

ANSELM OF CANTERBURY

TRUTH, FREEDOM, AND EVIL THREE PHILOSOPHICAL DIALOGUES

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY

JASPER HOPKINS & HERBERT RICHARDSON



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Truth, Freedom, and Evil:
Three Philosophical Dialogues

By
Anselm of Canterbury

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Sed non tantum debemus inhaerere improprietati
verborum veritatem tegenti, quantum inhiare
proprietati veritatis sub multimodo genere
locutionum latenti.

—*De Casu Diaboli*

Editors' Foreword

The bibliography of writings on Anselm of Canterbury shows that scholarly interest has focused primarily on problems which are discussed in a small number of his treatises—namely, those which are presently available in translation. Whether this interest has produced the translations or the translations the interest, or both, it is certainly true that there is some correlation between these two factors which has led to a neglect of the fullness of Anselm's thought and to an unbalanced estimate of his achievement.

The present volume originated in the recognition that there are not sufficient translations available to provide students in the history of philosophy and theology with an adequate knowledge of the methods and conclusions of medieval thought. The translation of Anselm's works is doubly justified as a means to fill this lacuna. For not only is he fully the equal of Augustine and Thomas in his speculative power, but he also employs a consciously pedagogical style which is adapted to the needs of the beginning student. Hence these treatises will continue to be in our day what Anselm intended them to be in his own: useful tools for theological and philosophical education.

Academic responsibilities provided not only the impetus to undertake this project, but also the milieu within which much of the work was first used. The actual translating was done in preparation for teaching a Harvard doctoral seminar in the Explication of Latin Theological Texts, and the completed translations were first assigned in courses in the history of philosophy at Case Institute of Technology and Western Reserve University.

This work has been a joint effort throughout, and it is no

longer possible to isolate the particular contributions of the editors in either the translation or the introduction. For this reason the work is both richer and more balanced than either person alone could have produced. Of course, particular formulations and emphases have frequently been a matter of compromise; but we have agreed that the present form is substantially correct and defensible. Had we always been of the same mind, there would have been little value in collaborating.

The final draft of these translations was read by Father Maurice Savard, O.M.I., of the Oblate Seminary in Natick, Massachusetts. We have followed many of his suggestions and are deeply appreciative of his charity and wisdom.

We are grateful to our colleagues, students, and secretaries for their willing help. Miss Norah Pollard typed several revisions of this manuscript. Case Institute of Technology made a generous provision of time and funds so that our collaboration would be possible. We wish to thank especially Dr. Maria Grossmann, of the Harvard Divinity School Library, who gave us wise counsel and encouragement, and who arranged for a previous limited publication of these translations under the auspices of the Harvard Divinity School Library. Finally, it would not be fitting to omit acknowledging the debt which we—and all students of the work of St. Anselm—have to Father F. S. Schmitt, whose articles and critical texts have provided a firm rock on which to build. We are also indebted to Thomas Nelson and Sons for permission to use the Schmitt texts as the basis of our own work.

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Cambridge, Massachusetts
January, 1966

Abbreviations

DV	<i>De Veritate</i>
DL	<i>De Libertate Arbitrii</i>
DCD	<i>De Casu Diaboli</i>
CDH	<i>Cur Deus Homo</i>
DI	<i>De Interpretatione</i> (Aristotle)
PL	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> (ed. J. P. Migne)
S	F. S. Schmitt edition of the Anselm texts: <i>Opera Anselmi</i> (Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1946-61). E.g., S-237.7 (I) indicates p. 237, line 7, vol. I of the Schmitt text.

Editors' Introduction

I. Father of Scholasticism.

Anselm of Canterbury is commonly called "the Father of Scholasticism." Flourishing in the eleventh century, he refurbished the dialectic of the monastic schools by turning his intellectual powers to the analysis of the philosophical issues implicit in, and inextricably bound up with, the theology of the medieval church. Thus philosophy and theology are inseparable in his writings: he is both dialectician and exegete. In the dialogues which follow, he is found expounding a definition of truth, arguing for a special view concerning free choice, and proposing a new way to handle the ancient puzzle about "not-being." The keenness of Anselm's thinking lies in his ability to develop an argument and follow it doggedly to its conclusion. The assumptions of his argument are sometimes theological and determined by Scripture; but this never interferes with his quest for consistency nor with the rigor of his argument. He is led into examining the notions of possibility and necessity, ability and inability, signification and reference. In so doing he appeals, like Aristotle, to patterns of commonly accepted linguistic behavior: "*frequenti usu dicimus*—in ordinary usage we say . . ." By this appeal Anselm rises above all criticism which attempts to reduce his method to that of drawing conclusions from premises accepted as true on the basis of ecclesiastical or biblical authority alone. Anselm does indeed appeal to these authorities; but his manner of argument is such as to seek for rational rather than confessional bases. In *De Veritate*, *De Libertate Arbitrii*, and *De Casu Diaboli* (abbreviated hereafter as DV, DL, DCD), he combines appeals to three sources: (1) ordinary use of language

expressions, (2) *a priori* rationalistic judgments, and (3) experience in general. His scholasticism consists precisely in his intent to understand and defend the dogmas of faith in terms of the dialectics fostered by these three sources. Each of the dialogues here presented begins with a biblical or theological problem; but its development carries one into what, today at least, would be called distinctly philosophical ramifications.

II. *Life and Philosophical Heritage.*

Anselm was born in 1033 in Aosta, on the border of Burgundy and Lombardy. By the age of fifteen, he had resolved to devote his life in some way to religious pursuits. A diligent student, in 1059 he came under the influence of Lanfranc at Le Bec in Normandy. The Benedictine monastery was a center for learning, and Anselm, though not a monk, had journeyed there to study. In 1060 he entered the order and gave himself to worship and reading. He led so disciplined a life that three years later, when Lanfranc was selected to take charge at Caen, Anselm succeeded him as prior of Bec. Around 1070 he began to compose a series of discourses and meditations. His first major work, *Mono-logion De Ratione Fide*, appears to have been written around 1076. It was followed in a year or two by the tightly reasoned *Proslogion*. *De Grammatico*, *De Veritate*, *De Libertate*, and *De Casu Diaboli* were probably written next, though the order of their composition is uncertain. *De Veritate* refers to the *Mono-logion* as already available. The preface asks that *De Libertate* and *De Casu* be ordered subsequently to *De Veritate* but states nothing about their actual order of completion. Schmitt dates *De Grammatico*, *De Veritate*, *De Libertate* around 1080-85 and *De Casu* between 1085-90. The *Cur Deus Homo* is a product of the late nineties.

When Anselm became abbot of Bec in 1078, his major works still lay ahead of him. His reputation grew with his writings, so that his fame reached England, having been carried partly by Lanfranc, who was now Archbishop of Canterbury. When Lanfranc died in 1089, William Rufus, son of William the Conqueror, refused to fill the vacancy. At the insistence of English noblemen who feared the devitalization of the church under the rule of

Rufus, Anselm sailed to England in 1092 to give encouragement to the spiritually flagging. The next year Rufus fell sick and in a moment of vacillation consented to Anselm's appointment as archbishop. Much against Anselm's own desires, he was consecrated archbishop at the behest of nobles and clergy alike. The history of Anselm's primacy in England is marked by a struggle between ecclesiastical and secular authority. However, in spite of the practical difficulties, Anselm continued to pursue a wide range of intellectual endeavors, which he continued until his death in 1109.

Anselm's thinking takes its start from the writings of Augustine. In the preface to the *Monologion* he observes that he has espoused nothing contrary to the teachings of Augustine. But his conclusions as a whole, though they owe much to his fourth-century predecessor, do not simply mirror earlier approaches. Even where Anselm's very examples and conclusions are drawn from Augustine, he offers different considerations in behalf of these proposals. For example, his rebuttal of the alleged conflict between divine foreknowledge and human free choice follows Augustine in asserting that for a human action to be *certain* is not the same thing as for it to be *necessitated*. Nonetheless, his definition of "freedom" and his analysis of "ability" diverge from the Augustinian pattern. That Anselm should have been so influenced by Augustine is not strange, for Augustine had addressed himself to virtually every major dogmatic problem within the mind of the Church. Peter Lombard's *Books of Sentences*, completed shortly after 1150, were to draw ninety percent of their patristic quotations from Augustine.

Boethius' commentaries on Aristotle's *De Interpretatione* and *Categories* furnish another source for Anselm. He thus utilizes the Boethian-Aristotelian distinction between sentence and proposition, noun and verb, substance and accident. He is influenced by, but qualifies, the Aristotelian table of modalities. His discussions move quickly to the point. His style bears more relation to the conciseness of Aristotle than to the lavishness of Augustine.

III. *Anselm's Doctrine of Truth.*

In DV Anselm's formal concern is definitional: he seeks a consistent characterization of the nature of truth. He proposes to

elicit such a definition from an inquiry into the various contexts in which we say there is truth—in propositions, thoughts, the will, actions, the senses, beings—and then to determine whether truth in these various contexts is really one Truth. What suggests the pursuit is the credal statement “God is Truth.” For such an utterance is without precise meaning until we are able to ascertain the correct definition of “truth.”

A. TRUTH IN PROPOSITIONS.

Anselm chooses to begin with the more familiar contexts and move to the less familiar. In accordance with this principle he begins by asking what truth in a proposition is. He uses “*oratio*,” “*enuntiatio*,” and “*propositio*” interchangeably (cf. S-177 f. with 180.11). A sentence (*oratio*) is any meaningful combination of words.¹ A proposition (*enuntiatio*, *propositio*) is a sentence which either affirms or denies something. Propositions are therefore true or false. All propositions are sentences, but not all sentences are propositions. A prayer, for instance, being neither true nor false, qualifies as a sentence but not as a proposition.² Anselm switches back and forth between (mainly) “*oratio*” and “*enuntiatio*” as a stylistic device to avoid monotony. It would therefore be misleading to translate “*oratio*” consistently as “sentence,” for it would give the impression that in the passage under discussion Anselm meant to distinguish between “sentence” and “proposition,” whereas all he is actually doing is using “*oratio*” to refer to a member of the sub-class of sentences, viz., an *enuntiatio*, or *propositio*.

Following Boethius' commentary on *De Interpretatione*, Anselm asserts that a proposition is true when it affirms what is the

¹ Cf. Aristotle, DI, 16^b27ff.

² Cf. Boethius, PL, 64, 313 C-D: “*Enuntiatiua vero non omnis, sed illa in qua verum vel falsum est, non autem omnibus inest, ut deprecatio, oratio quidem est, sed neque vera, neque falsa.*” (= Aristotle, DI, 17^a 1-4). “*Orationis . . . multae sunt species: est enim oratio prima optativa, ut. Utinam tibi istam mentem dii immortales dent! Secunda, vocativa, ut Heus tu. Tertia, imperativa, ut Cape, da hoc, Portio. Quarta, deprecativa, ut, Jupiter omnipotens: precibus si flecteris ullis. Quinta, enuntiatiua, ut dies est, dies non est. Sed in hac sola specie orationis veritas et falsitas inest, in illis vero ceteris minime.*”

case and denies what is not the case.³ But in what, he asks, does the truth in a proposition consist? The state of affairs affirmed or denied by a proposition is not the truth of the proposition, but the cause of the proposition's being true. For example, when a proposition asserts truly "It is raining," rain is only the "cause" of the proposition's truth. Since we do not predicate truth of rain, the truth of a proposition cannot be something wholly external to the proposition.

Anselm now considers whether the truth of a proposition might be something internal to it, existing in complete separation from the state of affairs which the proposition signifies. There is, he notes, just such an intrinsic truth. The proposition "It is raining" may in one respect be called true, or correct, whether there is any rain or not. For this proposition is always a "true," or significative, combination of words. This "truth of meaning" which is always present in a proposition, Anselm calls "the natural truth of signification." By "natural" he means something so constitutive of a thing that it cannot be lost without the thing which has this nature also ceasing to exist. Hence, a combination of words which has no natural truth of signification (i.e., has no meaning) is not really a proposition, since it lacks what is constitutive of every proposition.

Although Anselm has now found a truth which is internal to a proposition, he goes on to point out that we do not usually have this kind of truth in mind when we ask whether a given statement is true. For by such a question we usually do not mean to be asking whether a given combination of words is meaningful, but whether a given meaningful combination of words affirms what is actually the case. If it does, then it has a "truth of reference." And with respect to this kind of truth propositions are generally called true or false. Truth of reference belongs to a proposition accidentally rather than naturally. By "accident" Anselm means a characteristic which may or may not belong to a given thing; but should it be lacking, the thing would still be that thing. Truth of reference, then, belongs to a proposition accidentally, for a combination of words would still make an assertion even if it did not refer correctly. If C is any combination

³ Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1011^b26.

of words and if T_1 stands for "truth of meaning," T_2 for "truth of reference," the following possibilities obtain:

- (1) C has T_1 but not T_2 .
- (2) C has T_1 and T_2 .
- (3) C has neither T_1 nor T_2 .

But the fourth possibility is not assertible:

- (4) C does not have T_1 but has T_2 .

Thus

- (5) Whatever combination of words has a truth of reference must also have a truth of meaning, and whatever combination of words does not have a truth of meaning cannot have a truth of reference.
- (6) Every proposition which has a truth of reference is "doubly true."⁴ (It has two truths.)
- (7) There can be no proposition which is wholly false, or completely lacking in truth.

At this point in his search for a definition of truth, Anselm has arrived at the following position. (1) When we say "A proposition is true," we mean to predicate truth of the proposition itself. (2) The state of affairs affirmed by a proposition and external to it cannot be the truth of the proposition, though it may be called the "cause" of the proposition's being true. (3) Although the meaningfulness of a proposition is a truth internal to the proposition, we usually do not mean this truth when we say simply "The

⁴ Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I.16.8. Reply to Objection 3: "Sic igitur haec propositio: Socrates sedet, eo sedente vera est et veritate rei, inquantum est quaedam vox significativa; et veritate significationis, inquantum significat opinionem veram. Socrate vero surgente, remanet prima veritas, sed mutatur secunda."

