so. In addition, we may note that the intentional inclusion of a metaphysical realism in Christian doctrinal theology gives it an ecumenical relevance. Consequently, philosophy may play a significant role in Christian doctrinal theology. This point is to be seen in a further examination to follow of Mascall's approach to the doctrine of the Trinity in which faith and reason mutually and reciprocally co-operate.

For the moment, we may repeat the question we asked above, namely, what place, then, would Mascall's existentialism have in theology? On the basis of the present discussion, we may answer this question more fully by saying that an incorporation of the philosophy of metaphysical realism in Christian doctrinal theology would extend the mind's range so as to encompass aspects of the mystery of God otherwise attenuated in our thinking without it. In this way, the doctrine of God the Holy Trinity is both supported and clarified.

On the basis of a creational understanding, in an inter-locking and symbiotic manner, our understanding of the truth of the Trinity and of the truth of created existence, reciprocally enhance our thinking such that we may find ourselves capable of being drawn into an intellectual participation of Existence Itself. In this sense, the doctrine of God may be seen as an analogical and intellectual reflection of the participation of creation in the Infinite Being of God the Creator and so reflects the Trinity's mission to reach out to all creation in Christ.

The range of metaphysical thinking and its significance for doctrine is further illustrated in the next section. Through the mutuality of faith and reason we are enabled to think about and love the mystery of God.

2. THE RANGE OF MASCALL'S METAPHYSICAL THINKING

THE MUTUALITY OF FAITH AND REASON IN THINKING ABOUT THE MYSTERY OF GOD

Within his metaphysical perspective, Mascall begins his ecumenical study of the doctrine of the Trinity with these words.

> The starting point must be St Augustine's adoption and transformation, in developing his doctrine of the triune God, of Aristotle's category of 'relation'. For Aristotle, *Relation* is one of the ten 'categories' or, as the scholastics called them, 'predicaments'.[16]

He points out that it is Aquinas who takes up Augustine's idea of viewing the Persons of the Trinity as *subsistent relations* and develops the existential/ontological meaning of such relationships. Mascall echoes Thomas's approach as follows: " 'A relation in the manner of a substance which is a hypostasis subsisting in the divine nature' – this is St Thomas' mature and considered understanding of ' person' as applied to Father, Son and Spirit….".[17] Consequently, while some contemporary theologians have reservations about substantivist categories, a metaphysical approach need not mean that such theology is to be regraded as an exercise in a non-relational understanding of God, or that the personal and relational aspects of the Trinity and divine revelation are compromised.[18] Rather, a substantivist way of thinking is also capable of expressing a relational and personal approach to the doctrine of God and of its relationship with the doctrines of the church, as the following discussion of Mascall's application of *subsistent* relations to ecclesiology shows.

Regarding the church, in applying the notion of *subsistent relations* to ecclesiology, Mascall understands that it provides a significant way to understand the nature of the church and of the apostolic succession. Mascall expresses these two doctrines in the organic terms of *collegiality*.[19] His ecclesiological understanding reflects the relational

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[16] Mascall, *Triune*, 11.
[17] Mascall, *Triune*, 22. See 20-23 of Mascall's references to Aquinas' doctrine of the Trinity.
[18] Mascall, *Triune*, 24-33. *Cf* for example see K. Vanhoozer, "Human Being, Individual and Social" in C. E. Gunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 165-166, "[The *imago Dei* is not a] matter of static properties [but rather] a dynamic orientation of the whole person towards God".
[19] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 214-215.

categories established in the doctrine of the Trinity. He is enabled to do this because he believes in the dynamic and relational quality of substances, as his exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity shows. Nevertheless, in reference to the doctrine of God, he walks a fine line between claiming that we can know the essence of God and saying that our language can relate only to the world. The doctrine of the Trinity shows that the mutual inter-relationship of faith and reason in both ontological and relational terms is possible and helps to structure our understanding of the church and the ministry. This is shown in his discussion of the distinction of Persons.

To continue our discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity, we see how metaphysical realism may help us understand the notion of the distinction of Persons as it is explained in this doctrine.[20] As we have seen, metaphysical realism points to a significant concept in our understanding of God, namely, the simplicity of God. This concept helps to show how we may explain the distinction of Persons in God in terms of God's knowledge and love of himself. On this point, Mascall explains the significance of the mutual inter-relationship of faith and reason, as it is seen in the following quotation concerning the Trinity:

> St Augustine's adoption of the category of relation and his elevation of it to the level of substance is, of course, an example, perhaps the supreme example, of the use of analogy in theology, and, like other uses, it has the limitation that, while the *perfectio significata* [lit., "perfection signified"] is familiar to us at the start, the *modus significandi* [lit., "manner of signifying"] of its final application in the last resort eludes us. But it has, I suggest, its uses and I believe that it is in fact a more valuable contribution to Trinitarian theology than the 'psychological' analogies for which Augustine is famous…. [which] need the control of the relational analogy to keep it from distortion and aberration.[21]

We also see here the importance of substance for a better understanding of questions of identity, where such questions may enhance our possibility of making distinctions. The notion of the simplicity of God does not compromise our understanding of the distinctions of the Persons of the Trinity, but in combination with a substantivist approach, enables us to better express such distinctions in a dynamic and personalist way.

In regard to the question of theology, we may affirm with Mascall that both reason and faith inter-relate to the benefit of theological understanding. In addition, we may also see

[20] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 186: "It is because the creation of the world is contingent, whereas the processions of the Persons are necessary, that we can at the same time assert that God without the world is still God, and that the three Persons are not three Gods".
[21] Mascall, *Triune*, 18-19.

in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity how faith and reason are not only elevated, healed and corrected by revelation, but by it their range is extended. [22] This is further illustrated regarding our love of God.

THE MUTUALITY OF LOVE AND REASON IN LOVING GOD

Mascall is well-aware of the accusation that the doctrine of existence depersonalizes theology,[23] and also that the doctrine of subsistent relations will not convince everyone.[24] But he insists that the notion of *substance* is of continuing significance for Christology, Trinitarian theology, and ecclesiology. This is illustrated in Mascall's account of a disagreement with John Hick concerning the place of substance in theology. Hick substitutes *agape* for *ousia* as a way of explaining the relationships within the Trinity and with regard to aspects of Christology.[25] Mascall replies to Hick's rejection of substance in the following terms: "We ought to think of [substance] in a more dynamic [way]; but I do not think we can do without it".[26] In the case in question, Mascall upheld the notion of substance because it is the best way to affirm the identity of the *agape* of Jesus with that of God. On this point he writes: "It appears to me that [to identify Jesus's *agape* with God's] can be done coherently only if *agape* is identified with *ousia*, and then we are back where we started".[27]

Mascall's point is that dynamic and personalist understandings are not denied, but rather secured by metaphysical thinking, as they are applied to the doctrine of the Trinity.

While Mascall upholds ontological thinking as important for our understanding of the nature of the relations between the Persons, such thinking need not encourage a static

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[22] *Cf* Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, Encyclical letter (September 15, 1998), available from internet resource - http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_151019 21: "Faith is in a sense an 'exercise in thought'…". Also 8: "Revelation…introduces into our history a universal and ultimate truth which stirs the human mind to ceaseless effort; indeed, it impels reason continually to extend the range of its knowledge…".

[23] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 123.

[24] Mascall, *Triune*, 12: "[Augustine] introduced the notion of person as *subsistent relation* or…as…*relational being*. The immediate reaction of many to this device of Augustine's will be to dismiss it as nothing but a clever dialectical dodge". *Cf* John Paul II's phrase, "The drama of the separation of faith and reason" which has resulted in the "an ever deeper mistrust with regard to reason itself" in *Fides et Ratio*, 22.

[25] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 122: "For Hick, 'the main feature of the Nicene and Chalcedonian formulae that renders them unacceptable today [was] their central reliance on the category of substance'…. [Hick] questioned the adequacy and even the intelligibility of the notion of *homoousios* for our day…. Hick claimed for *agape* the advantage over *ousia* that it makes it plain that 'we are not speaking of some kind of static substance but of volitional attitudes and operation' ".

[26] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 122-123.

[27] Mascall, *Theology and the Gospel*, 122.

understanding of God, or a less than personal response in us. Mascall explains that in the Trinity, personal relations "are not static but dynamic, and not schematic but constitutive. It is his active and total eternal self-expression and self-giving that constitutes the First Person as Father; it is his active and grateful response to its reception that constitutes the Second Person as Son".[28] Indeed, it is the recognition of God's tri-personal nature that has influenced the development of the West's understanding of personality and human individuality.[29] With such an understanding of ourselves derived from the doctrine of the Trinity, a response of love for God may be seen to be supported and clarified by an understanding of the Trinity further supported and clarified by metaphysical thinking. Reason and faith bear a symbiotic relation to each other, and may so stimulate an affective response to God. This thought is further developed in the following point.

The incommunicable aspect of person together with the communal aspects relate to the Trinity as a "partial analogue" which is to be found within creatures.[30] The personal aspects of the Trinity are reflected in the incarnation where we see concretely the "self-articulation of filial deity" fully expressed in relational terms. The doctrine of the incarnation is congruent with the doctrine of the Trinity in this respect. Mascall says that "The point I wish to make here is that this filial relation which we see on the created level in the human life of Jesus is simply the incarnation of the filial relation which, on the uncreated level, is the filiality of the eternally begotten Son".[31] In the incarnation, as in the doctrine of the Trinity, we may see that substance becomes dynamically personal. Therefore, we deny that "Augustine's clever device [has] left us chasing our own tails in a ballet of bloodless abstractions…".[32] The doctrine of subsistent relations is an account of the love within the Personal relationships of the Trinity which helps to shape our understanding of the incarnation. In a process of concentrated rational contemplation, it may encourage our love of the Trinity as we reflect on its mystery. Also, as we have seen, it helps to shape our understanding of the church and of the individual person in society.

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[28] Mascall, *Triune*, 25.
[29] Mascall, *Triune*, 26.
[30] Mascall, *Triune*, 28.
[31] Mascall, *Triune*, 32.
[32] Mascall, *Triune*, 30; 26: "Through participation in the tradition of Christian life and worship, they [the ordinary Christians] have come to experience God as he is. There is a knowledge by 'connaturality' through faith and love, which is more intimate than merely conceptual knowledge, and it is vital that intellectuals should remember this".

