THE PROOF FROM ORDER—PART II

We repeat the exposition in our last lesson to reinforce the understanding that every agent manifests the influence of intellect in its actions, whether the agent be knowing or unknowing, whether the agent be active or passive.

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              [ either ACTIVE, as in an orderer              ]
              [                                              ]
              [                       [ either by         ]
              [           [ either    [ DISCOVERY         ]
Order         [           [ as        [              ] and then   ]
towards       [           [ KNOWN     [              ] INTRINSIC   ]
end is        [           [ and then  [ or by        ]            ]
              [ or        [           [ INSTRUCTION  ]            ]
              [ PASSIVE,  [                                       ]
              [ as in the [                              ] INTELLECT
              [ ordered,  [                              ] is implied
              [ and then  [           [ either, nonetheless, ]    ]
                          [ or as     [ with knowledge of    ]    ]
                          [ NOT       [ end MATERIALLY       ]    ]
                          [ KNOWN     [              ] and then    ]
                          [ and then  [              ] EXTRINSIC   ]
                                      [                        ]
                                      [ or without any         ]
                                      [ knowledge of end       ]
                                      [ whatsoever             ]
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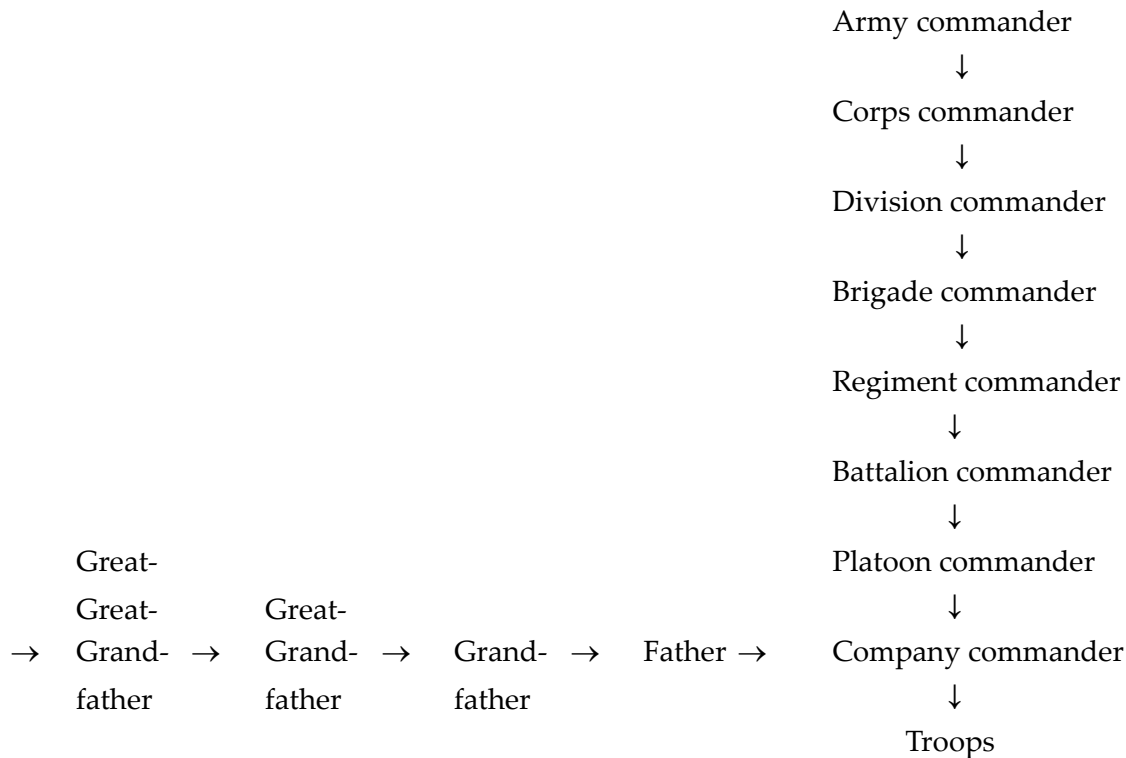
From these considerations it is plain—

(1) that every order of finality supposes an ordering intellect, that is, an intelligent orderer ; and,

(2) that even intelligent beings, intellects which understand in virtue of power received—i.e., intellects which are not their own act of understand—are ordered by a higher ordering intellect. For such intellects are ordered towards their intelligible object just as sight is ordered towards colour. The power of intellect is given them just as the powers of sight and of hearing are given to animals, whether brute or rational animals (men).