The phrase "truth of reference" is the editors'. Anselm speaks only of a second "truth of signification." Since Frege, propositions (as opposed to words and phrases) have usually been thought to refer to their truth values, if they refer at all. By using the phrase "truth of reference" the editors do not mean to imply that Anselm believes that propositions refer to states of affairs. Rather, the phrase indicates the truth (of signification) which a proposition is said to have when it affirms or denies what is the case.

statement is true." (4) Hence, the truth of a proposition cannot be either wholly external or wholly internal to the proposition, but must be something in between the two, viz., a certain correspondence between the proposition and the state of affairs external to it. This notion is involved in Anselm's very definition of a true proposition (which he takes from Boethius and Aristotle): "*vera propositio significat esse quod est.*" (DV, Ch. 2)

Anselm wishes to account for the possibility of this correspondence by trying to show that the aim of a proposition is to state what is the case. He asks, "For what purpose is an affirmation uttered?" And the student replies: "In order to signify the existence of what exists." (DV, Ch. 2) Anselm is thinking of propositions primarily as verbal utterances. When someone uses a proposition correctly so that it tells just how things are, then this proposition is true by virtue of correspondence. (*Enuntiat quemadmodum res est.*) (DV, Ch. 2) The rule determining the right use of a proposition is inferrable from the proposition's nature. Anselm thinks of propositions as having natures, just as physical objects have natures.

For just as when fire heats, it does the truth because it has received the power to heat from God, from whom it has its existence, so also the proposition "It is day" does the truth when it signifies that it is day, whether it is day or not, since it is its nature to do this. (DV, Ch. 5)

Because a proposition has a nature it also has a correct usage, which is the expression of its nature. That is, Anselm's conception of proper *use* is governed by his conception of a nature. Accordingly, "Socrates sits" is correctly used only if it is uttered on those occasions when Socrates is in fact sitting, for the *purpose* of such a sentence is to express precisely this state of affairs.

Although Anselm has a theory about propositions' having natures, he also appreciates the more ordinary ways in which men use language. Rather than denouncing all "incorrect usages" and asserting that no "improper statement" can ever tell the truth, he recognizes that most men speak "improperly" part of the time and that in so doing they are able to communicate with each other

about the world. "Improper utterances" are legitimate as long as they are translatable into proper utterances which are their equivalent. Consider the expression "Hector is able to be overcome by Achilles." (DV, Ch. 8) Anselm notes that everyone understands this expression. The statement is a "manner of speaking," and the person uttering it does not mean to affirm that Hector has some ability ("ability to be overcome") which Achilles does not have. He really means that Achilles has an ability which Hector lacks. "There is no ability in Hector, who is conquered, but only in Achilles, who conquers him. And there is no inability in Achilles, who cannot be overpowered, but only in Hector, who cannot overpower him." Because we understand "ability to be overcome" as equivalent to "inability to overcome," we are not confused by the impropriety of speaking. Anselm's appreciation of the richness of linguistic possibilities can be seen in his frequent discussion and analysis of improper statements—there being no tendency on his part either to denounce or to denigrate them. But he insists that all such statements be in principle translatable into proper statements. He is not concerned to undertake such translations except when genuine misunderstandings arise. And he is inclined to believe that ordinary ways of speaking have a *prima facie* justification.

Anselm is now in position to specify what the truth in a proposition is. Since, as he believes, there is truth in a proposition when it "does what it ought," or when it fulfills the purpose for which it was made, truth must be the right order, or correspondence, between the nature of the proposition and the state of affairs which it signifies. A proposition has a truth of reference when someone rightly uses its natural truth of meaning to signify an external state of affairs. When this happens, the proposition participates in a Rightness which exists independently of both the natural truth and the external state of affairs. This independently existing Rightness puts a demand upon the natural truth of a proposition to be used in a certain way at a certain time and place, even when it is not so used (as, for example, when it is used falsely). When a proposition has a truth of reference, it participates in the general Rightness of all things. (*Nihil est verum nisi participando veritatem. . .*) Properly speaking, then, truth is not in a proposition, but a proposition is in Truth. This

external order of Rightness in which things participate is equated by Anselm with God.

B. OTHER LOCI OF TRUTH.

Anselm's analysis of the truth of propositions has led him to conclude that truth is a form of rightness. When propositions are correct they participate in God, Who is Supreme Rightness. In an attempt to show that every form of truth is a form of rightness, Anselm investigates right thoughts, upright willing, righteous action, correct perception, the straightness of an object, and the rightness of all natures. The continuity of his argument depends upon the presence in Latin of a single term, "*rectitudo*," which he applies to this range of objects. English has no single word applicable to these different objects; and thus the one Latin word is translated by a number of English expressions.

Anselm acknowledges that upright willing is but a single instance of the larger category of "rightness of actions," and gives an argument to justify calling actions either true or false. As his starting point he takes the words of Scripture that "He who does evil hates the light" and "He who does the truth comes to the light." (John 3:20-21) He then argues: (1) In these verses doing the truth is declared to have doing evil as its opposite. (2) But doing good also has doing evil as its opposite. (3) Hence doing the truth and doing good are the same thing, for both have the same opposite term. (4) But to do good is to do what is right. (5) It follows both that doing the truth is the same as doing right and that truth in actions is rightness.

Anselm next turns to a discussion of the truth of the senses. Ancient views regarding the truth of sense perception generally alternate between two theses: (1) The senses often deceive us and conflict with what reason legislates; whenever this happens we should choose to adhere to the dictates of reason rather than to the impressions of sense (Parmenides, Zeno). (2) There is no error in the senses as such; error arises from reason's faulty judgment about the information furnished by the senses (Epicurus, Lucretius). Anselm follows the second tradition in maintaining that the senses as such report what they find and in so doing function as they ought. Perceptual error arises as a result

of wrong inferences from the data of the senses. A stick in water looks broken; but we should not infer from this that it is broken.

So when sight and the other faculties of sense seem to report to us many things as being other than they really are, the fault is not with the senses, which report in accordance with their natural powers, but must be attributed to the soul's faculty of judgment, which does not clearly discern what the faculties of sense can and should do. (DV, Ch. 6)

This faculty of judgment (*iudicium*) is identified with the *sensus interior*. This identification comes through Augustine, who has more to say on this topic than Anselm. Augustine thinks of the inner sense as perceiving and judging the five outer senses. Man differs from non-rational animals by possessing reason, and not by possessing an inner sense, which belongs to all animal natures.⁵ In all animals the inner sense is the source of awareness that one either is or is not perceiving something at the moment. It is also the faculty which coordinates the information of the outer senses, so that what we see and what we hear, for instance, are referred to the same object (cf. Aristotle's account of *sensus communis*). Reason is a still higher faculty which uses the data of inner sense to arrive at knowledge. It is this Augustinian theory which Anselm has in mind when he distinguishes *sensus exterior* from *sensus interior*. By holding to this theory of the truth of the senses, Anselm is able to affirm the goodness of the creature, for the ground of error in perception rests with judgment. Thus man, not God, is responsible for errors in perceptual judgment. God has created a sensible nature which functions as it ought and does not deceive us in any way.

The Platonic background of Anselm's theory of vision may also be noted in DL. Here Anselm divides the factors necessary for vision into three: "So don't you understand that the ability to see any given body is one power in the seeing, a second power in the thing to be seen, and a third power in something in between, which is neither in the seeing nor in the thing to be seen?" (Ch. 3) This tripartite division was already a part of the

⁵ *De Libero Arbitrio*, Book 2, Chs. 4-5.

Platonistic-Augustinian tradition.⁶ Plato had written in the *Republic*: "If sight is in the eyes and the man who has sight tries to use it, and if color is in objects, still unless there is a third thing especially suited by nature to aiding vision, you know that sight will not see anything and that colored objects will be invisible."⁷ This third thing Plato identifies as light. On the Platonic theory in the *Sophist* (266c) and *Timaeus* (46a) seeing is made possible because of a ray of light streaming from the eye and meeting with a flow of light coming from some other object.⁸ Anselm seems to be subscribing to this view when he speaks of "the ray which passes through the eyes by means of which we sense light and the objects in the light." (DL, Ch. 7)

Thus far Anselm has shown that truth is in propositions, thoughts, the will, actions, and the senses. He now asserts that there is truth in the very nature, or essence (*essentia*), of things.⁹ Since everything which exists accords with its plan or model in the Divine Mind, it is both what, and as, it should be. When Anselm states that everything exists *in summa veritate*, he has in mind this correspondence between objects in the world and exemplars in the mind of God.¹⁰ Nothing can exist falsely, since that would be to exist apart from God's jurisdiction, which is impossible. In a sense, then, everything which exists, exists rightly (*recte*). And truth in things turns out to be another form of *rectitudo*. But from a different point of view, if there is evil in the world, then how can each object and event

⁶ Cf. Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio*, Bk. 2, Ch. 3: "credo te non negare aliud colorem esse, et aliud colorem videre, et item aliud etiam, cum color non subest, habere sensum quo videri posset, si subesset?" PL, 32, p. 1245.

⁷ *Republic*, 507 d, e.

⁸ Portions of the *Timaeus* were known from Cicero and Chalcidius.

⁹ Cf. *Monologion*, Ch. 4, where Anselm contextually identifies *essentia* with *natura*: "Idem namque naturam hic intelligo quod essentiam." (S-17.17(I)) In DV, Ch. 10, he substitutes "*rerum existentia*" for "*rerum essentia*." (S-190.10 (I)) "*Essentia*" is translated in the text of DV, Ch. 10, as "essence" or "being." In DCD it refers to one or more particular beings ("Omnis essentia est a summa essentia."). S-234f.(I).

¹⁰ Cf. *Monologion*, Ch. 9: "Nullo namque pacto fieri potest aliquid rationabiliter ab aliquo, nisi in facientis ratione praecedat aliquod rei faciendae quasi exemplum, sive aptius dicitur forma, vel similitudo, aut regula." S-24. 12-14(I).

be what, and as, it ought to be? Anselm's counter is to observe that "ought" is often used ambiguously. There can be a sense in which the same action both ought and ought not be done. Jesus ought to have been put to death because God willed man's salvation thereby; yet insofar as his death was the outcome of evil wills, he ought not to have been killed.

With a pointed comparison between truth of action and truth of signification, Anselm consolidates his overall argument (Ch. 9): (1) There is a sense in which, as urged above, no one can do that which he ought not; for the very fact of his having done something indicates that it ought to have occurred, inasmuch as God permitted it to occur. (2) In another respect, some actions are morally wrong and hence should not have been done. Recalling, then, that any action which is morally right is a good action and that every good action "does the truth," Anselm is able to maintain that when someone does a morally right action, he is thereby "telling the truth." When he does a morally wrong action, he is thereby "telling a lie." What Anselm now wants to assert is a parallel between truth in an action and truth in a proposition: (1) Ordinarily we call a proposition true when it correctly states what is the case; this truth belongs to the proposition accidentally, for it can be lost if the state of affairs referred to changes or disappears. By comparison we ordinarily say that an action ought to be done—or, by Anselmian reasoning, that it is true—when it is morally upright. Thus, as a proposition is true by virtue of coinciding with what is the case, an action is true by virtue coinciding with what ought (morally) to be the case. (2) But a proposition which has been meaningfully constructed has a natural truth—one which it never loses, irrespective of whether the conditions referred to actually prevail at the time the proposition is uttered. Similarly, an action, having been allowed to happen, "signifies" as it ought (and has an inherent truth), irrespective of whether it is done at the right place, at the right time, to the right person—in short, irrespective of its moral probity. A comparison analogous to that between propositions and actions also holds between propositions and thoughts: (1) A thought is true if it is what a person ought (morally) to be thinking; and not every thought has this kind of truth. (2) A thought also, by the very fact of its having taken place, signifies that it ought (per-

missively) to have taken place; and every thought has this kind of truth.

The same argument holds for acts of willing and also for the occurrence of events (so that there is truth in the essence of all things). By this line of reasoning Anselm is able to show that not only propositions but also thoughts, volitions, actions, and occurrences are significative. Moreover, they signify in a double way, just as propositions do. Having in this fashion consolidated his argument and shown that what is common to all the things we call true is their rightness, Anselm is now ready to lay down a definition of truth: truth is "rightness perceptible only to the mind." Rightness itself is related to the notion of "oughtness": a thing is right when it is as it ought to be. But being or doing what one ought—and doing it for the reason one ought—is also the definition of "justice." Therefore justice is apparently the same thing as rightness, and rightness the same thing as truth. Yet, continues Anselm, the notion of justice seems to be narrower than the notion of rightness. Stones do what is right and what they ought when they fall toward the earth; but we would scarcely call their doing so *just*. So justice is found only in rational creatures, who can know what they ought to will. And willing rightly involves both willing the right object and willing it for the right reason. After a lengthy series of distinctions Anselm concludes that justice is rightness, or uprightness, of will kept for its own sake. He has thus defined both truth and justice in terms of rightness. Justice is a sub-class of the class of truths: although it is rightness perceptible to the mind alone, it is, more narrowly, rightness of *will*—and still more specifically, rightness of will maintained for its own sake.

C. TRUTH AS ONE ETERNAL BEING.

The dialogue concludes with a statement and defense of the view that the truth in all things is one eternal being, namely God. Anselm has purported to show that truth, in every case, is a kind of rightness. But rightness is a concept which is more inclusive than the concept "truth," for there is a perceptible rightness in material objects. The straightness of a stick is a rightness visible to the senses; but in any usual sense of the word this is not the truth of that object. Hence, Anselm limits the definiens of

"truth" so that it excludes the straightness of material objects. "Truth is rightness perceptible only to the mind."

If truth is perceptible only to the mind, then it is possible that it exists independently of the objects it is in, so that it does not perish when they do. In such case, truth would be one eternal being. It would be one because it has a single nature (*viz.*, rightness); it would be eternal and independently existing because it would not perish when the things it was in perished nor would it exist as a quality of anything else. However, truth could be neither one nor eternal if it existed in things as straightness exists in a stick. For while straightness *qua* straightness is a universal, straightness *qua* particular straightness is as multiple as the objects it is in. For when a straight stick is destroyed, the particular straightness existing in it perishes—even though other straightnesses do not perish. Hence, particular straightness is many, not one.