Consequently, metaphysical realism may encourage us to love the mystery of God as we understand it more clearly and enhance or own personal characteristics. Within the unity of a personal response, we may find a confluence of reason and love, of philosophy and faith. In the dependency of creation, we may also catch a glimpse of the love of God as the Divine Giver in the gift of being which creation is. An acknowledgement of the gift may become central to a love of God and of Christian worship.[33] Within natural theology, we may both understand and feel the contingency of our lives. The gift of creation, of the incarnation, the church and of the individual may be seen to analogously reflect the mutual giving and receiving of the Trinity. Since the Creator is the cause of created perfections,[34] metaphysical realism helps to explain the loving response of personal creatures and the mutuality of love and reason in the response of praise.[35]

CONCLUSION

Human reflection arises from its participation in real existence. Metaphysical thinking is the acknowledgment in thought of the absolute dependency of being on God. In this way it honours creation as the beginning of all things and as the account of their essential meaning. The discovery of the richness of the *ratio entis* and the act of being is what Knasas describes as an "earthquake" in one's thinking.[36] As we have seen, this discovery helps to awaken our minds out of a belief in a supposed brute reality of the world, in order to see its created existence, wholly dependent on a personal God. In this intuitive mental process, the mind reaches a higher level of cognitivity as it is stretched by revelation to realise the presence of Infinite Being in the world and that this Being is Trinity. This realization also concerns a fundamental insight or intuition regarding the mutual inter-relation of faith and reason. What place, then, would Mascall's metaphysical realism have in theology? Metaphysical realism may be regarded as a fundamental support for our doctrinal thinking and affectivity. As we have seen, official Anglican doctrinal statements are potentially open to a greater degree of realistic expression in their formulation on this

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[33] *Cf* J. Owens, *An Interpretation of Existence*, (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1968), 90: "Every accomplishment, every virtue, every activity, is found within subsistent existence to the full extent to which each is a perfection…".

[34] *Cf* Mascall's discussion of the *Fourth Way* in Mascall, *He Who Is*, 53: "…the form of the argument in the *Summa Theologica*…is of importance, for it asserts the existence of a supreme degree of each perfection not merely as the pattern or exemplar of the lesser degrees, but as their creative cause".

[35] E. L. Mascall, "The Primacy of Praise" in *Cross Currents* 6 (1956): 218-225, especially 224, where he is "very doubtful whether *our* love can be completely disinterested, even when its object is God…. [Knowledge and love] must…be…infused with and transfigured by praise, *laude formata*".

[36] Knasas, *Being*, 129.

basis. Metaphysical realism may be regarded as a way to secure a greater degree of realistic reference to God and human salvation in these statements.

3. AN ANGLICAN NEGLECT OF ONTOLOGICAL INTENTIONALITY

A CONCEALMENT OF CREATION

In contrast to Mascall's approach, O'Donovan points out that Articular Anglicanism neglects the importance of creational thinking in what he calls *the concealment of creation*. He explains as follows:

> That mankind is the creature of God, made in God's image, set at the head of God's creation, a physical being with rational powers to understand and to rule the rest of creation and to worship God appropriately: these things are nowhere acknowledged in the Articles. But that is only an aspect of a larger omission, the doctrine of creation itself.[37]

An implication of O'Donovan's assessment is that there has been a loss of an ontological intentionality and the lack of a metaphysical realism in sixteenth century doctrinal thinking.[38]

Mascall's assessment of the thought patterns of the Reformers shows a culture based on a decaying late medieval philosophy, and this is corroborated by O'Donovan's account. Mascall has reservations about doctrinal formulation in a tradition that lacks "traditional" elements, namely, a greater degree of metaphysical realism. As we have seen in Chapter II, he believes the lack of this traditional thinking partly derives from the influence of *nominalism* present in the intellectual background of the Reformers. But, as was noted there, Mascall's account has been roundly rejected by some scholars. In discussing this point, Avis, for example,[39] upholds Gordon Rupp's criticism of Mascall concerning his

[37] O'Donovan, *Thirty Nine Articles*, 65-67, who notes the consequences of the neglect of creation in Anglicanism for science, the development of humanism, and for liberalism – "shorn of the doctrine of creation" – in the nineteenth century. Fallenness relaced creation as the relation of the world to God.
[38] The rise of liberalism cannot be directly related to the content and example of the Articles. See Cockshut, *Anglican Attitudes*, 87.
[39] See Chapter II above and Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church*, 342-343, where the accusation is that Mascall in *Recovery*, adapted Bouyer's thesis, namely, that "As far as the Reformers diverged from the Catholic Truth, they knew not what they did. They were the stooges of decadent Scholasticism", 342. But

view of the influence of nominalism on the Reformers.[40] In a later work, Avis believes recent research has shown that Luther and other Reformers were significantly influenced by a common tradition of natural law.[41] He writes,

> [Tuomo] Mannermaa has reclaimed the ontological dimension in Luther's theology; he has shown that in Luther justification was never merely forensic and external (extrinsic), but always involved moral transformation by the indwelling presence of Christ which was nothing less than the content of faith (*in ipsa fide Christus adest* [lit., "in that faith (which) is Christ"]). Mannermaa and others have argued that Luther's concept of justification/sanctification as a single act, is analogous to the Orthodox idea of *theosis*….[42]

While Avis alludes to the need to be clear about the nature of the influence of natural law on the Reformers,[43] it is reasonable to distinguish between the influence of *natural law* and *metaphysical realism* on the Reformers' understanding of creation as concerning the notion of the "ontological dimension". Such a distinction need not detract from the integrity of Mascall's different case for metaphysical realism.

As we have seen in Chapter II, whether Mascall's account of the influence of nominalism is accurate is not an entirely relevant question. Mascall seems to be correct about a deficiency in the sixteenth century understanding of creation and the lack of a traditional approach to doctrine, where doctrine is based in and supported by metaphysical thinking. In this situation, the neglect of creation co-exists with Reformed reservations about tradition and the lack of ontological intentionality. These aspects of the Reformed approach may all be seen to be related in a complex whole that may also involve other contemporary dynamics in addition. However, O'Donovan's analysis of this aspect of Articular Anglicanism may be seen to corroborate the conclusion of Chapter II that there is present in the fundamental statements an ontological presumption which needs to be supported by metaphysical thinking if they are not to succumb to radical interpretations in later history. As we have seen, pertinently, it is with regard to some twentieth century

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this is a thesis "no serious student of Luther would accept…[and it] is quixotic in the extreme. What is more, the Bouyer-Mascall thesis appears to be a mere tilting at windmills in the light of Gordon Rupp's criticism of it in *Protestant Catholicity*".

[40] See G. Rupp, *Protestant Catholicity: Two Lectures*, (London: The Epworth Press, 1960), where Rupp argues for an *inward* catholicism (that is, a fellowship with the saints through common access to God, which leads to the church as a *society*, and not an institution). The point is that whether Mascall is right or wrong about nominalism and about its supposed influence on Luther – the latter proposition is one which Rupp rejects – there was a neglect of creation in Anglicanism.

[41] Avis, *Beyond?*, 122 and 196.

[42] Avis, *Beyond?*, 124.

[43] Avis, *Beyond?*, 123: "[The]Reformers may have used the language of natural law [but] it did not carry the same ontological freight as for the scholastic writers – or so it was generally assumed".

revisions of doctrine that Mascall employs the Intellectual Principle to assess the cogency of their accounts.[44] The Intellectual Principle to which we now return may be seen as a focussing of metaphysical and creational realism for speculative purposes in theology.

THE INTELLECTUAL PRINCIPLE AND CREATION

As we have seen in Chapters I and III, the Intellectual Principle derives from Mascall's metaphysical account of perception. Ultimately, it is derived from an ontological understanding of creation. It encapsulates a principle of meaning, where "*meaning* can be the same under a variety of linguistic and conceptual vehicles".[45] The principle of meaning also includes the notions that "truth consists in the conformity of the intelligence to reality and not just to language or concepts", and that "reality itself is therefore intelligible [and so] *meaningful*".[46] Finally, it means that we are enable to "predicate [truth], analogously and derivatively, of any being that was real and not fictitious, simply in virtue of its status as a potential object for an intellect, and [so] to declare *omne ens est verum* [lit., "all being is truth"]".[47] In this way we may see that Mascall's Intellectual Principle is based in the philosophy of metaphysical realism. He develops it as a basis of criticism of non-traditional theologies, especially concerning revisionist Christologies.[48] For example, he says that

> Once we have recognized that truth is concerned with insight into reality and not with the assignment of verbal labels we shall be in a position to approach the question, much canvassed today, of pluralism in theology.[49]

It is evident that Mascall's critique of the so-called "new Christologies" is based in his metaphysical realism and an ontological account of creation. For example, we see this in his defence of the Chalcedonian Definition and his belief that it is capable of a further development. It is of continuing relevance and this is seen in its capacity to provide the necessary concepts for an adequate discussion of some contemporary questions about Christ. His defence of the substantivist categories of Chalcedon concerns definitional issues and so enables a better basis on which to discuss some contemporary questions such as those about Jesus' genuine humanity and God's involvement in human suffering. These

[44] Mascall, *Whatever*, 24-26.
[45] Mascall, *Whatever*, 26.
[46] Mascall, *Whatever*, 26
[47] Mascall, *Whatever*, 26.
[48] Mascall, *Whatever*, 24.
[49] Mascall, *Whatever*, 24.

involve aspects of human biology and of Jesus' knowledge.[50] In particular, he believed that the problems in non-traditional Christological accounts lie in the translation of classical Christology

> from ontological into psychological terms [and so] the person nature terminology [in traditional statements] was, in effect, devised precisely in order to free Christology from the complications of contemporary psychology: it is a pity if we in the twentieth century fall into the very snare which out fifth-century forefathers skilfully eluded.[51]

The theological point is about the elevation of humanity to participation in Deity by the taking up human nature into the Person of the Word.[52] This approach to the incarnation is based in a focal meaning of theology concerning the significance of an ontological understanding of creation and of re-creation, namely, that grace perfects but does not destroy or ignore nature. Consequently, the "New Christologies" fail because they either exalt the humanity at the expense of the divinity (as in a *degree* Christology), or they make God "the subject of Jesus' life…at the expense of substituting a mutilated or scaled-down divine nature for the genuine human nature of the Jesus of the Gospels".[53]

The problems of new theologies stem from the neglect of an ontological intentionality within a context of contemporary cultural consciousness. They reflect a neglect of creation as a priority in theological thinking, and such a neglect may influence a range of issues which may include the question of the ontological reality of doctrinal references, the nature of the meaning of doctrinal statements, and their continuing relevance in new cultural situations. Such influence is clearly relevant to contemporary Christological questions.

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[50] Mascall, *Whatever*, 23-23.
[51] Mascall, *Christ*, 38.
[52] Mascall, *Christ*, Chapter 5, and especially Mascall, *Christ*, 37, and Mascall, *Whatever*, 67-68. See A. M. Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple*, 35, where Ramsey rejects Mascall's criticism of Gore on the basis that Gore did not try to solve Christological problems by psychological categories. Ramsey thinks that Mascall's criticism does not succeed. But Mascall was not so much rejecting the notion *kenosis*, only avoiding its interpretation in non-ontological categories. The root of Mascall's Christology is ontological and traditional. Consequently, Ramsey's criticism of Mascall on this point fails.
[53] Mascall, *Whatever*, 35.

