



Knowledge and the Transcendent: An Inquiry into the Mind's Relationship to God

Paul A. MacDonald

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There has been a distinct trend in modern thought to be deeply suspicious and critical of the human mind's ability to gain genuine access to any reality that transcends the world or the mind. As such, much modern reflection on the mind's relationship to a transcendent God has either banished God from the realm of the cognitively accessible or found ways to evacuate God of his transcendence, and reduce God to a concept or idea in the mind. In this book, Paul Macdonald directly challenges negative modern understandings of the mind's relationship to God.

Knowledge and the Transcendent advances the provocative claim that the human mind is not "bounded" on the outside but actually remains "open" to the world and to God. As such, the mind is able to know the world and God with varying degrees of objectivity. The author turns to the philosophical theology of Thomas Aquinas in order to explicate as well as defend important claims that Aquinas makes about human cognition as well as our knowledge of God.

In this life, while we cannot know or 'see' God directly, we nevertheless can enjoy some knowledge of God by way of reason and faith, both of which are cognitive capacities for forming and holding true beliefs about God. Consequently, Macdonald argues that Aquinas, as properly interpreted, provides powerful philosophical and theological resources for rehabilitating the mind's relationship to God and thus also safeguarding our knowledge of transcendent being and truth.

"A lucid, systematic, brilliant defense of the coherence and plausibility of realist philosophical theology and a decisive critique of anti-realism and skepticism. This is an ideal text insofar as it engages contemporary debate while drawing on the history of philosophy, especially the work of Aquinas, to shed light on the philosophy of God, epistemology, and theories of human nature. This should be read by all those with interests in philosophy of religion or the disciplines of theology and religious studies today."--Charles A. Taliaferro, St. Olaf College

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Paul A. Macdonald Jr. is assistant professor of religion at Bucknell University.

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK:

"This clearly written, carefully argued work makes a real contribution to the fields of epistemology and philosophy of mind. . . . Highly recommended." -- J. Jaeger, *Choice*

"The genius of *Knowledge and the Transcendent* lies in its question. In a broad sense, the question is how God can transcend the human and still be known. . . . The book is very good and I recommend it heartily. The range of scholarship and conversation is impressive, the writing and argumentation solid, and, most importantly, the therapy unique, necessary, and true." -- R. J. Snell, *Christian Scholar's Review*

"Macdonald's book demands the attention of philosophers and theologians alike. . . . *Knowledge and the Transcendent* will be integral to the ongoing debate about the nature of analytical Thomism compared to traditional Thomism." --Nathan R. Strunk, *Thomist*

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