In order to show that truth is one, Anselm must show that it is a universal and as such is perceptible only to the mind. He infers from his discussions of truth in actions, wills, thoughts, and the senses that truth is always a form of rightness whereby a thing does as it ought. He argues that this universal rightness exists independently of the things it is in, so that even if those objects which are right perish, the rightness which is in them does not perish. From this he concludes that truth is eternal. Properly speaking, rightness is not "in things" but things are "in Rightness." In his earlier discussion of truth of reference Anselm has already implicitly asserted that truth exists as one eternal being. For even when a proposition lacks a truth of reference because it asserts something which is false, Rightness (or Truth) exists and puts a demand on it to refer as it ought. Since Truth exists, but does not exist in the proposition when it refers falsely, it must exist independently of it. When a proposition has a truth of reference, it participates in that Truth which exists independently of the proposition and which places a demand on the proposition to signify as it should even when it does not signify as it should.

If there were not some case of an "accidental" truth available, Anselm would not be entitled to contend that truth exists independently of the things it is in. His argument depends on their

being something which has a demand put upon it by something else, whether that first thing does or does not fulfill the demand. If every truth were a natural truth, however, this argument could not be made, since there would be no case when a thing existed without its being true (the truth in the essence of things), and hence there could not be something which had a demand put upon it whether it fulfilled that demand or not. If every truth were a truth of nature, we could conclude that truth is a universal, but not that it is eternal or that it exists independently of the objects it is in. Of course, it might exist independently, but no argument could be given for this supposition. There would be no way of knowing whether the truth of things existed after those things had perished (unless one simply postulated that all universals exist eternally), and hence there would be no way of proving that truth is one being. But because all truth is rightness, and because in one case rightness exists independently of the things it is in, Anselm has a reason for concluding that in all cases truth exists independently of the things it is said to be in.

The student poses a final problem. The straightness of sticks is multiple because when sticks which are straight perish, their particular straightness also perishes. Perhaps then, the fact that truths of reference can perish (i.e., propositions may be false) means that the propositions they are in also perish with them and that these truths are as numerous as the things they are in. The analogy the student develops is not between the straightness of a stick and truth, but between truth and the color of a material object. "Color has its existence or non-existence through a material object. For as long as a material object exists it is necessary that its color exist, but when a material object perishes, it is impossible for its color to remain." (DV, Ch. 13)

"Straightness" is an accident of a stick, so that a stick may exist without being straight, though it may not exist without a shape (a categorical determination); but color is itself a categorical determination of material objects, so that no material object may exist without some kind of color. (Anselm holds that even transparent objects have color, namely, the color of glass.) The student suggests that truth of reference is a categorical determination of a proposition just as color is a categorical determination of a material object, and that if truth of reference

perishes, then we may infer that the proposition it was in must also have perished.

Anselm opposes the student's analogy by recalling his earlier distinction between the two truths of a proposition. The perishing of color in a material object is concomitant with the perishing of the material object itself. But when a truth of reference perishes, the proposition it is in has not also perished. A proposition which lacks a truth of reference exists even without that truth and still has a natural truth in it. Hence it exists, and is naturally correct, and Correctness still puts a demand on it. Thus Anselm infers from a proposition's lack of a truth of reference that truth exists independently of the things it is in, and is one eternal being; and he uses a proposition's truth of meaning to show that the perishing of a truth of reference does not imply that there are as many truths as there are things truth is in.

The dialogue draws to a close. Anselm asks the student whether he can think of any other arguments to show that truth is many instead of one, and the student confesses he cannot. Anselm then concludes: "So rightness is one and the same in all things." And he goes on to state explicitly the doctrine of participation whereby the many things that are true are true by virtue of their participation in Truth, which he now equates with God.

We do not say "the time of this" or "the time of that" because time is in things, but because things are in time. Now time, when considered in itself, is not called the time of any particular thing; but when we consider things which are in time, we say "the time of this thing" or "the time of that thing." So too, Supreme Truth, subsisting in and of itself, is not the truth of any particular thing; but when some thing is in accordance with Supreme Truth, then we speak of the truth, or rightness, of that thing. (DV, Ch. 13)

Anselm has attempted to give an argument for the Platonic thesis that if truth is a universal, then it must exist independently of the things it is in. He has done this by combining the Platonic notion of participation with the Aristotelian notion of correspondence. He wishes to affirm that when a proposition has truth of reference (right correspondence), it participates in the Rightness

of all things. When a proposition has a truth of reference, it has a double participation in truth. This theory of double participation is Anselm's way of conflating two philosophical traditions. His insistence that if there are truths there must be Truth is reminiscent of Augustine's argument in *De Libero Arbitrio*. But his defense of this position by drawing upon the Aristotelian theory of the truth of propositions is an important contribution to the history of philosophy.

Anselm began this dialogue with the credal statement that God is Truth. He had hoped to provide a rational demonstration for his belief that all the many truths we ascribe to objects, actions, and events owe their character to God, Who is Supreme Truth. In attempting to exhibit "necessary reasons" for dogmas of faith, Anselm initiates one of the methods of scholasticism. Even when he fails to be convincing, his concern to furnish these dogmas a philosophical justification is appealing.

IV. *Anselm's Doctrine of Will.*

Anselm puzzles over the same problems as Augustine: namely, how is free choice compatible with divine foreknowledge and predestination, and how is freedom of choice to be defined? Anselm's thinking on the question of free will occurs mainly in four treatises: *De Libertate*, *De Concordia*, *Cur Deus Homo*, and *De Conceptu Virginali*. Although he speaks both of *libera voluntas* (S-222.7ff.(I)) and *libertas arbitrii rationalis voluntatis* (S-225.24ff.(I)), the second is his usual phrase—shortened to *liberum arbitrium*.¹¹ This choice belongs necessarily to a will; and as long as nothing compels the will, the will's act of choice is free. "Velle" is rendered in English as "to will," "to want," "to wish." Anselm understands the will to be not only the faculty by which a man chooses or consents but also a faculty of desire, for "the will is desire."¹² He distinguishes *voluntas* from *appetitus*,

¹¹ "Hac libertate rationalis naturae et arbitrium liberum et voluntas libera dicitur." (*De Concordia*, Q.1, Ch. 6). S-257.27(II).

¹² "quoniam et concupiscentia et desiderium voluntas est. S-245.1(I). Note that in *De Concordia*, Q.3, Ch. 11, Anselm distinguishes the will into three components: *voluntas instrumentum*, *voluntas affectio*, *voluntas usus*. In *DL voluntas affectio* is not mentioned.

the desires of appetite, which in themselves are neither good nor bad, but become good or bad depending upon whether the will consents to them when it should or when it should not.¹³ Animals as well as man possess the faculty of will; but since their wills are governed by appetite, they are not free. A horse may consent to follow its appetites, but this is the consent of natural necessity, since it derives from the horse's nature. By contrast a man, under guidance of reason, may and should choose to act upon the appetites only when the time is suitable, morally or conventionally speaking. Anselm sets out to show that a man's consent is *never* the consent of natural necessity or external compulsion and that the will, accordingly, is *always* free.

A. THE ABILITY TO SIN AND NOT TO SIN.

Anselm wishes to defend the thesis that free choice is "the ability to keep uprightness of will for its own sake." The dialogue *On Freedom of Choice* begins, therefore, with an argument excluding "ability to sin" from the definition of free choice. "I don't think that freedom of choice is the ability either to sin or not to sin," says the teacher. "Indeed, if this were its definition, then neither God nor the angels who are not able to sin would have free choice." (DL, Ch. 1) Since an adequate definition must specify what is common and only what is common to all choices that are free, the definition of freedom must exclude whatever is not essential to all free choices. Therefore, since God is free, even though He has no ability to sin, the definition of free choice cannot be "the ability either to sin or not to sin."

If we were to weigh Anselm's line of thinking in the light of Wittgenstein's proposal that definitions need not identify common traits, but merely "family resemblances," we might deem it proper to call both God and man free even though freedom in man's case included "the ability to sin." But in the face of such an objection, Anselm would have other considerations to bring forth in favor of his definition. For he seems to understand free choice as something which exhibits characteristics parallel to the truth of propositions. This suggestion coincides not only with the structure of his arguments and the order in which he arranges

¹³ *De Conceptu Virginali*, Ch. 4.

the dialogues, but also with his paradigm case of a free act, viz., telling the truth. The term "freedom" designates that characteristic of a choice whereby a man is able "to keep uprightness of will for its own sake," i.e., to choose what is good. In this sense freedom is like the "natural truth of a proposition." For natural truth is that by which a proposition is able to do as it ought, namely, to state the truth; in the same way, freedom is that "natural truth" of volition whereby a will is able to do as it ought, namely, choose the good. Just as the purpose (and hence the definition) of a proposition is that it be able to state the truth but not that it be able to state a lie, so the purpose (and hence the definition) of choice qua free choice is that it be able to choose the good but not that it be able to choose evil. (Cf. DV, Ch. 2 with DL, Ch. 3)

We can now, perhaps, better understand the answer that Anselm gives to the next problem the student raises concerning the distinction between the ability to choose what is good and the ability to sin. It appears, argues the student, that if free choice is only an ability to choose the good, then the ability to choose evil must not be grounded in free choice; hence Satan and Adam could have sinned only by necessity. In such case, how could their acts have been culpable? Anselm replies in terms of the definition set forth above. Satan and Adam

sinned through their own choice, which was free, and not through that by which it was free, namely, the ability not to sin and not to serve sin. Rather, they sinned by the ability they had for sinning, which neither helped them towards the freedom of not sinning nor compelled them into the service of sin. (DL, Ch. 2)

The subtlety here is that although the ability to sin is grounded in free choice (i.e., in the ability to choose the good), it is not part of the definition of free choice. Freedom is essentially an ability to choose the good. But when one has such a power, he may also choose evil; however being able to choose evil is an accidental feature of the will. So whoever has an ability to choose evil and does choose evil, sins by his own choice; and he was free because he was able not to sin. However, he does not sin by having been able to choose the good, but by having been able to

choose evil. He is therefore both free and culpable. Having the ability to sin implies, for Anselm, having the ability not to sin, even though the reverse is not the case; for whoever has the accident of a nature has the nature itself, even though whoever has a nature may not possess an accidental specification which it is possible for that nature to have. With this, Anselm's argument is secure—but at the price of making it logically (semantically) impossible that anyone should perform an evil deed through that ability by which freedom is defined.

The argument for a univocal definition of freedom as ability to choose the good has, thinks Anselm, a second defense. Someone might object that God is able to choose evil but never actually does. Were this so, "ability to sin" might properly be added to the definition of freedom, for it would be a common property of all free wills. In order to exclude this kind of argument, Anselm takes up a line of inquiry based on a notion which seems rather strange today, namely, the idea of a greater and lesser perfection of natures. He begins by asking the student: "Which will seems the more free to you: the will whose ability not to sin is such that it can in no way be turned away from the uprightness of not sinning, or the will which can in some way be turned to sinning?" (DL, Ch. 1) The student replies that the second will seems to be more free than the first. Anselm then produces the following argument: "But don't you see that someone who possesses what is fitting and advantageous in such a way that he can't lose it is more free than someone else who possesses the same thing in such a way that he can lose it and be drawn towards what is unfitting and disadvantageous?" (DL, Ch. 1) Anselm concludes that the will which does not possess an ability to choose evil is more free than the will which possesses this ability.

To understand this argument, we must interpret the expression "more free" as referring to a dignity or perfection of essence. Anselm is not denying that to possess two abilities is arithmetically "more" than to possess one ability, and that the will which has both the ability to choose good and the ability to choose evil has something more in this sense. Rather, he is asking whether it would be a greater good, or perfection, for a will to have both abilities essentially, instead of having only one. Is the essence of

a will which has both abilities of greater dignity and perfection than the essence of a will which has only the ability to choose the good? For since God is the most perfect Being, He will necessarily possess that kind of freedom which is most perfect. As soon as the question is posed in this way, we see the significance of Anselm's insistence that for a will to possess both the ability to choose the good and the ability to choose evil is not better than for it to possess only the ability to choose the good. If choosing evil is not a perfection, then possession of an ability to choose evil constitutes a loss of essential dignity. If God had the ability to will evil, then His not doing so would be only a contingent fact. And a being who is only contingently perfect is inferior to a being who is necessarily perfect.

B. ABILITY AND USE.

Anselm must now demonstrate that no one can lose the natural freedom of choice which he has; i.e., he must show that a man always possesses an *ability* to choose what and as he should, even though he may not actually choose the good. He accomplishes this by distinguishing the ability which someone has from his use of that ability.

Suppose you know a man so strong that when he is holding a wild bull, the bull cannot get away. What if you should see the same man holding a ram, and see the ram shake himself loose from the man's hands: would you think the man less strong when he is holding a ram than when he is holding a bull?

The student replies:

I should think that his strength was the same in both cases, but that he didn't use his strength equally—for to hold a bull is harder than to hold a ram. The man is strong because he has strength, but his action is said to be strong because it is done in a strong way. (DL, Ch. 7)

From this analogy Anselm reasons that when a man yields to temptation, he still has an ability not to yield, even though he does not use this ability which he has. For if a man always has an ability to choose the good, then he always has an ability to refuse evil. Hence, he can always resist temptation.