CONCLUSION

Mascall noted that "the distinction between natural and revealed theology was universal in traditional Anglicanism".[54] Granted the truth of this observation, it is evident nevertheless that such realist thinking was not intentionally present in Anglicanism in the sixteenth century and is not reflected in the Articles. A concealment of creation – together with the lack of an inclusion of revelation in some contemporary Christologies – indicates the neglect of an ontological intentionality and the loss of an orthodox approach.

The elements of a creation-based pattern of thought may be noted in five aspects of ontological thinking .Mascall develops our understanding of creation as dependency in *The Openness of Being*,[55] in his works of natural theology, as well as in his doctrinal works.[56] This aspect is of foundational importance. All the elements express the logic of creation, especially the idea of radical dependency. This will be developed in the next section.

4. FIVE ELEMENTS OF A CREATION-BASED PATTERN OF THOUGHT

INTRODUCTION: THE LOGIC OF CREATION AND RE-CREATION

Mascall defines creation as

> a set of relationships between the Logos and the created Universe, in virtue of which the Universe possesses actuality…. It is the complex aggregate of those relationships in virtue of which the various elements of the various experiences of various experients have occurred, are occurring, or will occur…. From the eternal standpoint…creation is simply that relationship of the Logos to the Universe through which it exists as separate from Him…. Creation [is] God's power in action, the concrete embodiment of the divine omnipotence….[57]

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[54] Mascall, *Christ*, 234.
[55] Mascall, *Openness*, see especially 121-123.
[56] See, for example, Mascall, *Via Media*, 149-152. See also Mascall's discussions of grace in terms of the elevation of creation to "participation" in the divine nature, for example, *Via Media*, 148-165, Mascall, *Openness*, 217-250, and E. L. Mascall, "Grace and Nature in East and West" in *The Church Quarterly Review* 164 (1963): 181-19 & 332-347.
[57] E. L. Mascall, "The Divine Logos and the Universe" in *Theology* 21 (1930): 148 &149.

Creation implies the radical and paradoxical dependency of all things on the Creator.[58] This thought lies at the heart of Mascall's understanding of creation.[59] In this approach, the idea of creation implies two significant aspects regarding our understanding of God as the Creator:-

- the radical freedom of God – to create or not create; and,
- the impassibility of God.[60]

From these two aspects conjoined, we are able to develop a pattern of thought that, in turn, may be used as a criterion for the analysis and assessment of other doctrinal thinking, so as to help us determine the presence of a creational and a realist ontological intention in such thinking. Since Mascall places the logic of redemption or re-creation within the same aspect of dependency, re-creation is a "set of relationships between the Logos and the space-time process by which the whole of that process is present, as redeemed, to God."[61] Redemption is "the whole process of unification of the Universe with God, which follows from the historical event of the Incarnation".[62]

As part of his doctrine of creation, Mascall supplies us with a foundational statement of the paradoxical nature of created existence as follows:

> When we say that the fundamental difference between God and creatures is that God is self-existent while creatures are non-self existent, we are not merely making a logical or semantic comparison between the two concepts of self-existence and non-self-existence. We are implying that, because the creatures in spite of their non-self-existence do in fact exist, they are objects of the incessant creative activity of the self-existent God. This creative relationship is…entirely asymmetrical.[63]

In another place he notes that since non-self-existent creatures do in fact exist, we may consequently see that the relation of creation, "from the side of the creature, [is] *a pure relation of dependence*".[64] The paradoxical nature of creation is to be found in the nature

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[58] *Cf* Gilson, *The Spirit*, 95-96, where he says that to create is to cause analogical being, and nature becomes an intelligible created order.
[59] Mascall, *Via Media*, 41-42, we too easily recognize the *reality* of the world "and ignore the dependence". Creation is real in the creation, logical in God. See Mascall, *Whatever*, 68-71, which is about the incarnation and change in God.
[60] As Mascall, *Via Media*, 19 points out: "A deity who is bound to create, and to create one particular world with one particular set of characteristics, clearly has not the kind of independence and supremacy that belongs to a God who is free to create or not…".
[61] Mascall, "Divine Logos", 149.
[62] Mascall, "Divine Logos", 147.
[63] Mascall, *Openness*, 121.
[64] Mascall, *Via Media*, 31.

of non-self-existent reality. Creation is real, yet dependent. The mental apprehension of this paradox also enables the mind to achieve to a deeper insight. In the words of Mascall, we realise that the

> fundamental fact about the world…apart from the creative activity of God [is not that] it would be nothing, [but that] under the creative activity of God, it is precisely what it is; it is dependent reality which manifests on the finite level a limited but…genuine expression of the goodness and beauty [of] God.[65]

The note of goodness and beauty, mentioned by Mascall, means not only that the creation reflects something of the Being of God, but that it is bound to God in a most intimate relation.[66] The idea of a most intimate relation is at the heart of a metaphysical understanding of creation. This idea and that of the distinction of God and creation combine to account for what he calls the *one fundamental cosmological truth* of his metaphysical account: "These two facts – the fact of distinction and the fact of relation – are the only two aspects of the one fundamental cosmological truth, the truth of finite being as genuinely existing and yet existing with an existence that is altogether derived".[67] And so, in this thought, the fundamental logic of creation is expressed.[68] Nevertheless, in this understanding, neither fact may be seen to compromise the freedom and impassibility of God. Rather, both facts point in this direction.

Within this fundamental logic we may see that the primary causality of God operates on the existence of the creature as agent but also on the existence of secondary causality. God moves all secondary causes in accordance with their nature, both natural and voluntary. However, this thought further expresses and enhances the paradoxical and also the mysterious nature of creation. In this context, Mascall is concerned to point out the reality of human freedom is not compromised by God's freedom in creation. As he says concerning the initiative and freedom of voluntary agents, it is in their existence that God's creative presence of God is most active. God's causation of free actions does not mean "the suppression of another's initiative and autonomy, but…their stimulation and liberation".[69] It is within this context that questions about the relationship of God's foreknowledge and human freedom are properly to be understood. And so, as Mascall

[65] Mascall, *Via Media*, 33.
[66] Mascall, *Via Media*, 31.
[67] Mascall, *Existence*, 148.
[68] Mascall, *Via Media*, 33-35.
[69] Mascall, *Via Media*, 44.

affirms, there is a fundamental mystery at the heart of our understanding of creation. The mystery is to be found in the question of the reason for creation: "If, as I have suggested, the fundamental mystery about creation is that God creates a world at all, that is to say, that the self-existent Reality wills the existence of dependent realities, there is a mystery at the creature's very heart".[70] The question draws our attention to the reality of the freedom and impassibility of God which is the basis of the paradoxical and mysterious nature of creation.

Consequently, we may affirm that the doctrine of creation is of fundamental importance for the whole of Christian thinking and loving. It expresses a *sine qua non* condition of our approach to an understanding of existence, and so provides the formal cause of our understanding of doctrine in general. As we have seen in Mascall's thinking, doctrine is to be understood as an attempt to express truthfully the nature of reality in loyalty to Christian revelation. Therefore, based on the philosophy of metaphysical realism, the doctrine of creation is of fundamental significance for Anglican theology.[71] The logical or grammatical structure drawn from Mascall's metaphysical approach to creation may become the basis of an assessment of all doctrine.

The logic of creation may be expressed in the following five elements:-

- Radical dependency;
- The paradox of creation;
- God's sovereign freedom;
- The mystery of creation; and,
- The logic of the incarnation follows the logic of creation in a new key.

These are described in the next section.

THE FIVE ELEMENTS

As noted, the first and most radical aspect is *dependency* which includes both the reality of creation and of its relative independence.[72] It is a dialectical and paradoxical notion. The independent freedom of the evolution of the world, together with the freedom of personal

[70] Mascall, *Via Media*, 45.
[71] *Cf*, for example, Mascall, *Via Media*, 32, "In order for the creature to be in relation with God it must first of all exist. If creation is this relation, then creation comes into the order of being after the creature. This is indeed turning the world upside down!..".
[72] Mascall, *Existence*, 145.

beings, occurs in a world where freedom is most real as it is most dependent. But, as Mascall pointed out, the relative independence of the world can create the idea that the world is not dependent. Rather, it exists as a brute fact of reality.[73] And so, the reality of creation may become both a snare and an opportunity in our thinking: a snare because we may mistake the relative independence and freedom of the creation in which its "reality is dependent and communicated",[74] for the world's absolute independence; and an opportunity, because we may look at creatures and not see creatures only but "the God who was their origin", so finding the source of their freedom.[75]

The second aspect is the *paradoxical* nature of the non-self-existence of being that exists. As we have seen, paradox may also be found in a number of aspects. However, the following three are relevant here. First, in the idea that the God who does not need to create is the only God who can be seen to create; secondly, in the idea that only the impassible God is the God who can love the creation to an infinite degree;[76] and thirdly, in the idea that the creative powers of God are most evident in the granting of human freedom and independence. Mascall's comment on the relationship of God's omnipotence to human freedom with reference to both the Thomist and the Molinist contributions point to the significance of the personal element in a discussion of the question and is as follows:

> Both parties to the controversy have, I think, tended to forget the paradoxical but indisputable fact that when we are dealing with the relation between personal beings the strength of one person's influence upon another is frequently shown not in the suppression of the latter's initiative and autonomy, but in their stimulation and liberation.[77]

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[73] *Cf* Mascall, *Via Media*, 31-32: "This 'creation', which we so hypostatize, is a pure abstraction, whose sole purpose is to express the fact of creatures, existing in pure dependence, exist in pure dependence upon the will of God".

[74] Mascall, *Via Media*, 41.

[75] Mascall, *Via Media*, 41. See also pp. 40-42. *Cf* also "It is therefore hardly surprising that our weakened and misdirected sight can only too easily recognize the reality and ignore the dependence" with 46: "Sin has indeed distorted God's world, but in their ontological depth creatures are contrasted with God not by being sinful but being finite". *Cf* M. J. Dodds, "The Teaching of Thomas Aquinas in the Mysteries of the Life of Christ" in Weinandy, *Aquinas*, 105-106, where he points out that the present negative concern of some theologians with the doctrine of providence is misdirected since there are two "entirely different orders of causality". God does not interfere with the actions of creatures, but rather enables them…".

[76] Mascall, *Christ*, 129: "The…recognition of the full godhead of the Son deprives that doctrine of creation of what is to many persons its most attractive feature at the present day, namely that of providing an outlet for the love of God."

[77] Mascall, *Via Media*, 44.

With reference to questions of determinism and God's foreknowledge, the fundamental nature of creation in Mascall's thinking means that God's omnipotence is the source of whatever freedom creation rightly possesses. Mascall explains that

> the eternal presence to God of the space-time process is essentially *sui generis* and not to be likened to our acts of anticipation, or present consciousness, or memory, and that relationships of determinacy and contingency, thought strictly real, are relationships within the space-time order, and have no significance relative to the eternal standpoint.[78]

And so, it is in the creation of personal beings that the freedom, impassibility and action of the Creator may be more clearly seen. The third aspect takes up again the issue of God's freedom to create.