But there is more. Not only are these dependent upon a higher intelligent being for their *power* of intellect, they are dependent also as regards its *exercise* which is the act of understanding, for if they ordered themselves and were not ordered by another, they would understand before they were ordered or adapted to understand, which is self-contradictory.

As we consider this dependence more closely, it begins to appear how every order of finality supposes not just an ordering intellect, but *an ultimate intellect*, an intelligent orderer which is not dependent as regards understand but is *its own act of understand* ; that is, an intellect which is not in any way passive as regards understanding but is, its very self, understand or intelligence.

It is clear that there can be subordination of intellect to intellect. Let us consider the following analogy taken from battle order in war in which there are two series of subordinated orderers, one *per accidens* —in which there can be no certitude that there should be a first—and the other *per se*, in which all those that are subsidiary are reduced to a first, or prime, orderer.

<div align="right">

Army commander

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Corps commander

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Division commander

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Brigade commander

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Regiment commander

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Battalion commander

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Platoon commander

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→ Great-Great-Grand-father → Great-Great-Grand-father → Grand-father → Father → Company commander

↓

Troops

General Montgomery in Africa in World War II

In the one series influence is conveyed down the chain such that the troops carry out the command initiated by the first orderer. The ordinative act of each member of the series reflects that of his immediate superior, back to the first. Each link is essential (*per se*) to the execution of the order, to the *be* (the very existence) of the order.

In the other series there is no necessary subordination. It is quite irrelevant (i.e., *per accidens*) to the Company commander's ordering of his troops that he be the son of his father, or that he is descended from a line of ancestors. "A man generates," as St Thomas says, "forasmuch as he is a man, not

forasmuch as he is the son of another man." (*Summa Theologiae* I, q. 46, a. 2, ad 7) Each cause in *that* series is a cause not as regards *be*, but only as regards *become*.

Now, as we have related a number of times in these lessons, a series of causes subordinated *per se* cannot regress to infinity, for otherwise *there would be no influence conveyed*, only a series of conveyors. There has to be a first itself uncaused, a PRIME CAUSE, in the present case a prime orderer, an intellect not dependent on another for its *be* or its *do* but which is itself intelligence or understanding. There has to be one who is his very act of understanding. So Aristotle said of the first mover that he "is understand, the understand of an understand". (*Metaphysics* XII, c. 9, 1074b, 30 ; & note St Thomas's comments *In XII Meta*. L. 11)

But an intelligent orderer not ordered to his understand (but Who is His own understand) fulfils the concept of God. Finality, as it is finality, requires an orderer as its proper cause, for finality is not the reason of itself. And since finality is a most universal effect—found throughout the universe— therefore all finalities must be reduced to a most universal cause, a prime orderer itself unordered (for if it were itself passively ordered, its own order would need to be reduced to a prior orderer).

Accordingly, this orderer, or governor, is both the one universal orderer and his own understand and this fulfils the definition of God.

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Here is the proof simply exposed.

Fact	The action of things in this world is ordered towards an end.
Principle	But the action of a thing cannot be ordered towards an end without there being an ordering intellect.
Subsidiary Principle	And if this ordering intellect is not its own understand, it is ordered to understand —not merely to be or to become—by a higher ordering intellect (which must first be that it may order, for *do* follows *be*).
Conclusion (& 2nd fact)	And if this intellect is not its own understand, it also must be ordered to understand by a yet higher ordering intellect (which must be in order to order).
Third principle	But this regress cannot extend to infinity, because if there is no ordering intellect which is and which supplies the order of finality in the members of the series then no such order will be found in the members, nor will the action of anything be ordered towards an end.
Second conclusion (& 3rd fact)	Therefore there must exist an orderer which causes the order of finality found in all the members of the series, which is a *prime orderer itself not passively ordered*.

Fourth principle   But such prime orderer is the universal orderer for otherwise there would be a universal effect (the immense and intricate order found in the world and in the universe) without a universal cause, which is impossible.

Conclusion   Therefore there must be a prime universal orderer.   But such is God. Therefore, there is a God.

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