One way to ascribe an ability is on the basis of the occurrence of an action; if someone does something, it follows analytically that he has the ability to do it. When there is no case of someone's using an ability, it is difficult to know why he should be said to have it. Of course, we may ascribe ability where no test has been made (or action performed), provided the resemblance to cases where such tests have been made is close. So then, we might argue that A had the ability to do X at time t_1 —i.e., he could have done it—even though he did not do X at t_1 . The ground for the truth of this assertion might be our knowledge that A has performed just such an action on similar occasions in similar circumstances. Again, we might ascribe ability to A to do X even if he should never actually do X. Our support for this would come from the fact of other people's being able to do X, together with the judgment that there is no relevant respect in which A differs from other people, within a stipulated context of considerations (part of what is meant by relevant). So we are justified in saying of a particular horse that it can carry a 300-pound rider, even though it may never do so. And if it should die without having done so, it would still be true that it could have done so. (It was not lame; it showed no signs of sickness, etc.) It had the strength, ability, power to do so. We know this because other such horses have proven able to sustain such loads. This fact together with the fact of there being no counter-evidence of disability warrants the inference. And such an inference ordinarily counts as knowledge. Now, in this sense, a man may have an ability which, nevertheless, he has exercised on no occasion. But Anselm does not ascribe to rational nature the "ability to choose rightly" on the basis of (or by inference from) any action. Rather, he lays it down as part of the general definition of a rational nature that it always possesses this power.

But even if we could grant the legitimacy of Anselm's ascribing to rational nature a general ability to choose rightly, it would still be necessary to reject his claim that when a man fails to choose rightly, it is always because he does not use his ability "strongly enough." Consider his example of the bull and the ram. There is an obvious sense in which a man can be said to be able to subdue a *ram* if he can actually subdue a *bull* (on the supposition that the former is weaker than the latter). But if on

a particular occasion a man fails to hold down a ram, what allows our saying that he could have done so *on that occasion*? If the "could have" ascription is to make sense here, it must be filled out by adding conditions: "He could have, if he hadn't slipped," "He could have if he had had a good night's sleep," etc.

Anselm's language of ability is misleading. For the suggestion that a man had the strength to subdue a ram, but did not *use* this strength makes sense only in the general case. If a man has strength enough to hold down a given animal, then in general he has strength enough to hold down a weaker animal. In the exceptional circumstance, his failure to master the weaker animal must be accounted for by pointing to some unusual occurrence. If he were sick that day, then he was unable to use his full strength, so to speak. But now, the distinction between ability and use of that ability collapses, for to say he was unable to use his strength is the same as saying that on that particular day his strength was gone, i.e., on that day, he had an inability (remember how Delilah saw that Samson's strength "had left him"). A man's yielding to temptation in a specific circumstance is precisely the kind of case where the distinction between having an ability and using that ability is in danger of collapsing. For to say that A had the ability to resist but did not use it may be the same as saying that in that situation he was unable to resist. One additional stipulation is necessary: The distinction collapses *provided that* no conditional clause is added. It *would* make sense, for instance, to say that "A could have resisted doing X if he had known he would be arrested." His ability and its exercise are distinguishable when there is some ground for supposing that additional knowledge would have motivated A to act differently. When we believe that no additional knowledge would have motivated him to act differently, and when we see signs of an inner struggle, we ordinarily say that A was unable (rather than unwilling) to do otherwise.

The trick of Anselm's argument is to reduce all "unable occasions" to "unwilling occasions." But in so doing, he loses any meaningful distinction between ability and inability. To say "I had the ability to do it, but didn't use my ability," gives rise to the rejoinder: "Why didn't you use it? Were you unwilling to or

unable to?" And answers to both these questions lead to an infinite regression.

C. ACTING AGAINST ONE'S WILL.

Anselm's contention that a man always has the ability to choose rightly leaves the student unsatisfied on one special point. For even if this is generally the case, isn't it true that what is meant by a person's "being overcome by temptation" is that his will is constrained, or forced, to sin? And do we not often see cases where men actually do choose something which is against their will—as when a man is forced to lie in order to save his life?

Anselm replies to this question by proposing a distinction between two senses of "choosing against one's will." Suppose someone is placed in a situation where he must either lie or be killed. (DL, Ch. 5) If such a person values life more than truth, he will tell a lie. But if he values truth more than life, he will not lie. His choice is contingent upon the kind of person he is. He is not compelled to lie, and he is not constrained to tell the truth. Whichever he opts for, he does so freely—for he could have decided differently, since he had the ability to do either the one or the other. He is placed in a situation where he must "either lie or be killed" against his will; but the particular alternative he chooses is not against his will. For he does not choose "to lie" against his will, nor does he choose "to save his life" against his will. If such a person had a vision of the heavenly reward which would be his immediately after death were he to tell the truth, or if he had a glimpse of the punishment which would ensue from telling the lie, then without doubt, notes Anselm, he would choose the truth.

Put another way, anyone in the straits of such a forced option would find it necessary "either to lie or to be killed"; but it would not be necessary for him to lie, for he could let himself be killed, and it would not be necessary to be killed, for he could lie. The alternatives are limited, but the choice between the alternatives is free. There is, of course, another sense in which the man may be unwilling to be put to death. For he has two choices: he may will the truth for its own sake and death for the sake of the truth; or he may will the lie for the sake of his life. In the first instance

he may be unwilling to be put to death even though he wills to let himself be put to death. And in the second instance, he may be unwilling to lie, in that he does not will the lie for its own sake; but he is not unwilling to lie, in that he chooses the lie in preference to death. Thus there is a clear sense in which he is willing to lie.

Perhaps, however, this man unwillingly wills the lie; perhaps he is constrained to will the lie. Anselm does not allow this move.

A man can be bound against his will because he can be bound unwillingly; a man can be tortured against his will because he can be tortured unwillingly; a man can be killed against his will because he can be killed unwillingly. But a man cannot will against his will because he cannot will unwillingly to will. For everyone who wills, wills willingly. (DL, Ch. 5)

In short, there is a sense in which a man who wills death for the sake of the truth is both willing and not willing to die. Similarly, there may be a sense in which someone who wills a lie for the sake of his life is not willing to lie, though, in another sense, he is not lying against his will. There can be no further regress, for just as the man who lies in such circumstances does not lie unwillingly, because he could have chosen death, so also when he wills to lie, he willingly wills to lie, because it is impossible to will anything unwillingly. Thus an alien force may attack the will without the will's consent, but it cannot overcome the will without the will's consent.

In effect, then, Anselm is suggesting that a man's consent always (and necessarily) derives from himself. When he chooses, he chooses willingly, and therefore freely. "Can anyone deny that his will is free to keep uprightness, and free from both temptation and sin, if no temptation can turn his will, against his will, from uprightness to sin, i.e., to willing what it ought not?" (DL, Ch. 5) But the argument begs the question. For it really assumes what was supposed to be proved. In other words, (1) the "argument" construes "something's compelling the will" as meaning "something's moving the will against one's will." (2) This construal is then shown to be self-contradictory. (3) From this it immediately follows that nothing can compel the will. But this immediate inference might be taken as a sign of faulty analysis of the notion

of "compelling the will." Anselm "defines" compulsion in such a way that it is self-contradictory. Thus on the basis of a tendentious definition he establishes that no will is ever compelled. This is scarcely an argument and is handled best by questioning the plausibility of the definition.

D. ANSELM AND AUSTIN.

Our discussion of Anselm's treatment of the usages of language suggests certain parallels with contemporary philosophical interests. Perhaps at no point is this resemblance more striking than in the discussion of free will by the contemporary English philosopher, J. L. Austin. In dealing with the question of free will, Professor Austin has recently adopted, *volens volens*, an Anselmic account of ability.¹⁴ Leading up to discussing his conception of ability, he points out that the "if" in "I can if I choose" is not the "if" of causal condition. For instance, it is not like "if" in "If I run, I pant." The latter statement refers to a causal connection, so that the contrapositive follows: If I do not pant, I do not run. But, regarding the former statement, it makes no clear sense to assert "If I cannot, then I do not choose to." Expressions such as "can do X (if I choose)" or "could have done X (had I chosen)," argues Austin, are not straightforwardly analyzable into expressions such as "would have done X (had I chosen)," or "should have done X (had I chosen)." The proper analysis of "can" and "could have" is not immediately clear, for the sense of these words changes with the different roles they play.

Sometimes 'I could have' is equivalent to the Latin 'Potui' and means 'I *was* in a position to': sometimes it is equivalent to the Latin 'Potuissem' and means 'I *should have been* in a position to'. Exactly similar is the double role of 'could', which is sometimes a conditional meaning 'should be able to', but also sometimes a past indicative (indefinite) meaning 'was able to' . . .¹⁵

"A could have done X" may indicate: (1) that A had both the ability and the opportunity to do X, (2) that he had the oppor-

¹⁴ "If and Cans," in his *Philosophical Papers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

tunity but lacked the ability, or (3) that he had the ability but lacked the opportunity.

Thus "I could have ruined you" may mean: (1) All the conditions for my ruining you were fulfilled (I had the money and the cleverness). All I had to do was decide to and to act upon this decision. (2) I could have ruined you—if only I had been a good public speaker. Everything was opportune. I had only to phrase my words convincingly. But that's precisely what I couldn't do. (3) One or more conditions for ruining you were lacking, so that my choice and subsequent action would not have precipitated your ruin; but I had the ability to ruin you had the conditions been fulfilled. In the first instance, I actually could have ruined you had I wanted. In the second and third instances, had other conditions obtained (e.g., had I had more money yesterday, or had I been properly trained) I actually could have ruined you. Now, to say as in the first case that I actually could have done X (though I did not) is not to say that I should have done it. It means, continues Austin, that with all the relevant conditions just the way they were, I could have done X. *Whether* I would have ruined you is a question of motivation—that I could have, a question of ability. I missed the putt with the golf ball, say, but I am convinced that I could have made it (with the same ball, on the same green, with the same iron, from the same distance).

But if I tried my hardest . . . and missed, surely there *must* have been *something* that caused me to fail, that made me unable to succeed? So that I *could not* have holed it. Well a modern belief in science, in there being an explanation of everything, may make us assent to this argument. But such a belief is not in line with the traditional beliefs enshrined in the word *can* [e.g., Anselm's beliefs]: according to *them*, a human ability or power or capacity is inherently liable not to produce success, on occasion, and that for no reason (or are bad luck and bad form sometimes reasons?).¹⁶

Thus, to maintain that an agent could have done otherwise is, sometimes at least, to ascribe to him an "ability or power or capacity." Austin refuses to countenance a deterministic picture of ability; for he believes that in some cases someone who has

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 166n.

the ability to do X could have done it, though nothing about the circumstance should have changed except the attempt. But Austin encounters the same basic difficulty as Anselm, viz., he does not furnish criteria for determining occasions when a person "really could have done X" and occasions when he "really could not have done X." Without these criteria the notion of "having been able" is in danger of becoming obscure. We cannot know in what kinds of setting it is accurate to say of a golfer "he was able to make the putt" unless we know in what kinds of setting it is accurate to say "He was not able to make the putt." Austin may be right in believing that "A could have made the shot" is not satisfactorily analyzable into "A would have made the shot if . . ." But he comes close to making only an uninformative statement when, by extension, he is seen to suggest that a golfer who shoots consistently under 70 and misses an easy putt, was able to have holed it. Perhaps he was on that occasion, perhaps not on another. How does one tell? Is the criterion for his "having been able" simply that he is a "good" golfer (defined as shooting consistently under 70)? Or is it immediately clear that with all the same conditions fulfilled, he really could have made the shot? If so, then there is something elusive about the meaning of "same." There may or may not be a reason for everything. But bad form is certainly a different kind of reason from bad luck. (The latter may not even be a reason; but the former certainly is.) Bad form is usually thought to be one condition among others, so that if all the conditions were the same, the same result would ensue. Moreover, being a good golfer involves having developed a skill. But whereas having a skill is indeed possessing an ability, not all actions are the products of skills, and not all abilities are skills. For example, choosing, *per se*, is not a skill—though choosing the right word to complete a thought or the right answer to a mathematical puzzle might, and usually does, involve skill. Hence the criteria for attributing "to have been able" must differ with the nature of the action. Austin is in agreement with Anselm that one may have an ability which he does not exercise.¹⁷ But like Anselm, he does not make it clear when to ascribe such an ability and when not to.

¹⁷ Cf. Anselm, who speaks of some actions as having no cause except the mere ability to will. (DCD, Ch. 27)

E. "KEEPING UPRIGHTNESS FOR ITS OWN SAKE."

Anselm's concern to establish that man is always free even if he never uses his freedom to accomplish any actual good arises in part out of his desire to affirm two statements which are important to Christian doctrine: (1) The nature of man is characterized by freedom, and man does not lose his nature as a consequence of the Fall; (2) since the Fall, man's condition is so changed by sin that he no longer can use his free choice to accomplish any good deed (in the strict sense of the phrase).¹⁸ The fact of the matter is, however, that Anselm has made it extremely difficult for himself to defend these two theses. For by removing the "ability to sin" from the definition of free choice, and by circumscribing freedom as a strict ability to choose the good, he seems to have made it almost meaningless to say that fallen man, who never uses his freedom to do good, actually is free. We have explored the difficulties of Anselm's view in the preceding sections. But as we shall see, Anselm wants to maintain this particular view of freedom (in spite of its difficulties) because it is consistent with his understanding of grace.

An alternative way to defend the two theological propositions mentioned above was taken by Augustine, who defined the idea of human freedom as a mere power of willing. Augustine sees an unregenerate man's actual sinning as the ground for ascribing to him a free choice—for freedom is simply the ability to choose what one desires. Anselm has brought the object of choice into the definition of "free choice" by defining it as "the ability to keep uprightness"; but Augustine defines freedom as a mere power of choosing, and in a sense regards the object of that choice as an accident of freedom. Augustine holds that freedom encompasses the whole range of possibilities relating to sinning. Original man freely chooses either to sin or not to sin; fallen man freely chooses to sin but is not free not to sin;¹⁹ beatified man freely chooses the good and is not free to sin.

¹⁸ On Anselm's view, even when unredeemed fallen man chooses the right end, he does not do so from the right inclinations.

¹⁹ "Sicut enim qui se occidit, utique vivendo se occidit, sed se occidendo non vivit, nec se ipsum poterit resuscitare cum occiderit: ita cum libero peccaretur arbitrio, victore peccato amissum est liberum arbitrium. . . ." *Enchiridion*, Ch. 30. PL, 40, p. 247.