The third aspect is the notion of God's *sovereign freedom* which is also to be described as his goodness and love, and which freedom may be seen to be the final cause of creation.[79] Here, the paradox is encountered afresh, as Mascall shows in the following quotation.

> We can perhaps see that to create is not inconsistent with God's nature, for God is good, and *bonum est diffusivum sui* [lit., "goodness is itself diffusive"]. Nevertheless, that does not make creation necessary. For the only being that *can* create is one that *need* not do so; only a God who is fullness of being, and whose own beatitude is therefore incapable of augmentation or diminution, can give existence to other beings. [80]

The phrase, "the only being that *can* create is one that *need* not do so", points to God's sovereign freedom and love, as it exemplifies the paradoxical nature of creation. The affirmation of the compassion of God for the creation could be seen to be linked with the idea that God is bound to the creation out of necessity. In this way, creation is often seen as a necessary outlet for God's love and goodness.[81] Thus, in this sense, God's impassibility is a denial of his compassion. However, Mascall insists that only an impassible God can love with sovereign freedom; only a God who does not need to create can create with freedom; and, only a God whose goodness is absolute in the fullness of being can give being and freedom to others without any loss. The knowledge and love of God within the life of the Trinity, which includes a knowledge and love of the creation in

[78] Mascall, "Divine Logos", 150.
[79] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 190: "Creation is not, as the deists conceive it, an isolated occurrence which happened once for all in the remote past; it is the act of love and power, continuous from our standpoint but timeless from God's…".
[80] Mascall, *Existence*,126.
[81] See Mascall's discussion, *Existence*, 134-143.

God's freedom, overflows into the creation.[82] And so, the ontological account of creation undercuts objections to God's sovereign impassibility, freedom and love.[83] The discovery of the goodness and love of God increases creation's sense of its perfection. Such views of predestination and providence that have emerged in Protestantism are often based on the idea that God's sovereign freedom diminishes the freedom of the creation.[84] However, the freedom of the creation is not jeopardized by the freedom of God, and this notion is the proper context for a discussion of such views.

Furthermore, and paradoxically, there is no need to suggest that the idea of the best possible world is the basis of its perfection. Rather, it is the world's finitude and imperfection that attests to the goodness and perfection of God. The world is as it is in God's providence, and in its finitude we see paradoxically the goodness of God.[85] The sovereignty of God, however, is not a threat to the world, but a source of its hope and source of its renewal in grace.[86]

The fourth aspect is the *mystery* of being and of the creative act which is non-temporal, unique and universal. As we have seen, Mascall places the mystery of creation in the fact that God, whose beatitude cannot be increased by the world's existence, creates a world at all.[87] The act of creation is also mysterious to us because it is radically unique and so "profoundly mysterious".[88] We only catch it in what appears to be most real to us. Likewise, the universality of creation is mysterious to us because of the lack of an exemplar in our experience.[89] We catch it, not in itself, but in it as it is found to be a gift of God. In addition, we are unable to fully understand the concept of *ex nihilo*. As Mascall says, "Even when we have recognized that the creative act is, *a parte Dei* ["from the side of God"], non-temporal, we are still in danger of this tendency to hypostatize non-existence"[90] – including our difficulty in pressing beyond "the earth [as] a formless

[82] Mascall, *Existence*, 128-130.
[83] See Mascall's discussion of the cosmology of Whitehead and F. R. Tennant in *He Who Is*, Chapter 11.
[84] See O'Donovan's discussion of predestination in O'Donovan, *Thirty Nine Articles*, 82-87.
[85] Mascall, *He Who Is*, 104-105.
[86] Mascall, *Existence*, 141 places the nature of the doctrine of analogy which he has outlined in Chapter 5, as at the heart of our negotiating both the snare of creation and its possibility. Thus, "This is the true analogical passage from finite to infinite, which uses the finite to deepen our knowledge of the infinite, and not the infinite to deprive the finite of the true, though limited, reality that it has".
[87] Mascall, *Via Media*, 45.
[88] Mascall, *Existence*, 143.
[89] Mascall, *Existence*, 146.
[90] Mascall, *Existence*, 144.

void" [91] – as matter on which God worked. Creation is therefore "more perfect and primary than…generation or alteration, because its *terminus ad quem* [lit. "the end towards which"] is the whole substance of the thing".[92]

The fifth aspect is that the *logic of the incarnation* follows the logic of creation, but in a new tonality of restoration and advance. As Aquinas explained,

> The first principle of the whole procession of things is the Son of God, 'through whom all things were made' (John 1:3). This is why he is also the primodial exemplar (*primordiale exemplar*) which all creatures imitate as the true and perfect image of the Father…. But this exemplar of God (*exemplar Dei*)…has willed to become man that he might be a human exemplar (*humanum exemplar*) for mankind.[93]

In this approach, Christ is the logic of creation and of redemption. *Exemplar* is to be understood in an ontological way rather than in a moral way. Substantive accounts allow us to ascertain positive answers to questions of identity. In this case, the identity of the human nature of Christ with human nature in creation is assured in the notion of the *primordiale exemplar*. This is the reason for us to say that the logic of creation is a starting-point of both sacramental doctrine and doctrines of the atonement.

And finally, we may be reminded that God's work in creation and re-creation is one work as is re-countered in the principle that grace perfects but does not ignore or destroy nature as a focal meaning of theology. In this way, the doctrines of the Trinity, the incarnation, and the church may be seen to converge within the meaning of creation. A consideration of God's action in nature and supernature has led Mascall to affirm the unity of God's double operation. "For Western theology, in Mersch's words, 'the infinite Being has two ways of communicating himself to finite beings: the first is that by which he gives himself to them in their way and makes them themselves, the second is that by which he gives himself in his way and makes them one with him' ".[94] Lionel Thornton corroborates Mascall's approach when he says that "Repetition of creation (of the old order in the new) is one of the fundamental unities of scripture; and the place where the strands of the pattern overlap

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[91] Genesis 1:2.
[92] Mascall, *Existence*, 144-145. Mascall is quoting *ST* I, 14, 1 ad 2.
[93] Quoted by Dodds, "The Teaching", in Weinandy, *Aquinas*, 109, from *In I Cor. 11: 1-3* [583], 115, note 121.
[94] Mascall, *Existence*, 150-151. See also Mascall, *Via Media*, 36, who quotes A. Farrer regarding the relationship of revelation and reason: "We have not to distinguish between God's action and ours, but between two phases of God's action – his supernatural action, and his action by way of nature".

has…two centres of reference which are yet inseparably one, namely, the God-Man and his God-bearing Mother".[95] We may add this: that in the unity of the work of the Trinity is to be found an original and essential holiness, catholicity and apostolicity which may be seen to reach out to all creation and to inform all creation, and so to bring it into a real participation in God's life.

5. The Logic of Creation – An Extrapolation of Mascall's Approach Applied to Three Anglican Doctrines

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain how Mascall's ontological thinking is of vital significance for Anglican theology. The following account of the three doctrines discussed in Chapter II attempts to show how the logic of creation may be seen to significantly influence and enhance the expression of these doctrines – to notably support and expand our doctrinal understanding. As we have seen, Mascall's presentation of these doctrines incorporates an ontological thinking about creation. However, while the following presentation is based on his understanding of these doctrines, it attempts to illustrate a vital link between the logical priority of creation as to be found in natural theology with our understanding of each doctrine. It is to show how the presence of metaphysical and realist thinking fulfils Anglican aims to be orthodox and catholic, but without negating any gains of an essential Anglican ecclesiology. It suggests that creational logic provides a better basis for doctrinal expression than the expression given in the Articles. It also suggests that the theistic basis of the salvation of which these Articles speak, and, as they are hierarchically related to the first five fundamental Articles, may be given a clearer ontological basis rather than incorporating an ontological presumption when they refer to God.

These three doctrines have been contentious, both within Anglicanism and in the wider church. They have been chosen for the following three reasons:-

[95] L. S. Thornton, "The Mother of God in Holy Scripture" in E. L. Mascall, (ed.), *The Mother of God. A Symposium by the Members of the Fellowship of St Alban and St Sergius*, (Westminster: Dacre Press, 1949), 23.

- Mascall has understood them in catholic terms;
- his understanding of them derives from his ontological thinking; and,
- a creation-based approach to them shows that his approach was in line with the broader catholic tradition and the ultimate aims of Anglicanism.

The following also explicitly applies the criteria of the five elements of the logic of creation. The three doctrines are the doctrine of justification, the doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament, and the doctrine of apostolic succession.

DOCTRINAL APPLICATION

The Doctrine of Justification

If *justification* is to be understood in salvific/soteriological terms, then an incorporation of an ontological and creational approach may be an apt and profitable way to think of this doctrine. As we have seen in Chapter II, it is possible to describe the Articular account of justification as of mixed provenance. That is, the declaratory aspects of the gospel offering of salvation have been conflated with the declaratory aspects of the forensic metaphor from an ecclesiological category. In the Articles, these aspects are to be seen in Article XI.[96] If a meritorial basis of justification/salvation is assumed in Anglicanism – "whether it be the merit we should have and can't produce [or] the merit God reckons to us" [97] – then an ontological and creational basis for justification/salvation may at least offer the debate about justification/salvation a new way in which to discuss the contentious issues. For example, if the notion of an imputation of a moral righteousness is included in an understanding of justification, then, in such a setting, it may be seen to be congruent with the terms of the elevation of human nature in the new creation. Meanwhile, in another context of theological discussion at another time, Wright's corrections may be assimilated with profit.

Article XI may reflect the influence of Melanchthon or merely the influence of the Protestant concern to highlight the individual status of salvation as is seen in the term *per fidem* [lit., "through faith"], but not *propter fidem* [lit., "because of faith"] or *fide* [lit., "by

[96] The *declaratory* mode of justification encapsulates Protestant thought, as seen in the following alternatives:- *sola scriptura* against the authority of tradition; *sola gratia* against the doing what you can so as not to deny grace; the preaching of the Gospel against a processual sacramentalist ritualism; the Renaissance concern for written texts against a ritual performance; the forensic notion against affective symbolism; and, the Renaissance concern of the individual against ecclesial institutionalism.
[97] Wright, *Justification*, 188.

faith"].[98] The latter terms may be taken to reflect the idea of justification based on sacramental and ecclesial processes. Alternatively, their rejection may be taken to point to and emphasize Protestant understandings. Nevertheless, as we have seen in Chapter II, and as Wright has pointed out,[99] a concern for the term *per fidem* and not *propter fidem*, does not entirely eradicate the idea that faith is or may become a kind of work in the interpretation of the Article XI. This is so especially if the doctrine is expressed in a soteriological provenance where faith is said to require a constant testing and approving of itself by virtues and works, as in the *Homily on Justification.* We may see that this approach to faith applies to the term *Justification by Faith* as a name for the doctrine.