(Adam)	
<i>posse peccare</i>	<i>posse non peccare</i>
<i>non posse non peccare</i> (fallen man)	<i>non posse peccare</i> (beatified man)

Augustine reconciles the two theological affirmations above by defining fallen man's freedom as an ability to choose evil.

He serves freely who performs the will of his master with pleasure. By this token, a man who is a servant to sin is free to sin. Hence, he will be free to do what is upright (*juste*) only if, after having been freed from sin, he becomes a servant to justice. In the case of someone's being a servant to justice there is both true freedom, because of delight in upright deeds, and holy servitude, because of obedience to God's commands.²⁰

But Anselm would never regard someone's sinning and taking pleasure in sin as *evidence* of freedom.

Anselm does have one way to support his position that a man always has the freedom to choose the good (or to keep uprightness of will for its own sake), and it depends precisely upon the fact that he has specified the object of choosing within the definition of free choice itself. Interestingly enough, his solution leads to the conclusion that fallen man is at once both able and not able to choose the good—though in different respects. He explains this to the student:

Anyone who has sight has the ability and the instrument for seeing a mountain. But if there were no mountain around, and you said to someone "See the mountain," he would answer: "I can't, because there is no mountain around; but if there were one, I could see it." Yet suppose there were a mountain, but

²⁰ *Enchiridion*, Ch. 30. PL, 40, p. 247. Cf. also *Enchiridion*, Ch. 105. PL, 40, p. 281: "The will by which we will to be happy is not to be reproached, or called unfree, or called no will at all. By means of this will we want happiness and do not—indeed cannot—want unhappiness. Now, just as our soul in this life does not will wretchedness, so in the next life it will never be able to will wickedness."

no light; and suppose you said "See the mountain." This time he would reply to you, "I can't see it because there is no light; but if there were light, I could see it." Or suppose, in another case, that the man were to have sight, and that there were a mountain, and that light were present, but something obstructed his vision—as if someone covered the man's eyes—then he would say, "I can't see the mountain." But if nothing obstructed his vision, then, without doubt, he could see the mountain. (DL, Ch. 3)

From this example Anselm concludes that actually seeing a mountain requires the presence of not just one, but three abilities. A man must be able to see the mountain, a mountain must be able to be seen, and there must be light "in-between" which is the medium of seeing. When any one of these three powers or abilities is absent, we do not deny that the other two are present and would be effective in actually seeing the mountain if the third "ability" were also present. Hence, if a man never actually sees a mountain, this does not mean that he is unable to see a mountain—for it may be that there was never a mountain near enough to be seen. Similarly, if a man never actually does any good deed, it may not mean that he was unable to do a good deed but that there was no good available for him to do. And if this is so, then we say that he is both able to choose the good (because if there were a good available for him to choose, he could actually choose it) and that he is unable to choose the good (because there is no good available for him to choose).

Now this seems like a strange argument, for we do not ordinarily think of choosing the good as analogous to seeing a mountain. And we do not ordinarily think of a good as something available for the will to choose in the same way that a mountain might be available for sight to see. But this is precisely Anselm's notion, and with it we can finally understand the exact meaning of the assertion that freedom of choice is "the ability to keep uprightness of will for its own sake."

In what sense *is* choosing good like seeing a mountain? The obvious sense is that an object is specified in both cases. But what is this good which Anselm regards as the object of a free choice? He suggests what it is by a development of his earlier example: "With respect to seeing light itself . . . the thing to be

seen and the thing which aids our sight are one and the same." (DL, Ch. 4) When one sees light, there are only two terms and not three—for the thing which aids sight is the very thing which is then seen. And in the case of doing what is right, the object of the act and the rule of that act are not two separate things—for the good which is the object of a just act is nothing other than the conformity of that act to a right rule. So the "good" of a just deed is the uprightness of the will chosen for the sake of that uprightness itself. This is Anselm's reason for calling the will's good "uprightness," which is only a characterization of an act of willing, and his reason for designating it as "for its own sake" in order to make clear that it is an end in itself.

In identifying the good of the will with "uprightness kept for its own sake," Anselm has specified the act of "choosing the good" as a "keeping" (*servare*). He calls free choice a "keeping" because he holds that God did not create an ability to choose the good before He created the good which the will was supposed to choose. Rather, God created Adam both with an ability to choose the good and already possessing the good which he was supposed to choose (keep).

When a will was first given to the rational nature, it was—in the moment of giving—turned by the Giver towards that which it was supposed to will; or better, it was not *first* given and *then* turned upright, but it was originally *made upright*. As long as the will stood firm in this uprightness in which it was made (and which we call truth or justice), it was just. (DCD, Ch. 9)

With this statement Anselm can now argue his point that a man always has the ability to keep uprightness of will for its own sake (ability to choose the good) even if he never actually does so. For in order actually to exercise an "ability to keep," the thing to be kept must already be possessed. If anyone does not possess such a thing, he still has the "ability to keep" without any diminution, and so he is said "to be able to keep it"; but in another respect, of course, he is "not able to keep it"—not because he could not keep it *if he had it*, but because he does not have it so that he can actually keep it. For example, a man may have an ability to drive a car, but not be able actually to drive a car

since he has no car to drive. By comparison, once Adam had thrown away the uprightness of will which was given to him in the moment of creation, he could never thereafter actually do good (keep uprightness), although he still possessed the native power to keep uprightness if uprightness were restored to him.

In this way Anselm maintains that the "ability to choose the good" was not diminished by the Fall, even though its actual use is impossible once Adam deserted uprightness and the human race fell. By this means, then, Anselm can contend that fallen man is free, without following Augustine's method of defining (human) freedom as an indifferent power of choosing or desiring. Moreover, Anselm is able to assert, *contra Augustinum*, that unredeemed fallen man, like original man, is essentially able not to sin, so that he can always resist temptation.

F. GRACE AND FREEDOM.

In his preface to the three dialogues Anselm notes that he has not in these writings explicitly considered the relationship of grace to free choice. He takes up this issue in his later work *De Concordia*, where he construes grace and free choice as co-adjutors. Uprightness must be restored to the will of fallen man, for his will cannot by its own volitions attain to uprightness. And since only an upright will desires uprightness, the will must already be upright before it wills uprightness. Through grace God created man with an upright will; through free choice man was supposed to keep this gift (by willing rightly). In baptized infants there is not yet rational choice, and hence not yet free choice; accordingly, grace alone accomplishes their salvation, should they die. But in those men who have reached moral responsibility, grace accomplishes salvation by assisting free choice—and it assists by bestowing the uprightness which, through free choice, is supposed to be kept. In this sense, free choice can accomplish nothing without grace—grace itself coming as the result of no antecedent merit.²¹ Furthermore, Anselm even suggests that grace may sometimes modify the power of temptation, making it easier for an agent to choose as he ought.

²¹ "Sicut ergo illam nullus accipit nisi gratia praeveniente, ita nullus eam servat nisi eadem gratia subsequente." (*De Concordia*, Q.3, Ch. 4) S-267. 15-16 (II).

Except for this last suggestion Anselm's account of assistance due to grace is less encompassing than Augustine's. This is because Anselm conceives sin to have seriously affected neither the noetic faculty nor the will of fallen man. By defining freedom as an ability to keep uprightness, rather than as an ability to regain it (once lost), Anselm is able to equate freedom with the ability to resist temptation and to do what one ought. Hence for the will to lack uprightness implies no handicap in regard to its power to resist the lure of evil. For this reason Anselm conceives the grace needed for salvation to operate upon a person's motivations rather than his abilities.

Anselm's theory of free choice is to be explained in part by his understanding of the way grace works upon the will. He understands grace to be substantial—something that can be communicated sacramentally. And this substantial grace can be spoken of objectively as “something” which is restored to the will. However, the actual thing given to the will is not some object that the will can choose, but an inward disposition of will. Hence, because Anselm conceives the uprightness of the will as something given by grace, he falls into various confusions. For he sometimes reifies uprightness by speaking of it in analogy with material possessions, which a man may cast away or retain. (“So if uprightness were given again, a man could retain it.”) But “uprightness” also characterizes a subjective state of will: the will which wills what it should and in the way it should is upright.²² In being turned toward the good (objectively), Adam's will was itself good (subjectively). And when Adam acted rightly, or as he ought, he thereby kept the original uprightness which inhered in his will. When he first chose evil, he lost this state of will. So then, his will became deprived of uprightness by choosing wrongly. Thus “keeping uprightness of will” and “desert-

²² “voluntas non est recta, quia vult recte, sed recte vult, quoniam est recta. Cum autem vult hanc rectitudinem, procul dubio recte vult. Non ergo vult rectitudinem, nisi quia recta est. Idem autem est voluntati rectam esse et rectitudinem habere. Palam igitur est quia non vult rectitudinem, nisi quia rectitudinem habet. Non nego voluntatem rectam velle rectitudinem quam nondum habet, quando vult maiorem quam habeat; sed dico nullam eam posse velle rectitudinem, si non habet rectitudinem qua illam velit.” (*De Concordia*, Q.3, Ch. 3). S-265.28ff. (II).

ing uprightness of will" are understood in terms of choosing one thing or another.

But if "uprightness" is defined as a subjective state of will, how can it be restored after a person has chosen (or acted) wrongly? Apart from God's reconstituting the will, it seems impossible that uprightness could be restored to the will. In Scripture the redeemed are spoken of as having been made to be "new creations."²³ What can be restored is, subjectively, only the ability to choose uprightly. Yet this is precisely what, on Anselm's account, has never been lost.

V. *Anselm's Doctrine of Evil.*

Of the three dialogues, *De Casu Diaboli* is the most lucid, its argument the most consistent, its movement the most organized. Like the others it begins with an exegetical point: Is the Apostle speaking only to men or also to angels when he asks, "What do you have that you have not received?" (I Cor. 4:7) From this question emerges the entire discussion of the origin and reality of evil.

In this dialogue Anselm assumes the Augustinian argument that evil is only the privation of being, and hence is intrinsically nothing.²⁴ Augustine's position can be illustrated by the following example: We call cancer an evil. Now cancer exists only in a body, destroying it. As the cancer increases, the life of the body is lessened. But when the cancer completely destroys the body it is in, it also destroys itself, for a disease can only exist in a body which is alive. Hence, since a disease is nothing after the body it is in ceases to exist, a disease is only the lack of health in a body. And since evil is like cancer, or a disease, it is only the privation of good (or being). For when a good is totally destroyed, then the evil which is its corruption is seen to be nothing. This Augustinian theory lies behind Anselm's arguments in DCD.

The dialogue has a second characteristic which may strike the contemporary reader as somewhat strange. This is Anselm's treatment of the origin of evil in terms of the fall of Satan, an

²³ II Cor. 5:17.

²⁴ For Augustine's theory, see *De Natura Boni*. The specific example of the corruption of a body is found in Ch. 20.

angel. To focus the discussion of the origin and character of evil on the fall of Satan is characteristic of the entire medieval tradition, and is not a novelty of Anselm's work alone. It has, interestingly enough, peculiar advantages for a thorough treatment of the problem, since it involves essentially a "thought experiment" which focuses exclusively upon the moral character of the finite will, considered by itself alone. Father W. Rossner, in his introduction to Jacques Maritain's *The Sin of the Angel* (a study in St. Thomas) has noted the usefulness of putting the problem in this way:

What is the nature of that choice we must make in the depths of our will? . . . When we try to study this fundamental decision of will in man, the difficulty is compounded. For in us men the will is immersed in matter. A whole universe of bodily life, of nutrition, growth, and reproduction, of sense knowledge and passion, tends to complicate the problem, to obscure and hide the will from our gaze. In the Angel, however, the same fundamental problem of finite will is present in its full light, in its simplicity and with all the shadows and obfuscations of matter removed.²⁵

One does not have to believe in the existence of angels to appreciate the heuristic usefulness of such a "thought experiment." In fact, it was precisely an interest in the character of moral choice *per se* that led Kant to focus directly upon it, distinguishing sharply in his moral philosophy between will and inclination. When we recall the frequency of the charge that Kant's distinction between these two terms is an invalid abstraction, fundamentally misrepresenting the moral situation, then we may better appreciate the significance of the conceptual approach which the medieval theologians took in focusing directly upon the nature of the free choice of a pure spirit.

A. GOD AS THE SOURCE OF BEING AND GOODNESS.

Anselm argues that creatures receive all that they have from

²⁵ Jacques Maritain, *The Sin of the Angel* (Westminster: Newman Press, 1959), trans. by W. Rossner, S.J., pp. x-xi. This work originally appeared as "Le péché de l'Ange," *Revue Thomiste*, 1956, #2.

God; for God, as the Highest Being, is the cause of all other beings, and as the Highest Good, is the cause of all other goods. But it seems, interrupts the student, that God is the cause not only of everything that is, but also of everything that is-not. If this is the case, then not only all being, but also all not-being comes from Him. The argument is important to Anselm because he wishes to contend that evil has no ontological status—that it is nothing, or the privation of being. If God were the cause of not-being as well as of being, then it would be possible to regard Him as the Author of evil.

Anselm replies to the student's proposal by introducing two senses of the word "cause."

The one who causes something to be other than it was, or something to be different from what it is, is said "to cause something to be" or "to cause something not to be." We also apply these same expressions to someone who *could* cause something not to be, but doesn't, or *could* cause something to be, but doesn't. For example, not only is the man who attacks someone said to make him naked and undressed, but also the man who could restrain such an attacker and yet does not. But we say this of the first one properly, and of the second improperly. (DCD, Ch. 1)

When it is said that God "causes" the non-existence of things (e.g., their destruction or their not being created), the word "cause" is used in the second sense. But this second sense of the word "cause," states Anselm, involves an improper usage. For to abstain from exercising a power which one could exercise had he so chosen, may imply some responsibility for the continuance of a given state of affairs, but it does not involve the actual doing of anything. Rather, it involves a "not-doing" something; and hence it is improperly called a "causing" or a "doing." In his *Incomplete Work*²⁶ Anselm develops four causal modes. Every causing, he writes, is either (1) causing something to be, (2) causing something not to be, (3) not causing something to be, or (4) not causing something not to be. The third and fourth modes

²⁶ *Ein neues unvollendetes Werk des hl. Anselm von Canterbury* (Münster, 1936), pp. 29ff.

are not properly "causes" at all, for they are "not-causing." Hence, whenever we say that something was caused by someone's not-causing it, we are speaking improperly, and we cannot conclude from this to any "affirmation."

But this reasoning does not yet encompass all that Anselm wants to say at this point. For if it is improper to say that God "caused" a thing's non-existence by "not-causing" it to exist, we must account for the fact that we do speak this way ordinarily and that there seems to be some meaning in what we say. For example, we accept as intelligible the statement that "A man who could have prevented a death, but did not, caused that death to occur"—even though we do not attribute to the man any affirmative action. But we do not accept as intelligible the statement that "The sun caused a death to occur by doing nothing to prevent it." The difference between the two cases consists in the fact that in the former case the man *could have prevented* a death if he had exercised a power he possessed, whereas, in the latter case, the sun *could not* have prevented a death. Improper speaking about causality, therefore, appears to involve calling a "not-causing" a "causing" in circumstances where someone who is able to do a thing does not do that thing. Hence, Anselm notes that in ordinary language the affirmation (1) "causing something to be" is sometimes used for the negation (4) "not causing something not to be," and vice versa; and the affirmation (2) "causing something not to be" and the negation (3) "not causing something to be" are sometimes used interchangeably. (*Incomplete Work*) These peculiar "improper" usages seem admissible whenever we wish to assert that some person possessed an ability which he did not exercise, and hence is *responsible* for a given state of affairs precisely *because* he did nothing about it. So, for example, when we say that God "caused" the death of a man by "not-causing" that man not to die, we interchange modes (1) and (4) in order to fix a *responsibility* through improperly attributing a *causality*. We know that God did not do anything at all, and hence is improperly called the cause of this death. But because we know that God *could* have caused this death not to occur if He had so chosen, we say that God "caused" the death—i.e., He bears some responsibility for it. At this point, Anselm has handled the student's first objection by showing that God

is not the cause (in the proper sense) of not-being; the problem of God's responsibility for the occurrence of an event which He could have prevented (but did not) will be dealt with later in this introduction.

Having maintained that in general God is not the cause of the "not-being" of things, Anselm now focuses his argument on showing that God is not the cause of the state of not-being into which things fall once He ceases to cause them to be. He proposes the example of two men, A and B: If A loans B a suit of clothes at a time when B is naked, then A causes B to be dressed. When A takes back his suit of clothes, he ceases to cause B to be dressed—and hence we say, improperly, that A causes B to be undressed. By this act of reclaiming the clothes that are his, A does not really create the state of undress into which B falls, for B was naked before A gave him the suit of clothes; when A reclaims the garments, B returns into the state he was in before he was clothed. Hence, it is improper to say that A caused B to be undressed; i.e., it is improper to say that A caused the state of undress into which B fell when his garments were taken away.

Anselm offers a second example, which he evidently believes is identical with the first—a mistake from which a vast number of confusions arise.

When, as though through anger, God destroys a thing and removes its existence, He is not the cause of its not-being; but by His reclaiming what he had bestowed, then that thing which He had made and was keeping in existence returns into not-being. It had this not-being before it was made, and hence had it from itself and not from Him. (DCD, Ch. 1)

This comparison between reclaiming garments and reclaiming existence betrays the same tendency as the ontological argument in using existence as a predicate. A man may return to an original state of nakedness in which he existed before receiving clothes, but an object scarcely returns to an original state of not-being which it "had" before it was made. For before it was made, it was nothing, and could not be properly made the subject of the verb "to have."

B. GOD AS THE SOURCE OF THE POSSIBILITY TO BE.

Anselm now extends his argument concerning being and not-being to include "possibility to be" and "possibility not to be." If God is the cause of all being, then it seems to follow that He is also the cause of all possibility to be; conversely, if God is never the cause of not-being, then the possibility-not-to-be cannot come from Him. In the discussion which follows, the terms "possibility" and "ability" are used interchangeably as translations of the Latin word "*potestas*," which Anselm uses to encompass both the logical and the existential orders.²⁷ He takes up the problem of "ability to be" in the following manner:

Teacher: Do you think that whatever is nothing has nothing at all, and thus has no ability, and with no ability is able to be nothing at all?

Student: I can't deny this.

T. I think that the world was nothing before it was made. *S.* True enough.

T. Therefore, before it was, it had absolutely no ability. *S.* This follows.

T. Then before it was, it was not able to be.

S. I don't agree. If it were not able to be, it would have been impossible for it ever to be.

T. Before there was a world, it was both possible and impossible for it to be. It was impossible for the world, since the world had no ability to be; but it was possible for God, since it was in God's power to make the world be. Therefore, the world exists because God had the ability to make a world before there was a world, and not because the world itself possessed an ability to be, before it was. (DCD, Ch. 12)

In his treatment of this problem, Anselm has in mind the Aristotelian modal table (mediated to him through Boethius' commentary on *De Interpretatione*).²⁸ The table is usually written as follows:

²⁷ Anselm's tendency to fuse the logical and real senses of the term "*posse*," so that it means both possibility and ability (or potentiality), can be seen in the following text: "Et possibile et impossibile [mundus] erat antequam esset. Ei quidem in cuius potestate non erat ut esset, erat impossibile; sed deo in cuius potestate erat ut fieret, erat possibile. Quia ergo deus prius potuit facere mundum quam fieret, ideo est mundus, non quia ipse mundus potuit prius esse." DCD, Ch. 12.

²⁸ Cf. PL, 64, 367-370; 471.

(a) <i>possibile esse</i> possible to be	(b) <i>possibile non esse</i> possible not to be
(d) <i>non possibile non esse</i> not possible not to be	(c) <i>non possibile esse</i> not possible to be

According to this table, there are four modes of being (a, b, c, d), and these characterize two states of affairs—the contingent (a, b) and the necessary (c, d). Each of these states of affairs includes a kind of being (a, d), and a kind of not-being (b, c). To exist as (a) is to exist contingently; to exist as (d) is to exist necessarily; to not-exist as (b) is to not-exist contingently; to not-exist as (c) is to not-exist necessarily (i.e., to be impossible). Every contingent being must possess the two modal specifications (a) and (b); every necessary being must possess *only* the modal specification (d).

Having utilized this table in his discussion of the four types of “causing,” Anselm adverts to it again in his discussion of the “ability to be” of the world. In his argument that the world possessed no ability to exist *before* it actually existed, Anselm is concerned to overthrow the argument (which follows from the Aristotelian modal table) that a contingent being must have existed *in potentia* before it was actually created, because it *always* possesses two modal specifications (a, b).²⁹ But if the world possessed an ability to be before it was actually created, then it was not created *ex nihilo* for it already existed as a kind of total potency (e.g., Aristotle’s prime matter) even before it was made. Hence, in order to defend the thesis that God is the cause of all beings, as well as of the possibility that these beings should exist, Anselm must oppose the arguments that seem to follow from this modal table. He acknowledges that it would be impossible for the world ever to exist if there were no possibility whatsoever for the world to be before it actually existed; but he denies that it is necessary to predicate this possibility of the *world itself*. Before there was a world, it was impossible for the world itself to be, although it was possible for God to make

²⁹ Also see Desmond Henry, “Remarks on Saint Anselm’s Treatment of Possibility,” *Spicilegium Beccense*, 1 (Paris: J. Vrin, 1959), 19–22. Henry notes that Anselm specifically disagrees with one of Boethius’ examples of antecedent capacity, namely: “*Socrates poterat esse cum non fuit.*” (p. 19)

a world, since He had the ability to make it. Hence, the possibility of the world's being (before it actually exists) is properly ascribed to God's ability to make a world, and not to any ability the world itself had. In fact, even after the world has been made and, for this reason, has a possibility to be (for whatever is must be able to be), we must still distinguish between its possibility *per se* and its possibility *per aliunde*.³⁰ *Per se*, the world never has either its being or its possibility to be through itself, but only from elsewhere (*per aliunde*); the world's possibility to be belongs principally to God, who is the sole cause of the being and the possibility-to-be of every other thing.

After Anselm has put forward his argument that creatures possess no possibility to be before they are created, the student enters an objection. "I can't refute you rationally," he says, "but our common way of speaking does not agree with this [i.e., with the assertion that the world was not able to be before it was]." (DCD, Ch. 12) In reply, Anselm provides an amusing *coup de grace*: Aristotle's table of modalities rests, in the last analysis, upon conventional "improper" usages of ordinary language.

For we say many things improperly in our ordinary way of speaking. But when we wish to come to the heart of a matter, it is necessary to analyze, as far as the subject matter allows, the improper usage which is troubling us. Because of this impropriety of speaking, it happens that we very frequently say "a thing can. . ." not because it can, but because something else can; and we say that a thing which can cannot, because something else cannot. For example, I might say "A book can be written by me"; yet a book can do nothing, although I can write a book. (DCD, Ch. 12)

Once the systematically misleading conventions of ordinary language have been found out, there is no difficulty in denying that things possess an ability to be before they are actually created by God.

Anselm's argument has another interesting aspect. Anselm holds that even though the world does not possess its "possi-

³⁰ "*Per aliunde*" is not Anselm's term for specifying this distinction, but is that of Thomas, who picks up the distinction and uses it in the *Summa Theologica*.

bility to be" intrinsically (*per se*), still the world possesses its "possibility not to be" intrinsically (*per se*), because it was created *ex nihilo* and always has the possibility to return to the state it was in before it was made. On this view, the *possibile esse* and the *possibile non esse* of the created entity belong to it in different respects. For the world is "possible to be" *per aliunde*, and it is "possible not to be" *per se*. Because the sole intrinsic possibility of created things is towards not-being, Anselm—in the Platonic-Augustinian tradition—tends to think of them as constantly falling away into nothingness, constantly being drawn towards death and corruption.

The consistency with which Anselm treats the idea of the creation of the world carries through to his treatment of the going-out-of-existence of the world. The state the world was in before it was made is not the state of simple not-being (i.e., mode b), but the state of being impossible to be (mode c). "Before the world existed, it was not possible for it to be." Hence, if Anselm's statement that the world, once it is created *ex nihilo*, is "able to return to the state it was in before it was made" be taken in the strictest sense, it would mean that the world possesses the possibility to be impossible. And this is precisely his position.

C. GOD AS THE CREATOR OF NECESSARY BEINGS.

It remained for Thomas Aquinas to take up Anselm's problem again and to bring it to a successful conclusion. In the *Summa Theologica*, Thomas takes up the *per se/per aliunde* distinction that Anselm had brought to bear upon the modal table. By utilizing this distinction, Anselm had been able to ascribe a created being's *possibile esse* to God and had treated the creature's *possibile non esse* as a possibility to be impossible. Thomas sees that Anselm's introduction of the *per se/per aliunde* distinction with respect to the modal table allows for a new orientation of the theological problem.

Anselm supposed that the distinction between the two sides of the modal table (i.e., necessity/contingency) was the basis for differentiating God from His creatures; but Thomas bases this difference on the distinction between *per se* and *per aliunde*. If the principle for differentiating God from His creatures is not the necessity/contingency distinction, but the *per se/per aliunde*

distinction, then a wholly new treatment of the status of creatures becomes possible. For if the distinguishing characteristic of God is that He exists *per se* rather than simply that He exists *necessarily*, then it will be possible for there to be *necessary creatures*. And this is exactly what Thomas holds in the *tertia via*, where he reworks the argument *ex contingentia mundi* on the basis of this distinction.³¹

If the modal specification "necessary being" can belong to some creatures (e.g., pure forms and prime matter) as well as to God, then the last vestiges of Platonic-Augustinian dualism can be overcome. If God creates *ex nihilo* not only a contingent, but also a *necessary* creature, then such a creature cannot have the possibility not to exist.³² A necessary creature, like a contingent creature, has its being and its ability to be (or its inability not to be) only from God, and not *per se*. But if God were to remove His creative power from the necessary creature, then the resultant "state" would be truly nothing, for a necessary creature has no modal status apart from the creative activity of God Himself—who alone exists *per se*. Therefore, a necessary creature has neither the "possibility not to be" (corruptibility) nor the "possibility to be impossible to be"; it has no modal status other than its being both necessary and, necessarily, from God.³³ The superiority of Thomas' argument over Anselm's lies in its clear specification of this point.

Anselm himself could have made this move on the basis of the distinction which he introduced, but he did not do so because he subscribed to a theological tradition which regarded necessity as the distinguishing characteristic of God alone. In this tradition, the very nature of the creature *qua* creature was (at best) to exist *contingently*, or (at worst) to have a *potentia ad non esse* constantly wearing down its life. From the point of view of the Augustinian tradition, the affirmation that the creation might

³¹ See Thomas' use of the *per se/per aliunde* distinction in the *tertia via* (*Summa Theologica*, I.2.3).

³² On Thomas' understanding of necessary creatures, see Dermot O'Donoghue, "An Analysis of the *tertia via* of Saint Thomas," *The Irish Theological Quarterly*, 20 (1953), 135-140.

³³ Thomas' view on this matter is stated, and explicitly related to Anselm's *Monologion* argument, in *De Aeternitate Mundi*, par. 6-7.

exist necessarily was identical with the affirmation of atheism. And Thomas was accused of being atheistic in making it.

In the *Contra Gentiles* Thomas writes:

If anyone says that those things which exist *ex nihilo* tend towards nothing insofar as they exist from themselves (*de se*), so that there is a *potentia* towards not-being in all created things, then this is clearly false. For created things are said to tend towards nothing in the same way they exist *ex nihilo*, viz., only according to the power (*potentia*) of their efficient cause. Therefore, there is no *potentia* towards not-being in created things. Rather, their Creator has the *potentia* to give being to them or to cease giving being to them, since He causes the production of things not by any necessity of nature, but by His own willing—as I have shown above. (Bk. 2, Ch. 30)

Thus, the *per se/per aliunde* distinction, through which Thomas defined God as *ipsum esse* rather than *ens necessarium*, made a shift in the distinction between God and the creature theologically possible. The religious preparation for this shift—a change which took place long before Anselm began his work—was a new orientation of the soteriological interest of Christianity to the problem of sin rather than of death. As long as the religious problem of western man focused on death, it was required that the distinguishing mark of God be His eternity (necessity). But once the problem of western man became sin rather than death, the nature of God could be characterized in terms of some new concern.