The declaratory aspect implies that there are positive effects for the individual and the church if it is accepted. These include the idea that salvation/justification is about a covenantal relationship with God in which the assurance of God's acceptance is prior to faith.[100] They also include the idea that the assurance of faith or justification has positive effects on the individual's self-consciousness in the process on the way to the Beatific Vision. It may be described as a kind of personalist realism.[101] As Article XI suggests, "we are justified by Faith only [and this] is a most wholesome Doctrine, and very full of comfort [to each of us who have faith: *per fidem*]…",[102] and, "We are accounted righteous before God…". But in any case, the teaching of Trent is not the immediate cause of Article XII, and Anglicans wished to state the doctrine in their own terms: "Albeit that Good Works, which are the fruits of Faith…are very pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively Faith…". Similarly, Article XIII reflects an Anglican view: "Works done before the grace of Christ…are not pleasant to God…as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the School-authors say), deserve the grace of congruity…".

The declaratory aspect is evident in the English Reformers' concern to relate salvation to the gospel seen as the proclamation of the completed work of Christ in history, rather than

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[98] *Tantum propter meritum Domini ac Servatoris nostri Jesu Christi, per fidem, non propter opera et merita nostra….*
[99] See Chapter 2.
[100] Wright, "The Biblical Basis", 15.
[101] See Hampson's discussion of the self in Kierkegaard in Hampson, *Christian Contradictions,* esp. 272, that is, the self as *a relation which relates the self to the self* is a way to account for the personalist element. See McGrath's discussion of Luther's " 'theological breakthrough' ", 9, in McGrath, "The Development of the doctrine in the Reformation Period" in *Iustitia* , II, 1-20.
[102] See McGrath, *Iustitia*, II, 102-103.

to the processes of the medieval church and from the kind of piety based on merit so as not to be denied grace: *facere quod in se est* [lit., "to make (or do) what is in oneself"]. Article XI does not include the technicalities of the continental protestant view of justification such as the distinction between "*the imputation of faith for righteousness* and the quite distinct idea of *the imputation of the righteousness of Christ*."[103] However, as McGrath explains, the former phrase means that God accepts the faith of the believer to be "righteousness", while the latter is that "which corresponds to the teaching characteristic of the continental Reformation by this stage [1563]". It indicates that "faith is the means by which the extrinsic righteousness of Christ is appropriated by the individual believer", or that "faith is the *instrument* of justification, as explained by Melancthon…. [that is,] that man is not justified on account of any quality which he may possess [and] that *fides* is not…such a quality".[104] While brevity seems to be important to the Anglican Reformers, this aspect is not explained. And so, the Article does not foreclose the possibility of an ambiguity of interpretation occurring where faith is seen to become a work and which, in turn, leads to an insistence on ecclesiastical performance since faith is really a work, or paradoxically, its neglect in the name of *sola fide*. In either case, the intention of the Article seems to have been overthrown. As we have seen in Chapter II in the end it appears that the insistence of the *Homily on Justification* on the testing and approving of faith by virtues and works provides little difference between the general Anglican account and that of Trent. Pertinently, as Ramsey said of Luther,

> He dwelt upon the initial experience of justification to such an extent that he failed to recognize aright the discipline and struggle and order by which the soul, once justified, is led along the road of sanctification. And he was therefore ensnared by a false antithesis between the inward and he outward…. [Furthermore] he failed to see that in Apostolic Christianity the order of the Church matters supremely, expressing the dependence by which every group and individual learns the full meaning of the life-in-Christ.[105]

And so, the Articles, in their minimalism, may be seen as somewhat ambiguous statements, or their expression may lead to various interpretations involving various "churchmanships" in Anglicanism. The controverted question of justification/salvation concerns the question of ecclesiology. As we have seen, Mascall's understanding of justification appears to be in conflict with that of the Articles.

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[103] McGrath, *Iustitia*, II, 103.
[104] McGrath, *Iustitia*, II, 103.
[105] Ramsey, *The Gospel*, 190-191.

No doubt some Anglicans see the minimalist and essentialist nature of this statement as an important part of the Anglican approach. In any case, some believe the Articles are sufficient as they stand to oppose the Tridentine Decree.[106] However, a doctrine based more securely on an ontological and creational basis may have helped to resolve some of the ambiguities and antimonies inherent in variant interpretations of justification, and provide Anglicanism with a less ambiguous statement.

For convenience, the following discussion is based on McGrath's account of Aquinas' mature view on justification in the *Summa Theologiæ*.[107] It proposes that Aquinas' understanding of the doctrine of justification/salvation is a significant example of how a doctrine may be expressed on the basis of an ontological intentionality, and so how it may thus provide a basis for a resolution of some of the difficulties associated with this doctrine. Fundamentally, in Aquinas' account, justification/salvation is to be understood as the new creation: both restoration and advance. Actual grace, *gatia gratis data* [lit., "grace freely given" – a transitory gift of grace], works as a divine influence above the realm of nature in order to incline the human will to goodness and to assist it with particular actions. This first category of grace may be called *actual operative* grace. Aquinas regards human impotence to be such that the will is incapable of disposing itself towards justification – a view no doubt pleasing to Reformers. His pessimism regarding natural faculties lies behind the division of grace. So, the beginning of conversion is to be seen in the internal operation of grace, necessitating *gratia gratis data* prior to justification/salvation. Further assistance is required in spite of the presence of the habitual gift of *gratia gratum faciens* [lit., "grace generating grace" – a habitual gift of grace]. Further graces which function as *gratia cooperans* [lit., "co-operative grace"] are needed, acting on those who are already in a state of habitual grace since only God alone is capable of perfect action. Thus the second category of grace is that which assists the renewed will to actualize its good intention in co-operative external actions. It is *actual co-operative* grace. Grace therefore is a habit or a motion and both are either operative or co-operative. As a *motus* [lit., "a motion"], grace operates on our wills so that we will the good, and we co-operate with our will as we co-operate with grace. The third category is *habitual operative* grace. It is the formal principle

[106] For example, as discussed in Chapter II, Weil, "The Gospel in Anglicanism", 60-77, sees these Articles on justification as "cutting its own path between the polarized positions on both sides". The result was a theology of confidence, a world-affirming incarnational character as they exalt the principle of the grace of God alone.
[107] McGrath, *Iustitia*, I, 102-109.

of justification/salvation. The fourth is *habitual co-operative* grace and it is the formal principle of merit and involves cooperation.

This is explained in the following. Grace increases our freedom to believe. In *gratia formaliter operans* [lit., "more usually working in grace"] and *cooperans*, as an habitual reality, lies the source of the declaratory aspects of salvation/justification where the whole is seen to be rooted in a participation in the divine nature. The question of whether humans are capable of attaining *meritum de congruo* [lit., "merit of congruence"] is answered in the negative, which should please supporters of Article XI. Concomitantly, grace brings real change in a person while it is possible to say also that grace is in some sense possessed by the individual. So, reflecting the logic of the incarnation, human nature *in via* is both real and acceptable to God. *Extrinsicism* denies ontological renewal which is a real participation in the divine nature by real human nature in the present.[108] Personalist existential experience is seen to be rooted in an ontological change as explained by metaphysical realism and ontological thinking concerning creation. Therefore, good works are neither a mere act of gratitude for the grace of God, or a morally chosen volitional consequence, nor are they the basis of justification/salvation. They are intrinsic to it as rooted in a renewed creation. This clarifies the relation of good works as "fruits" of faith and the consequence of justification/salvation (the "follow after") of Article XI.

To Anglicans, the declaratory aspect of the proffered salvation, as presented in the gospel, may become a source of the personal experience of acceptance with God, which, in turn, may increase both a sense of confident self-acceptance in which there is a whole-hearted participation in sacraments, and, a confident approach to the world. Here, the gospel is based in a concept of the freedom and efficacy of Christ within a somewhat voluntarist framework. However, within the concept of justification, to either separate faith and works on the one hand, or to integrate them on the other hand, leads to the conflicts and confusions that have attended this controverted issue. Even if the doctrine is conceived in the terms of a mixed provenance, ambiguity is somewhat removed by the inclusion of an ontological and creational basis.

[108] Dulles, *Survival*, 167-168, points out, following O. Pesch, that "the Lutheran formula *simul iustus et peccator* rests upon a mode of thought that may be called "existential" – one that corresponds to what the believer is prompted to utter in a situation of prayer…" As we have seen in Chapter II, Mascall's interpretation of the historic Luther is ultimately beside the point of the relevance of whether metaphysical realism is a useful resource for Anglican theology.

Furthermore, the five criteria for the logic of creation are present in this account: first, radical dependency creates a relative independency (in *gratia gratum faciens*); secondly, the sovereign goodness of God is seen in both *gratia motus* [lit., "a motion by grace] and *gratia habitus* [lit., "a habitat by grace"]; thirdly, the paradox of justification wherein it is both God's work and ours is present; fourthly, God's action in justification is mysterious (we experience not grace but its effect); and fifthly, the actuality of justification reflects the incarnation inasmuch as it is based on the nature of the Body of Christ, which is participation in the Divine life of the Holy Trinity.[109] Basing the doctrine on creation makes a difference to its expression.

The Doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament

A way of discussing this aspect of doctrine is to take up some of Paul Avis's recent comments concerning the eucharist. He reminds readers that "it is hardly disputed that modern Anglicanism has a rich and full doctrine of the Eucharist, one with a strong sense of the real presence of Christ and with a proper understanding of the eucharistic sacrifice" and that stands in continuity with the understandings of the Articles.[110] He claims that Anglican eucharistic theology stands in the Augustinian tradition understood as a *symbolic-realist* interpretation of the efficacy of the sacraments and where "the sign participates in the reality that it signifies". This reflects the Reformation stress on faith and the word, and incorporates the eschatological tension between the present experience of the church and the church's true existence.[111] Avis denies that this symbolist-realist Reformation view amounts to *receptionism,* a view often associated with Anglicanism. He defines receptionism as "the idea that Christ's presence in the sacrament is entirely conditional on the faith of the communicant, that is, he is present only to faith".[112] Avis rejects the idea that Cranmer's and Hooker's doctrine is to be interpreted as "merely receptionist" since this "would be an unfortunate misreading of the Reformers generally….

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[109] The creational logic is upheld in D. A. Keating, "Justification, Sanctification and Divinization" in Weinandy, *Aquinas,* 145-146, in the following statements: justification is not only the declaration , but the "right ordering of the one who is justified; what is produced in us is by God and us; and, both divine and human agency is required".

[110] Avis, "Anglicanism and Eucharistic Ecclesiology" in *Identity*, 87. References to Avis's account are from 87-108.

[111] Avis, *Identity*, 88.

[112] Avis, *Identity*, 88-89.