D. THE MEANING OF “NOTHING” AND “EVIL.”

Anselm's defense of the thesis that God is the cause only of being, and never of not-being, has led him first into a critique of the Aristotelian modal table. In this way, he has argued that God does not directly cause either the not-being or the “ability not to be” of things, and that evil is only corruption, or privation of the being (or good) which God gives to things in the act of creating them. But this argument does not completely satisfy the student. For if it is really true that evil is only privation of good, then how can its consequences for the soul be so grave? And how can the name “evil” signify meaningfully if what it signifies is nothing? The student is contending that an explication

of the meaningfulness of the name "nothing" is propaedeutic to explaining the name "evil." If "nothing" is a name, and therefore is meaningful, then it must name something rather than nothing. And if it means something, then nothing is not really nothing, but something. Moreover, if "nothing" names something, rather than nothing, then the signification of the name is improper, for what we properly mean by "nothing," continues Anselm, is not something. Yet the name "nothing" appears to have a signification, for we use expressions such as "Nothing caused it" or "Evil caused it," which are similar in form to saying "Something caused it" or "Good caused it." Now if in these sentences the name "nothing" means something, then the signification of the name seems improper. On the other hand, if what the name means is really nothing, and not something, then it is hard to see how we can call nothing (or evil) a cause of anything at all. Therefore, the character of our language seems to be opposed to Anselm's *metaphysical* thesis that evil and nothing are really nothing, and not something.

The question thus posed is as ancient as Parmenides' poem and Plato's *Sophist*, for how can one talk meaningfully about what has neither attributes nor being? Parmenides, in arguing that not-being cannot *be*, had failed to distinguish the existential meaning of "is" (ἔστι) from the predicative use. On his account, even to deny something's existence involves a contradiction. "It is not an existent thing" is self-contradictory because "is" is interpreted as implying existence. So "It exists as not-existent" becomes straightforwardly contradictory. "It is no longer green" indicates, on this view, that it (a leaf, say) exists as something which does not exist (as green). By failing to distinguish the existential meaning of "is" from its predicative use, the Parmenidean account concludes that one cannot talk intelligibly about not-being, for contradictions will ensue. In the *Sophist* Plato is exercised by Parmenides' puzzle. If not-being did not have a kind of being, then false statement, so it seems, would be impossible. One could not, then, even think things which were not the case; and accordingly one could never utter a false statement without implying that what is not, in some way is.³⁴

³⁴ Εἶναι πως τὰ μὴ ὄντα δεῖ γε, εἴπερ ψεύσεται ποτέ τις τι καὶ κατὰ βραχύ. *Sophist*, 240 e. Cf. Bertrand Russell's early view: "Being is that which be-

Plato's solution moves away from attributing being, or reality ($\tau\acute{o} \acute{o}\nu$), to what is not ($\tau\acute{o} \mu\eta\delta\alpha\mu\acute{o}\varsigma \acute{o}\nu$). Such attribution he terms too daring ($\tau\epsilon\tau\acute{o}\lambda\mu\eta\kappa\epsilon\nu \acute{o} \lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma \omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma \acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\theta\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\theta\alpha\iota \tau\acute{o} \mu\eta \acute{o}\nu \epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota$).³⁵ Rather, a negative statement indicates only a state of affairs which is other than the state of affairs indicated by the expression following the word "not."³⁶ By means of this approach Plato is able to maintain that negative statements make no reference to not-being. What they assert is a state of affairs where objects participate in a multiplicity of Forms, one of which is the Form of Difference, or Otherness ($\tau\acute{o} \acute{\epsilon}\tau\epsilon\rho\omicron\nu$). These many Forms are said to interweave, or mingle ($\mu\acute{\iota}\gamma\iota\nu\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$). Thus "what is not, exists" means that difference exists, rather than that not-being exists. (*Sophist*, 258e) In this manner every negative statement refers to one or more Forms and has existential import.

Anselm inherits these puzzles about not-being and signification.³⁷ His proposed solution is twofold: (1) the word "nothing" means both nothing and something in different respects; (2) there is a thing which is both something and nothing. On the assumption that "nothing" means the same thing as "not some-

longs to every conceivable term, to every possible object of thought. . . . Being belongs to whatever can be counted. If A be any term that can be counted as one, it is plain that A is something, and therefore that A is. 'A is not' must always be either false or meaningless. For if A were nothing, it could not be said not to be; 'A is not' implies that there is a term A whose being is denied, and hence that A is. Thus unless 'A is not' be an empty sound, it must be false—whatever A may be, it certainly is. . . . Thus being is a general attribute of everything, and to mention anything is to show that it is." *Principles of Mathematics* (2nd. ed.), p. 449. New York (W.W. Norton & Co.), 1938.

³⁵ *Sophist*, 237a.

³⁶ Οὐκ ἄρ', ἐναντίον ὅταν ἀπόφασις λέγεται σημαίνειν, συγχωρησόμεθα, τοσοῦτον δὲ μόνον, ὅτι τῶν ἄλλων τί μὴνύει τὸ μὴ καὶ τὸ οὐ προτιθέμενα τῶν ἐπιδόντων ὀνομάτων, μᾶλλον δὲ τῶν πραγμάτων περὶ ἅττ' ἂν κέηται τὰ ἐπιφθεγγόμενα ὕστερον τῆς ἀποφάσεως ὀνόματα. *Sophist*, 257 b-c. See also 258 b.

³⁷ Augustine also raises the issue of whether the word "nothing" signifies. "So what shall we make of the word 'nothing'? Instead of saying that it signifies a thing which is nothing, shall we rather state that it signifies a certain state of mind in which the mind does not see anything but nevertheless has come upon not-being—or at least thinks it has come upon it?" Augustine postpones the issue. *De Magistro*, Ch. 2. PL, 32, p. 1196. There is no reason to think that Anselm knew Plato's *Sophist* directly.

thing," we see that this word signifies the complete removal of everything which exists. But one cannot signify something's removal without simultaneously indicating or signifying the thing which is to be removed. Thus "not a man" indicates the contradictory of "man." The meaning of "man" must be understood before one can understand the meaning of "not a man." In this sense "not a man" signifies *man* in the process of signifying the absence of man. Similarly, "nothing," since it means "not something" signifies *something*, in the process of signifying the absence of whatever is something. "For it is not necessary that nothing be something simply because its name somehow signifies something; rather, nothing must be nothing, because the word 'nothing' signifies something only in the sense we've mentioned." (DCD, Ch. 11)

The same kind of reasoning holds in the case of the word "evil" and its signification. Nonetheless, the student is dissatisfied with the argument, because the something which is signified in the above way is not what we are accustomed to call *nothing*. Either "nothing" is improperly considered a name or else what it names must, in fact, be nothing. But if what it names is nothing, then it does not signify anything at all and hence is meaningless. And if the word "nothing" is meaningless, then so too are sentences containing it. It seems, then, that the student's request for explanation is self-defeating. In the student's view, if one considers "nothing" to be a name, then, if it signifies properly, it will name nothing and therefore be meaningless. But if meaningless, it cannot be a name. Strictly speaking, the student is not entitled to ask for an explanation of *how* "nothing" is meaningful but is entitled only to assert that it *cannot* be a name (on the ground that, true to Parmenides, the notion of the word "nothing" naming something is self-contradictory). The teacher sees clearly that for this word to be meaningful it must in some fashion mean something, even if in the course of meaning it does not actually name anything. He springs his second approach by suggesting that many things are said according to our way of speaking (*secundum formam*) rather than according to fact (*secundum rem*). Thus, according to our way of speaking, blindness is said to be something; but actually it is not anything positive, since it is only the absence of sight where sight should be. So as it

happens, then, we merely speak of blindness as if it were something (*quasi aliquid*). Likewise, "nothing" and "evil" and "injustice" do not signify something according to fact; but when we say "Nothing caused it," we are speaking of nothing as if it were something. This second approach by Anselm (viz., to find a thing which is both something and nothing) actually reduces to a variant of his first—in the sense that he does not really find a thing which is both something and nothing, but instead addresses his attention to the way language functions. In a sense, then, his "solution" accords with Plato's in maintaining that when one says "X is nothing" or "X is not something," he is not really referring to, or asserting anything about, not-being. It differs from Plato's in not requiring the elaborate doctrine of the interweaving of the Forms (*συμπλοκὴ εἰδῶν*). The importance of Anselm's line of thinking lies in its awareness that "nothing" is a peculiar semantical operator, whose meaning does not depend upon a unique referring relationship. "Nothing" is indeed a name, as Anselm assesses it. And we use this special name as if there were something to which it referred. But it does not get its meaning from the thing which it names, for there is no such thing. Anselm's conception of language is thus flexible enough to accommodate the kinds of things we actually say—to accommodate them without giving rise to otiose paradoxes.

E. GIVING AND RECEIVING UPRIGHTNESS.

Anselm's treatment of the problem of evil has now encompassed the following points: (1) that neither not-being nor the ability not to be come from God, Who is Being and Good; (2) that evil is only nothing, or a privation of being; (3) that the names "evil" and "nothing" (or "blindness" and "corruption") mean something *secundum formam*, but mean nothing *secundum rem*.

There remain, however, two further issues to be considered before God can be cleared of being named in some sense the Author of evil. In the previous discussion of the term "cause," it was seen that even when causality is "improperly" attributed to a subject, it might be the case that a *responsibility* is rightly attributed—for even if the subject did not cause a given state of affairs to occur, he might have done so. Hence, if God is said

to "cause" evil when He does not cause that evil not to be, He might properly be regarded as responsible for that evil since He could have prevented it. Moreover, even if God is not responsible for an evil in this way (for suppose Satan sinned by a free choice which God could in no way impede), yet it might still be proper to call God a remote, or indirect, cause of Satan's evil deed, for God Himself gave Satan the instrument of the will by which that evil deed was done. Hence, Anselm must now take up two problems: (1) Could God have prevented an evil by doing a good which He chose not to do? And might we therefore call God the Author of evil since He has a kind of responsibility for the fact that it occurred? (2) Is not God the indirect, or remote, cause of an evil deed even if He could not impede it? For did not God cause Satan to have the free choice by which Satan freely "caused" an evil deed to occur?

Anselm first takes up the problem of God's responsibility for Satan's unwillingness to persevere in uprightness.³⁸ Suppose that God could have prevented Satan's defection from uprightness by not only giving Satan a free will, or an *ability* to persevere in uprightness, but also by giving him the gift of *actually using* this ability in order to persevere in righteousness forever. In such a case, Satan would not have sinned. But the fact that Satan sinned shows that God created a nature which was less perfect than He could have created. Hence, God did not do what He could have done, and He is responsible for the fall resulting from the imperfection of Satan's will. Had God created a being as good as He was able to create (and we know that God can give the gift of persevering in uprightness to creatures, for He gives it to the good angels and the elect), then Satan would not have fallen. Therefore, although God did not directly cause the Fall, He is responsible for it.

Anselm opposes the above supposition by appealing to the following considerations: First, God did not create Satan's nature with any imperfection, for God not only gave Satan the ability to persevere in uprightness, but also offered him the actual gift of persevering—which he refused. Secondly, Satan chose evil not

³⁸ The supposition developed in this paragraph does not appear in Anselm's dialogue, but is merely the explication of those considerations that seem to be implicit in the argument of the dialogue.

because his will was deficient in goodness, but because he preferred some other good to the good which had been given to him by God. (DCD, Ch. 4)

The ploy in Anselm's treatment of the problem of a rational nature's persevering in uprightness consists in regarding the gift of actually persevering as something which is not given with, but added to, the original created ability to persevere (i.e., something added to free choice). In this way, God can be regarded as having given (i.e., having offered) Satan the gift of persevering in uprightness (so that the creature lacks nothing, but is given a perfect nature by God); and yet Satan can be charged with the responsibility of having refused, by his own free choice, this gift of actually persevering. Hence, God cannot be charged with creating a less-than-perfect nature, for God caused Satan to be given every gift that is necessary in order to persevere in uprightness. Certain confusions implicit in Anselm's distinction between an ability to do something and the actual use of that ability have already been discussed earlier in this introduction. At this point, it is enough to note that Anselm employs this distinction in order to handle the problem of Satan's perseverance.

Anselm's argument begins with the student's noting that since every creature has received all that he has from God, actual perseverance in uprightness must be a gift. If the good angel persevered because God gave him perseverance then, contends the student, the evil angel did not persevere because God did not give him perseverance. In this case, Satan would not have been blameworthy. Anselm is able to show that the student's reasoning contains an elementary fallacy. From "If X receives something, then Y has given it" ($x \supset g$), it does not follow that "If X has not received, Y has not given" ($\bar{x} \supset \bar{g}$), but only that "If Y has not given, X has not received," ($\bar{g} \supset \bar{x}$). Hence, God may have "given" perseverance to Satan even though Satan did not receive it. (DCD, Ch. 3)

Anselm's argument strikes us as odd because we ordinarily think of "giving" as a dyadic term, i.e., a term which includes in its meaning not only an "offering" by a giver, but also an "accepting" by a receiver. But Anselm holds that "giving" is a monadic term, a term which has its full meaning in the mere act of of-

fering something to a receiver, whether the thing offered is accepted or not. On Anselm's supposition, "not-receiving" is not necessarily caused by "not-giving," for "even if giving were always the cause of receiving, not-giving would not always be the cause of not-receiving." (DCD, Ch. 3) God may have given the gift of perseverance to Satan, therefore, even though Satan did not have perseverance because he did not receive it. By means of this distinction, Anselm is able to maintain that God's giving is an actual cause of the good angels' having perseverance, while Satan's not-receiving is the cause of his not having perseverance. Because Anselm also regards "receiving" as a monadic term, so that receiving must be added to giving in order for any gift actually to be had, he is willing to affirm that when the good angel received the gift of perseverance, he thereby "gave it to himself."³⁹ By this argument Anselm is able to show that if the actual use of the ability to persevere in keeping uprightness is something which God gave to all the angels to accept or refuse, then the imperfection in Satan's willing to refuse it is not to be attributed to God (who gave Satan a perfect will) but to Satan (who refused it).