[who] would have been the last to make the efficacy of the sacrament dependent on human effort, on human works that are meant to somehow trigger God's grace".[113]

But this is puzzling insofar as receptionism more accurately could be seen as the view that the presence of Christ is objectively within the communicant and not within/in the elements, and, as Mascall defined receptionism, "that Christ's body and blood are received by the devout communicant at the same time as the bread and the wine but are in no sense identical with them".[114] Nevertheless, in the second receptionist understanding given above and in Avis's account of the sacrament – although not so of the version of receptionism to which Avis refers us – there is to be found a certain place for the notion of *ex opere operato* [lit., "through the performance of the work"[115]] or perhaps, *ex opere operantis Christi* [lit., "through the work of the performer/Christ"[116]]. It means that while a notion of the symbolic instrumentality of the transignifed elements is found in the semiological aspect, which is acclaimed at the expense of the ontological, there is to be found some kind of "unity between sign (the consecrated elements) and reality (Christ's vivifying presence)".[117] However, while an *ex opere operato* view is retained insofar as there is a sense of the unity between sign and reality and of the "giveness, the objectivity and the sovereignty of grace",[118] Avis rejects a view of transubstantiation. He insists that the real presence is located in the communicant, faithful or not,[119] and not in the instrument as would be implied by transubstantiation. In this sense, Avis is correct to deny the similarity of his view with receptionism as he defines it.

Following his definition of receptionism, Avis notes how Hooker's concern is not the "advocating of naked receptionism", but the rejection of "both the Roman and the Lutheran attempts to posit a corporal presence of Christ in the elements, transubstantiation

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[113] Avis, *Identity*, 89.
[114] E. L. Mascall, "Eucharist, Eucharistic Theology" in A. Richardson (ed.), *A Dictionary of Christian Theology*, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1969), 118.
[115] E. L. Mascall, "Ex Opere Operato" in Richardson, *Dictionary*, 123: Mascall's own translation.
[116] Mascall, "Ex Opere Operato", 123: Mascall's own translation.
[117] Avis, *Identity*, 89.
[118] Avis, *Identity*, 89.
[119] This seems to be the view of the 1662 liturgy *The Administration of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion* in the first Exhortation: "…so divine and comfortable a thing to them who receive it worthily, and so dangerous to them that will presume to receive it unworthily…".

and consubstantiation respectively".[120] Quoting Hooker, Avis notes that the language of instrumentality and effectualness is prominent in his account:

> 'The real presence of Christ's most blessed body and blood is not therefore to be sought for in the sacrament [i.e. the elements], but in the worthy receiver of the sacrament' (V, lxvii, 6). He articulates instead a position that is close to the Augustinian symbolist-realism of the English Reformers…. The true mystical participation, conjunction and union that is between Christ and the Christian – this is Hooker's great theme and his characteristic language….[121]

Hooker speaks of the sacrament(s) in Articular terms as "effectual signs of grace",[122] and so describes them as "means effectual whereby God when we take the sacraments delivereth into our hands that grace…".[123]

It seems, therefore, that Hooker is an advocate of the second interpretation of receptionism given above, and is that not of Avis.[124] However, it is sometimes denied that Hooker's version of receptionism is, in fact, his real position. For example, H. F. Woodhouse has written that Hooker's version "has been taken by some as the basis for an assertion that Hooker's view of the Eucharist was receptionist. But this seems to be clean contrary to the whole tenor of his chapter…".[125] Nevertheless, while it appears doubtful that Woodhouse is correct on the basis of explicit statements by Hooker, at least we may affirm that Hooker retains a somewhat *ex opere operato* view not too dissimilar to that of Avis. But in any case, the significant point concerns a question about the location of the real presence in the symbolist-realist interpretation.[126] Avis' real concern seems to be to exalt the way Anglicans handle these contentious issues. That is, with restraint,[127] with firm distinctions,[128] with minimalist intention,[129] and with "qualified realist intention [but] not

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[120] Avis, *Identity*, 91.
[121] Avis, *Identity*, 91. The gloss in brackets is Avis's.
[122] Article XXV.
[123] Quoted in Avis, *Identity*, 91.
[124] R. Hooker taught that that " the real presence of Christ's most blessed body and blood is not therefore to be sought for in the sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the sacrament ", Mascall, *Recovery*,12, quoting R. Hooker, *Ecclesiastical Polity*, V, lxvii, 6, (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1902), 376. Hooker is often described as wanting a change to take place, not in the elements, but in the receiver of the sacrament. This was discussed in Chapter II.
[125] Woodhouse, "Sixteenth Century Anglican Theology", 422.
[126] See Avis, *Identity*, 94, when he says that in recent Anglican eucharistic theology "Neither the doctrine of the real presence nor the doctrine of the eucharistic sacrifice are at issue here. Anglicans do not believe that they hold an essentially different eucharistic doctrine to that held by Roman Catholics [but need] to express these doctrines in ways that suits their tradition…".
[127] Avis, *Identity*, 91.
[128] Avis, *Identity*, 92.
[129] Avis, *Identity*, 92.

in a reductionist sense". This means with a balance.[130] And this further implies that, by not proclaiming "its credentials [by making] comparison with other churches",[131] we so understand Anglican ecclesiology in an eschatological sense where degrees of ecumenical unity can be achieved.[132] It means, as Avis insists, a seeing of Anglican ecclesiology as marked by *communion* – that is, as participation, conjunction, incorporation and union with Christ – rather than as a *juridical* account of unity. Such an approach underlines the relative provisionality of all accounts.

However, the question for Anglicans concerns what needs to be said lest the virtues of balance and restraint are insufficient to render this doctrine less capable of variant understandings that may cause disunity in the Church. The suggestion of this chapter is that the doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament instead should conform to the criteria of the doctrine of existence to help clarify it for Anglicans. Such an approach is truly eschatological and ecumenical. Alternatively, the symbolist-realist account does not in itself clarify the question of the status of the elements and their relation to the Body and Blood of Christ. Rather, Mascall's ontological position helps to do this. The following is based on his chapter "Recent Thought on the Theology of the Eucharist", and is a development of Mascall's idea of *subsistent relations* as a principle of Theology.[133]

The doctrine of *subsistent relations* allows for an organic, relationalist, and personalist view of substance, and is an appropriate way to understand sacramental signification. An eschatological and material understanding reflects an understanding of the presence of the new creation already active in the church. In the unique nature of sacramental signification, the natural status of the elements remains when, in Mascall's view, they are assumed by the Body and Blood of Christ, analogous to the assumption of human nature by the Person of the Word in the incarnation. The resurrected and transfigured Presence of Christ ontologically transfigures the elements.

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[130] Avis, *Identity*, 95: the reference is to recent accounts of the eucharist in Anglicanism, that is, in the Anglican response to the Catholic *One Bread, One Body* (1998) from the Catholic Bishops' Conference in England and Wales, Ireland and Scotland in *The Eucharist: Sacrament of Unity. An Occasional Paper of the House of Bishops of the Church of England,* (London: Church House Publishing, 2001).
[131] Avis, *Identity*, 97.
[132] Avis, *Identity*, 99: the church does not subsist completely in one ecclesial community, but "authentically in several different traditions…recognized as true churches".
[133] E. L. Mascall, "Recent Thought on the Theology of the Eucharist" in No Author, *A Critique of the Eucharistic Agreement*, (London: SPCK, 1975), 63-75.

As he says, the Presence is for the sake of the sacrifice, which is only the sacrifice of Calvary, so that there is no Presence without the sacrifice.[134] Consequently, "The whole sacrifice is contained and communicated under the sacramental symbols."[135] In this sense, the elements are transubstantiated as befits created entities, bearing a new and substantial relation to creation and the new creation. The creational reality of bread and wine remain in their renewed status as Body and Blood of Christ, since grace perfects but does not destroy nature.

Consequently, the doctrines of *transignification* and *transfinalisation* insufficiently explain the real presence if they try to do so without taking account of a change in substance. Because the rejection of transubstantiation is based on a too narrow view of substance, as the result of nominalist prejudices, these views are not persuasive. Consecration of the elements gives a new meaning that does not destroy the previous creational meaning as it perfects them. Mascall points out that since relations can be static and lifeless, and dynamic relations can be impersonal and lifeless, there is no particular merit in dynamic and personalist notions and views such as the one Avis advocates. Therefore, it is not enough to say that the elements are to be seen in relational terms unless it is added that they are personal. The eucharistic relations are to be both dynamic and personal because of Christ's command with regard to sacramental signification and in regard to his Real Presence. The elements become his Body and Blood, the totality of his transfigured human nature joined to the Person of the Word. In this setting, the recipient is assimilated into the Food and so is incorporated into Christ. The elements signify both our membership in the earthly community of Christ and in the supernatural organism of Christ's Body. They are ordered to the church's supernatural destiny, which is, the resurrection of the body and the beatific vision. They can become the location where the subsistent relational and dynamic Presence of Christ becomes real. Alternatively, Avis' account of symbolic-realism, either

[134] Mascall's view of *sacrifice* is that of the offering of a creature to God in recognition of God as Creator, to be accepted by God and transformed by this acceptance; thus sacrifice fulfils the law of our being as creatures, since God is both efficient and final cause. The true sacrifice is the offering of a rational creature by himself. Mankind was meant to achieve the fulfilment and beatitude as a creature by the offering of self to the Father in a life of joyful and loving filial response – an analogous reflection on the created level of the eternal act of filial response made by the Son on the uncreated level in the life of the Holy Trinity. The Cross is that perfect offering in the conditions of sin, where the death was the offering of that life and not its destruction, and the resurrection is the acceptance of that offering and the transformation of its into a perpetual efficacy. The offering of the Ascended Christ to the Father is communicated to the Church as his Body at Pentecost and to its members by the baptismal incorporation into him, restoring lost sonship, *Filii in Filio*.

[135] Mascall, "Recent Thought", 68.

denies both the reality of this location and our knowledge of it in denying the possibility of its explanation, or remains agnostic about the reality and our knowledge of it. This position is unstable. It is not the basis for positive knowledge of the Sacrament that upholds the reforming instinct.

Avis's objection to transubstantiation is based on the finitude of created reality. He believes he expresses an essential point of Anglican theological and ecclesial method in the following quotation:

> Here there is certainly realism: there is true communion because there is the true body and blood of Christ. But it is a realism shot through with a sense of the imperfection of all earthly means to embody and hold the transcendent power of God. There is not material conversion…no transubstantiation…[but] 'in, with, under and through'…. [not] any attempt to capture and hold as the sacrifice of Calvary.[136]

Here Avis believes that the ontological realism of the Presence of Christ is always to be conditioned by a certain provisionality and so drives us to renewal and reformation. As it is not captured or held by the created elements it also is not held by the church in history or in the moment of worship.[137] This, however, is a strange understanding for anyone who believes that the Person of the Word took flesh in the womb of the Virgin. Are the created human nature of Jesus or the Virgin's Womb ontologically unable to "capture and hold" the Eternal Word? Is the resurrection not possible because there could be "no transubstantiation" of the body and blood of Christ since some kind of trans-physicality is impossible?[138] In the doctrine of the trans-physical nature of the resurrected Christ and the Blessed Sacrament, transubstantiation becomes conceivable.[139] The key is the creational structure of radical dependency whereby "material" is not in metaphysical opposition to the Creator according to the law of its being, but open, dependent, and real. Mascall's

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[136] Avis, *Identity*, 89.

[137] *Cf* E. L. Mascall, *The Christian Universe*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966), 165: "The Eucharistic rite…is both a symbol and a foretaste of the gathering of the human race into Christ and the transformation of the material world in him. The conversion of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ is the symbol and the foretaste of the transformation of the material world….".

[138] See, for example, N. T. Wright, *The Challenge of Jesus: Rediscovering who Jesus Was and Is*, (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 1999), 144-145; also N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, (London: SPCK, 2003), 476-477, 606, for the notion of the *transphysical*. In Wright, such transphysicality is eschatological and brought forward into the present.

[139] *Cf* Mascall, *Whatever*, 35-36 regarding the incarnation: "There is no ultimate metaphysical *incompatibility* between God and manhood…. That this openness includes a fitness for assumption into hypostatic union we could perhaps never have suspected…but when it has occurred we can see how appropriate it is".

objection to early twentieth century Anglican versions of the *kenosis* may apply to the sacrament as well.[140] Mascall states that

> However greatly [the glorified human nature of Christ] is freed from the operation of the laws that govern our own bodies, it is still so far within the created order as to mediate the divine life to us in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar…and is locally manifested in the Consecrated Elements….[141]

To object to a change in the Elements as an event in this world is to place too sharp a dichotomy between things created as in this world and things created as in heaven, and between things created and Uncreated. As Mascall says of both creation and the Incarnation, "the whole space-time order is eternally present to the divine nature of the Logos in His eternal awareness of His human nature."[142] In speaking of the Transfiguration and the Resurrection of Christ, Mascall points out that the "physical, physiological, and psychological laws" of Christ's humanity, are "gradually subsumed under higher and wider laws that express its complete adaptation as the instrument of the Divine Logos".[143] Those wider laws embrace the physical, and the process of its being and operation and may be seen to be an example of the relational aspects of substance.

On this basis, transubstantiation may be considered to be an event within the created order, a local manifestation of the human nature – the Body and Blood – of Christ. In discussing the resurrection Body of Christ, Mascall explains that

> There is complete continuity of physical and mental life, there is no annihilation of Christ's manhood: but that manhood has reached a stage when it is entirely responsive to its divine person….The former body is not destroyed, but the laws governing it have been woven into higher laws….[144]

Analogously, the Elements are not destroyed as they are taken up into the created Humanity of the Glorified Christ. We may say with Mascall that

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[140] *Cf* E. L. Mascall, *Up and Down in Adria: Some Considerations of* Soundings, (London: The Faith Press, 1963), 96, links the Eucharistic life of the "Christian Church, the Body of Christ" with the nature of the church as "the organic extension of his crucified and risen flesh".
[141] E. L. Mascall, "The Incarnation and Space-Time" in *Theology* 19 (1929): 318.
[142] Mascall, "The Incarnation", 317.
[143] E. L. Mascall, "The Nature of Resurrection" in *Theology* 22 (1931): 206.
[144] Mascall, "The Nature of Resurrection", 206.

> The act of consecration thus establishes in them [the Elements] a complex of relations to us which are the same as those relations to us that constitute His glorified humanity; it thus brings about a real and concrete presence of Christ as God and Man, or perhaps we might more exactly say, as God in Manhood.[145]

Such an account of transubstantiation need not deny an Anglican concern for a continuing presence of the Elements as real bread and wine within our experience of creation.

So, the signifying aspect of the sign is there because of its creational and ontological reality, and not simply because of its epistemological and semiological reality, although both are needed and present.[146] As Mascall says, "Sacraments are not signs of realities which are absent, but signs of realities which are present; and the means by which, as instrumental causes, they make the realities present is by being signs ordained by God".[147] By signifying, they cause. To say, according to either of the versions of receptionism given above, that Christ is really present yet the elements are not changed, or that there is "no transubstantiation", may lead us to ask how much of a gap there is between the consecrated elements and the Presence in our thinking and in reality. Receptionism tries to capture a sense of location for the Presence. However, does it not spiritualize Christ's presence by extracting the glorified physicality of the incarnate Christ? And, is there a connection with a more extrinsic view of justification/salvation? Is it entirely rational to say that "in, with, under and through" is an appropriate description, but there is to be an ontological and substantial gap between the elements and the Presence because of the imperfection of all earthly means to embody and hold the transcendent power of God? It is a separation of symbol and element.

However, as Mascall says,

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[145] Mascall, "Resurrection", 212.
[146] *Cf* M. Volf, "Theology, Meaning & Power: A Conversation with George Lindbeck on Theology & the Nature of Christian Difference" in T. R. Phillips and D. L. Okholm, *The Nature of Confession: Evangelicals & Postliberals in Conversation*, (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1996), 55-58: "The place where the Christian 'semiotic system' emerges is *the history of God with the world*, a history that is more than a network of discursive and nondiscursive intersignifications…. Even though the history is accessible to us only with the help of a system of intersignifications, this history is always much more that this system of intersignifications."
[147] Mascall, *Corpus Christi*, 130.

> The Body and Blood are there not simply by a direct and unmediated act of the divine power, but by a mediated act of divine power using sacramental causality as secondary cause. The bread and wine are thus not destroyed by ceasing to have the status of substance nor when they cease to have the status of substance has anything been withdrawn from them. On the contrary, something has been added to them, namely the status of being the sacramental signs of the Body and Blood. The Body and Blood themselves have not undergone any change by becoming the substance of the Eucharistic gifts, nor have they on the other hand lowered the metaphysical status of the bread and wine by doing so. On the contrary, they have elevated it, for, if sacramental Signification is a metaphysical, and not merely a physical or a moral fact, bread and wine have a higher and not a lower metaphysical reality if they have the status of sacramental signs of the Body and Blood of Christ than if they have the status of substance.[148]

The last sentence may seem to be in line with Avis views, but a careful reading suggests that Mascall understands that the elements are changed and not destroyed as substance; they are elevated, and could be described as *trans-substantial* on the basis of metaphysical thinking. Consequently, Article XXVII is better read in such a way as to proscribe a crude and "Capernaite" rendering of transubstantiation. Or it may be read, as we have seen in Chapter II, as rejecting the kind of transubstantiation that "overthoweth the nature of a Sacrament…".[149] And so, transcendence is not a question of conceptuality, but of existential fact.[150] As C. O'Neill has pointed out, in the sacrament Christ is exercising his Lordship over the material world already.[151]

In the sense given above, the Blessed Sacrament follows the five criteria of *radical dependency*, *paradox*, *sovereign goodness*, *mystery*, and *reflecting the incarnation.* The protestant concern to uphold the sacraments as visible word remains but is given new definition in ontological thinking. Neither is an Anglican trust in the virtues of balance, restraint, moderation, and so on, abrogated because faith and mystery remain.

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[148] Mascall, *Corpus Christi*, 135-136.
[149] See E. L. Mascall, "Transubstantiation" in Richardson, *A Dictionary*, 344: "The Anglican Article XXVIII rejects 'transubstantiation' as 'overthrowing the nature of a sacrament', an accusation which certainly does not hold against St Thomas and only very doubtfully against Trent. However, it has been argued that the Article was written in the context of late medieval nominalist philosophy…".
[150] Mascall, *Up and Down*, 80.
[151] C. O'Neill, *Sacramental Realism: A General Theory of the Sacraments*, (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1983), 123.

The Doctrine of the Apostolic Succession

Apostolic succession is one point where the essence of what it means to be the church may manifest itself.[152] Hence, views on apostolic succession attach themselves to the variant notions of visible authority and become signs of them. So, apostolic succession, in its completeness and strength, becomes the formal and effectual sign of one form of visible authority on the one hand,[153] or a witness to some greater cause of unity and authority on the other. While acknowledging the diverse (and broken) nature of Anglicanism/catholicism, Avis describes apostolic succession as grounded in the continuity of the whole church as an expression of the permanence and continuity of Christ's mission in which the church participates. It is an effectual sign of apostolicity, but does not create it.[154] This last idea sounds typically Anglican, but is it cogent? Anglican dialectical ecclesiology makes distinctions in order to pare down doctrine to its minimum, to allow for variant views to exist together, and to throw-off tendencies towards absolutism in belief. However, it is a question of what needs to be said in order to be rational and to make a sufficient statement of what needs to be said in a doctrine. This is illustrated in the following point.

Following the Anglican love of the play of distinctions, it is possible, for example, to delineate a number of stages in thinking about the threefold order of ministry. The first stage is the ministry of the whole church where every member has authority to believe and proclaim the Gospel. This is an essential aspect. Secondly, another essential aspect, a ministry of word and sacraments, differentiated as oversight and service. Thirdly, there is a set of official ministers. And fourthly, an official threefold order in which the other stages take shape. The last is sometimes believed to be an inessential element. Likewise, analyses of the whole church allow for distinctions. Thus the catholic church can be seen to be an infallible body, but the institutional churches or particular national churches are seen as fallible representations of it, and therefore the particular teaching authorities within these

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[152]Avis, *Identity*, 99, Roman Catholic colleagues on English ARC [Anglican Roman Catholic Committee] have suggested that the fundamental difference between Anglicans and Roman Catholics… is the understanding of the Church. The Roman Catholic teaching…is that the one Church is already visibly realized in one community, in all its essentials, and in that sense is complete.

[153] *Cf* G. Kuhrt (ed.), *Doctrine Matters*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1993), 149, "[Catholicism] is open to the danger of uncritically identifying a historical institution, the Roman Catholic Church (with its bishop or Pope), with the body of Christ, and of arrogating a jurisdiction which leads to an abuse of power and a corruption of teachings in the Bible…".

[154] Avis, *Identity*, 142.

church are seen as capable of error.[155] However, a significant question concerns the particular place in a process of distinction-making where a sufficient statement of a doctrine has been deemed to have been achieved.

Alternatively, the doctrine of subsistent relations allows us to see the church under an organic conception where a notion of incorporation is able to express an essential aspect of it. As Mascall has shown, the notion of *collegiality* is the root meaning of apostolic succession. In this approach, apostolic succession and the threefold order are given a greater degree of intellectual certainty without a denial of a process of distinctions as the basis for reform. Consequently, the realism of the threefold order is the result of providence, as Hooker has said, but not the result of what may be called mere providence, understood as an accident of history in which God was somehow involved through human decisions.[156] Avis' view is that apostolic succession is grounded in the continuity of the whole church. Ontological and creational thinking gives the church as in Avis' view a greater degree of organic unity in which the continuity of Christ's mission is expressed. While it may be said with Avis that apostolic succession is an effectual sign of apostolicity but does not create it, it is better to say that it does create apostolicity in the present because it is rooted organically in Christ and the church and so is a sign of it. As a sign, it is rooted in the present ontological reality of the permanence and continuity of apostolicity within the church, as deriving from the mission of the Son. It is a sign of something present, not absent. Its significance partakes of its ontological nature, and it is an effective sign only because of the reality in which it emerges and partakes.

However, at this point, we may consider an important objection to Mascall's ecclesiology. D. L. Berry takes exception to this view of the church and of episcopacy.[157] He objects to the way Mascall ontologically grounds the church as in an incorporation into the deified human nature of Christ, and as in a reflection of the differentiated nature of the Trinity seen in the filial relation of the Son to the Father, and where the bond of unity of the Trinity and of the church is the same in the same Holy Spirit. Because of these facts about the church, especially its differentiated nature, Mascall finds good theological reasons to

[155] See O'Donovan, *Thirty Nine*, in his exposition of Articles 20-24, and 32-36, but as Avis, *Identity*, 89, has pointed out (see *supra* note 126), a eucharistic ecclesiology with its distinctions and balances sets the logic for the nature and intentionality of ecclesial polity.
[156] This tends to be the way Kaye sees it. See *supra*.
[157] Berry, "Mascall's View of the Church", cited *supra*.

accept apostolic succession as a divinely intended institution possessing an apostolate distinct from the apostolic nature of the church. But Berry writes: "This is to suggest that the chief work of the Holy Spirit with respect to the Church is to be the ground of unity within which certain differentiations of office can obtain".[158] Consequently,

> By considering the Holy Spirit only in relational terms with respect to the Father and the Son, Mascall thus undercuts the significance of the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son…. [which procession confronts] the Church with her Lord and judge, [the Holy Spirit is] not just her founder and ally.[159]

Therefore, *Filioque* is necessary for the church's continuing health and obedience.[160] It safeguards the church's obedience of faith to which the doctrine of justification is integrally to be related and understood. However, in answer to Berry, we may say that any fatal aspects of Mascall's view as Berry sees them, may be countered when the following points are taken into account. It also is a salient point to note that Berry links a particular ecclesiology with a particular account of justification.[161]

The doctrine of apostolic succession meets the five criteria of *radical dependency*, (on the present reality of created apostolicity, since the whole church shares in the contingency and created reality of the human nature of Christ, yet is real in this world), of *paradox*, (since to lead is to serve and to signify is to create in ontological thinking), of being a gift of the *freedom* and so the goodness of God, (hence its rootedness in the providence of God exemplified in creation and in the incarnation), of being *mysterious*, (as shown in the difficulty of maintaining its integrity in history and in creating an organic structure rather than a strongly jurisdictional entity), and, in that it conforms to the *incarnation* as part of the mission of Christ. In none of this are the reforming motives based on the provisionality of theology and ecclesiology abolished for the Anglican Church – a Church which claims to be an example of Reformed Catholicism. Ontological thinking contains the seeds of renewal. Berry's objection fails.

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[158] Berry, "Mascall's View", 38.

[159] Berry, "Mascall's View", 39.

[160] Mascall's doctrine of *filii in filo* – with somewhat masculinist overtones – is probably the real basis of his rejection of women's ordination, and not a moribund traditionalism brought about by his doctrine of ontology.

[161] It is arguable that Mascall escapes a view that doctrine is a kind of super-knowledge hierarchically placed above philosophy on the basis of that he was influenced by the dialectical aspects of Anglicanism. His metaphysical realism is more dynamic and relational than that of some Neo-Thomists.

6. CONCLUSION

In Chapter I we suggested that official statements of Anglican doctrine may have contained an ontological presumption concerning the existence of God. It was also suggested that alien accounts of reason are possibly incorporated into an interpretation of doctrine within Anglicanism so as to distort its ecclesiology by altering our understanding of common practice. Furthermore, the question was asked about whether a lack of an ontological assumption would affect an alteration of the distinction between what is essential for salvation and what is not essential – a fundamental aspect of distinctive Anglicanism. These issues concern the question of whether essential Anglicanism may lack integral structural resources which may so lead to an ambiguous expression of doctrine on the one hand, and to incompatible and conflicting accounts of Christian belief in a pluralistic situation on the other. Such a situation may impede a fulfilment of Anglicanism's stated aims of integrating the gospel with the universal church. Perhaps the provisionality of Anglicanism works to the detriment of catholicism as well as opening up a possibility of its attainment. Perhaps fundamental aspects of Anglican ecclesiology are vulnerable to the intellectual challenges of new philosophical situations. And so, we asked what might be the ongoing relevance to Anglican theology of Mascall's incorporation of Thomist Realism and of his Anglo-Catholicism into a fundamental expression of essential Anglicanism.

In Chapter II, we noted the possibility of epistemological presumptions inherent in the expression of fundamental and other doctrines which suggested that ontological presumptions were indeed also present. Since a set of fundamental doctrines is an integral part of essential Anglican ecclesiology, such presumptions implied systematic consequences for the nature of orthodox doctrinal expression, and for such distinctions as that concerning what is essential for salvation and the *adiaphora*. Ambiguity of doctrinal understanding may result and the question of what is to be considered orthodox becomes relevant in new historical and cultural situations. Examining three contentious Articles on the basis of a clue derived from Mascall's approach to theology, we concluded that these Articles indicated that there was a lack of an ontological and creational intentionality in the underlying thinking inherent in the Reformers' approach to doctrine.

In Chapter III, we concluded that in Mascall's account, *being* is prior to thinking and a fundamental notion of all thinking. It is the basis of an ontological intentionality. This suggested that the knowledge of God we have by way of faith is notably supported and expanded if it is set in the context of an affirmation of God's Infinite Being: the special character of divine revelation is more deeply appreciated when it is understood as coming from the infinite depths of God's creative Being. There is a significant sense in which doctrine and a realist ontology are reciprocally determining. And so, an Anglican theology may benefit from a conscious incorporation of metaphysical realism.

In Chapter IV we noted a significant objection to natural theology, such that, if it were not overthrown, natural theology would be relegated to a position of relativity within a community of faith and so become self-referentially an incoherent position – at least in the terms in which Mascall presents it. The objection was overthrown.

In Chapter V, it was seen how ontological thinking enhances our intellectual grasp of God's mystery and how some specific Anglican doctrinal understandings may be better expressed on the basis of an intentional ontological account of creation, and so benefit from a notably supported and expanded statement of God and God's salvation. Based on the special character of divine revelation they may be more deeply appreciated when it is understood as coming from the infinite depths of God's creative Being. And so, the Reformers' attempt to attain catholicity by apostolicity in order to be orthodox is also notably supported by the inclusion of an ontological approach to theology – such as is presented by Mascall. It may be seen to fulfil the Reformers' intention of a realist doctrinal account of God and of the things of salvation. And so, an ontological approach may be seen to create a broader field of plausibility for Christianity that also may justify some traditional accounts of doctrine that may be disputed today. The great tradition of Christian philosophy is currently relevant.

In each chapter the question of the relationship of Mascall's theology with Anglicanism was present. We may now conclude by saying that Mascall's theology offers Anglicanism a congruent fulfilment based on a realist metaphysical theism derived from a continuity of tradition and its inherent philosophical resources: Mascall's theology invites us to rehabilitate the intellectual riches of a fuller Western tradition. It invites Anglicans to exploit more fully what they mean by tradition within the threefold-cord and balanced

synthesis. Consequently, where doctrinal statements incorporate such an ontological intentionality, this approach may strengthen the cause of an orthodox and traditional interpretation of doctrine in the face of a discordant and pluralistic situation within the Church today. Metaphysical realism helps to stabilize the balanced synthesis with both its dialectical dynamics together with those of the so-called Anglican *method*. However, it may do this by strengthening the fundamental Anglo-Catholic claims concerning ecclesiology, the sacraments, and the ministry. It pushes Anglicanism in an Anglo-Catholic direction.

It may also strengthen Anglicanism's desire to relate the gospel to the universal church in an ecumenical approach. While such an approach may provide a firmer basis for the ecclesiological approach of essential Anglicanism, it also may blur some of the supposed clear lines of distinction suggested by the question of the things essential for salvation and the *adiaphora*. The ecclesiastical advantages of a minimalist approach to doctrine incorporating a balanced *via media* should not be so extreme as to "plump for simplicity at the expense of adequacy".[162] In these ways, the so-called distinctive Anglican ecclesiological method is notably strengthened and supported when the fundamental doctrines necessary to create the *distinction* are held in place and assured of a realistic reference.

In addition, Mascall's inter-weaving of the strands of the so-called balanced synthesis of scripture, tradition and reason may become a more significant approach than the apparent loosening of them in other Anglican approaches, and thus may include a more extensive account of some doctrines. It enhances Anglicanism by helping to safeguard the truth of faith while Anglicanism reaches out into new expressions of doctrine based upon its dialectical approach. And so, we may say that a search for catholicity through apostolicity according to Anglican ideals may be more successful on the condition that it incorporates the fructifying effect of the faith on reason so that in the service of catholicism a Christian philosophy is preserved.

The Anglican way developed within a structured political and social environment where epistemological and ontological assumptions were made. The Reformation disrupted a

[162] Mascall, *Christ*, 72.

vital connection with the great tradition of Christian thinking that had been the heritage of the Western church. Anglican ideals were possible in that environment, but were placed in jeopardy in new cultural and social settings. The retrieval of the tradition of metaphysical realism will help support the attainment of Anglican ideals. However, with Mascall we may note that, given an acceptance of essential Anglicanism, we may still demur that its achievement was fully consistent with its own ideal and successful: "I cannot see that [I am] bound to hold that either the Anglican liturgy or the Anglican divines were at all points successful…".[163]

Finally, we may note that Mascall espouses a number of theological principles in his works. In summarizing them, we may see clearly what he offers. These include the following seven principles, some of which he names:-

- the *Intellectual Principle* – which encompasses the fundamental priority of being in reality and thought, and which upholds the *Principle of Non-Contradiction*;
- the *Principle of Relationship* – based on the *Principle of Subsistent Relations*;
- the Principle that *Grace perfects nature without destroying it* – we might name this the *Principle of Creative Transfiguration*;
- the *Principle of the Whole Person* – where reason acts symbiotically with all our faculties;
- the Principle based on Thornton's idea that revelation masters its environment – this might have been named the *Principle of Accommodation*;
- the Principle based on the idea that the theologian is an instrument of Christ acting in his Church through the liturgy – this may well be called the *Principle of the Whole Ecclesial Person*; and,
- the fundamental importance of creation for doctrine – we may call this the *Principle of Creation*.

All of these reflect ontological thinking. His theology, therefore, may be deemed to offer Anglicanism a richer set of resources than it has sometimes been thought to include. The metaphysical approach to theology does not establish what the gospel is for us, but acts as a support against its overthrow as it brings out the ontological meaning of its revealed relation.

"Eric Lionel Mascall – magistro catholicæ veritatis" – teacher of catholic truth.[164]

[163] Mascall, *Corpus*, x.
[164] Nichols, *The Panther*: the dedication of the book.

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