F. SATAN'S RESPONSIBILITY IN SINNING.

Now, however, a second line of consideration opens. For why did Satan refuse this gift? Was it because he *could* not receive it or because he *would* not receive it? If he refused it because He could not accept it, then his choice was not free; and if he refused it because he would not accept it, then it again appears that his original will was not perfect, but contained a weakness or imperfection for which God is responsible.

Anselm's argument against these considerations is to show that Satan's refusing to keep uprightness did not result from an imperfection in his will, but from a perfection. It is not the case that Satan sinned because he was "*unwilling* to keep his uprightness," but because he was "*willing* to desert it." Hence,

³⁹ "Because Satan was able either to remove justice from himself or not to remove it from himself, he was, in a sense, able to give justice to himself. In the same way, the good angel, who remained constant in the truth in which he was created, did not cause himself to lose justice when he could have done so. By remaining constant, the good angel gave justice to himself, even though he received all this from God." DCD, Ch. 18.

his sin resulted from the strength of his will (i.e., willingness) rather than from a weakness of will (i.e., unwillingness). Therefore, God cannot be charged with creating him with an imperfect, or deficient, will.

In order to illustrate this distinction, Anselm provides the following example: Suppose a lighted coal is placed in someone's bare hand. In such a case, his "*unwillingness* to keep it" is prior to his "*willingness* to desert it," and the priority of unwillingness to willingness, in this case, rests upon the fact that a man can be "*unwilling* to keep (or to hold)" a lighted coal in his bare hand *even before* he has it, but he cannot be "*willing* to desert (or to drop)" a lighted coal before he actually has it. Therefore, "*unwillingness* to keep" can precede "*willingness* to desert" in every case where (a) someone does not want something for its own sake and where (b) the thing is unwanted before its possession. These specifications do not, however, characterize Satan's situation with regard to uprightness of will. For Satan originally desired uprightness of will for its own sake, and was created having uprightness. So it cannot be argued, from the example of a lighted coal, that Satan's fall proceeded from an "*unwillingness* to keep."

Anselm now suggests a second example, from which the student can see that in certain cases a "*willingness* to desert" is prior to an "*unwillingness* to keep," and from which he expects the student to agree that Satan's fall resulted from this positive willingness to desert rather than from the imperfection of being unwilling. He says:

Suppose there is a miser who wants to keep his money, yet prefers to have bread, which he is not able to have unless he gives up some of his money. He wills to give up (or desert) some of his money before he is unwilling to keep it. For he does not will to give up his money because he is unwilling to keep it, but he is unwilling to keep it [only] because he must give it up to get bread. For before he had his money, he wanted to have it and to keep it; and while he has it, he wants to keep it as long as he has no need to give it up.

(DCD, Ch. 3)

From this example, it is seen that Satan's sin could be explained as resulting from the misuse of an ability rather than resulting

from the lack of an ability (an imperfection). For Satan's willingness to desert uprightness might have preceded his unwillingness to keep it. Therefore, it cannot be demonstrated that Satan's fall occurred because God created him with an imperfect will.

Anselm's example is not yet sufficient to demonstrate that God did create Satan with a perfect will, for although we know that Satan *might* have fallen in this way, we do not know that he did so fall. The matter is, therefore, inconclusive with respect to God's responsibility—for although we cannot know with certainty that God created Satan with an *imperfect* will, we do not yet know for certain that God created him with a *perfect* will. We could only know this if we could actually specify what it was that Satan preferred to the uprightness of will he received. So the student challenges Anselm to show what the analogue to the miser's bread is in the case of Satan's fall. "Show me what Satan willed to have that he didn't have. . . . Then, if nothing can contradict it, I will agree that it is true."

G. WILLING TO BE LIKE GOD.

Anselm now takes up the student's challenge and attempts to state what it was that Satan preferred to keeping the uprightness which he had received when he was created. What Satan preferred to justice (i.e., to keeping uprightness of will for its own sake) must have been a good, for Satan would not have preferred what is not-a-good to the good of justice—although he could have preferred *another* good to the good of justice. Anselm later notes that except for the good

ascribed to things by virtue of their good nature, there are usually said to be two goods and two corresponding evils. One good is that which is called justice, and injustice is its corresponding evil; the other good is that which seems best called benefit (*commodum*), and its corresponding evil is disadvantage (*incommodum*). (DCD, Ch. 12)

The *happiness* desired by every rational creature consists in possessing these beneficial things. Since Satan could not have sinned by willing the good of justice (because to will justice is, by definition, not to sin), he must have sinned "by willing some-

thing beneficial, which he neither possessed nor was supposed to will at that time, even though it was able to increase his happiness." (DCD, Ch. 4)

An interesting contradiction now develops in Anselm's argument. Satan must have sinned by unjustly willing a benefit which would make him happy. But what could this benefit be? It is incumbent upon Anselm to identify it if he is to convince the student that Satan's "willingness to desert," rather than his "unwillingness to keep," is the cause of his sinning. But how can we know *what* it was that Satan preferred? There appear to be two ways: by rational deduction and from revelation. According to Scripture the original sin is choosing to be "like God." Taking his direction from Scripture Anselm formulates an *a priori* argument to show that the original sin must have been a choosing to be "like God."

To this suggestion, however, the student objects: "If God cannot be conceived except as a unique being, so that nothing else can be conceived to be like Him, how was Satan able to will what he could not conceive? He was not so obtuse that he thought something else could be conceived to be like God." (DCD, Ch. 4) Here the student is utilizing Anselm's ontological argument (presented ten years earlier in the *Proslogion*) against the assertion that Satan could have willed to be "like God."

Anselm attempts to avoid this objection by distinguishing two senses of the term "like God." Perhaps Satan did not will to be "like God" as the *object* of his action, but willed some object which was really "less than God." However, no matter what object Satan willed, as long as that object was not something which God willed for him to will, he willed to be "like God." For when Satan willed *any such thing* (we need not name what it is), he "still willed inordinately to be like God—for he willed something by his own will, which was subject to no one else. For it is supposed to be characteristic of God alone to will something by his own will and to obey no higher will." (DCD, Ch. 4) Hence, even if Satan could not will to be "like God" as the *object* of his willing, he would have willed to be "like God" in the *rule*, or manner, of his willing.

This adept move does not save Anselm's argument, however. For in order to convince the student that Satan did not sin be-

cause of any impotency of will, Anselm has to identify the good which Satan sought as the *object* of his evil willing. If being "like God" were, in fact, the object of Satan's evil choice, then Anselm's argument would perhaps have succeeded. But Anselm cannot draw this conclusion because of the ontological argument itself. Hence, he equivocates on the meaning of the term "like God," and understands it to refer to the *manner* of Satan's willing. But, then, the *object* of Satan's willing is not identified, which is what Anselm was required to do in order to convince the student that Satan's sinning was a "willing to desert" rather than an "unwilling to keep." ("Show me what Satan willed to have that he didn't have . . . just as you have shown in the case of the miser.") Anselm fails to do what he promised, and from his argument there can be no certainty that God did not create Satan with an imperfect will.

Anselm now closes his discussion of this set of questions with an argument maintaining that the injustice in Satan's will (when he "willed to desert uprightness") is nothing. He asserts that willing justice is something different from willing happiness. Satan was created with both the will for happiness and the will for justice. Had he had only a will for happiness he could have willed nothing unjust (for he could have willed nothing just). Likewise, had he had only a will for justice, he could not have willed contrary to justice, and hence could not be called unjust. But since he had both wills it was possible for him to will something pleasing which, nonetheless, exceeded justice. When he chose some pleasing thing which justice prohibited, justice departed from his will. This absence of justice in the will (whereby the will returns to the state it was in [logically] prior to possessing justice) is injustice. So injustice is only the absence of justice; i.e., it is nothing positive at all.

H. GOD'S INDIRECT CAUSATION OF EVIL.

The question under discussion in the previous section—namely, "Could God have prevented Satan's fall by doing a good which He chose not to do?"—has been answered negatively. For Anselm has argued (although inconclusively) that Satan's fall did not result from any imperfection, or weakness, in his will. A second problem still remains to be discussed: Is not God the indirect,

or remote, cause of Satan's sin? For did He not cause Satan to have the free choice by which Satan freely "caused" an evil deed to occur? Anselm's approach to this problem is to affirm, first of all, that God is indeed the indirect, or remote, cause of Satan's willing, and then to introduce considerations which suggest that God is not properly the Author of evil, since He only authors evil willings insofar as these willings *ought to be*.

The first set of considerations bears upon God's indirect causality in the case of Satan's evil act. In the *Incomplete Work* (p. 30) Anselm distinguishes between direct and indirect causation by citing four ways in which a thing may be said "to cause indirectly."

(1) indirectly causing X to happen by directly causing Y to happen	(3) indirectly causing X to happen by directly causing Z not to happen
(4) indirectly causing X to happen by not directly causing Y not to happen	(2) indirectly causing X to happen by not directly causing Z to happen

Examples of the four cases are as follows:

- (1) We say that A has indirectly killed C because he gave a sword to B, who did the killing. (*causing B to be armed*)
- (2) We say that A has indirectly killed C because he did not give C weapons to defend himself. (*not causing C to be armed*)
- (3) We say that A has indirectly killed C because he took away C's weapons. (*causing C not to be armed*)
- (4) We say that A has indirectly killed C because he did not take away B's weapons. (*not causing B not to be armed*)

It is clear that God gave Satan the will by which he sinned. However, He did not give Satan this will because He wished Satan to be able to sin, but rather because He wished him to be able to keep uprightness for its own sake. Now the sense in which God indirectly caused Satan to sin by giving him free choice is that God did not remove Satan's freedom *before*

Satan sinned. For God to have removed Satan's free choice would have been for God to do evil, for He would thereby have removed a good. Therefore, by not removing the free choice by which Satan, before he sinned, was keeping uprightness, God did indirectly cause Satan's sin to occur. But this indirect causing of Satan's sin consists in God's doing a good, viz., in causing a will which was keeping uprightness *not* to be removed from Satan before he sinned.

Anselm has another line of reasoning (presented most fully in DV but presupposed in DCD) to show that God cannot be called the Author of evil. There are various senses in which we say that one and the same action both "ought" and "ought not" to occur. After first noting that an action may be judged both oppositely and similarly with respect to its agent and its patient, Anselm goes on to extend this distinction to the direct and indirect causation of one and the same act.

Now, actions may be judged oppositely with respect to an agent and a patient, or they may be judged similarly. (1) For when the one who gives a beating does so rightfully and the one who gets that beating does so rightfully, then the beating is judged fully right, because there ought to be a beating in both respects. For example, this holds true when someone who does wrong is punished by someone who should punish him. (2) In an opposite case, when someone who ought not to get a beating is beaten by someone who ought not to give a beating, then that beating is judged to be fully wrong, because there ought to be a beating in neither respect. For example, this holds true when a just man is beaten by an unjust man. (3) But when someone who does wrong is beaten by someone who shouldn't beat him, then the beating is judged to be both right and wrong, for the one man ought to get a beating, but the other man ought not to give it. (4) But if we consider any beating from the *point of view of divine judgment*, which is both wise and good, and if we ask whether it ought not to have happened at all, or ought not to have happened either with respect to the agent or with respect to the patient, then who will dare to assert that what is permitted by such wisdom and goodness ought not to have happened? (DV, Ch. 8)

Since we can affirm even of finite actions that in different respects they both "ought" and "ought not" occur, there is nothing in the

nature of our speaking which would prohibit us from saying that an evil deed both "ought to be" (with respect to God, who indirectly causes it) and "ought not to be" (with respect to Satan, who directly causes it). Therefore, in the sense that an evil deed "ought not to be," it is improper to attribute such a deed to God; for it can be attributed to God only in the sense that it "ought to be." Anselm's argument presupposes that God is constantly engaged in a providential ordering of free choices to a final just end. In fact, this is the essential concern behind his doctrine of the atonement in the *Cur Deus Homo*, which was written in the decade following the completion of the present dialogue.

Anselm now draws upon a final distinction.

S. Well, if Satan's ability to will and actually willing are something, then they are good and they come from God.

T. Both are something. The ability to will is only something good and it is a free gift from God; and actually willing, in its essence, is something good. For even though Satan's will became evil by willing unjustly, nevertheless it is from God, from whom comes everything that is something. Now, not only does someone have from God that which God freely gives, but he also has what he unjustly steals with God's permission—for just as God is said to do whatever He permits to be done, so He is said to give whatever He permits to be stolen. Therefore, since God permitted Satan to use that freely given ability for the purpose of robbery, Satan had the use of this ability from God.

(DCD, Ch. 28)

By capitalizing on this notion of permission, Anselm attempts to remove from God the responsibility for Satan's misuse of free choice. In permissive willing the indirect responsibility for an act is formally understood as being the least possible. In his *Incomplete Work* Anselm distinguishes permissive willing from three other kinds of willing.⁴⁰ There is, first, an *efficient* willing (*voluntas efficiens*), in which the will as best it can effects what it wills. In this way a sick man wills health, for he does everything he can to become healthy; and when he can

⁴⁰ *Ein neues unvollendetes Werk*, op. cit., pp. 38f.

no longer do anything, it is still true that he would do something if he could. Secondly, there is an approving will (*voluntas approbans*), which may be able to cause something to happen, but does not. Still, if that thing comes to pass, we are pleased and consent to it. I may agree that a certain poor man needs money but may not want to give him mine. Yet, I want him to have money; and when someone else gives it, I am glad. Thirdly, our will is sometimes *conceding* (*voluntas concedens*). A creditor may wish repayment to be in a specific form, but may concede to the debtor an alternate form of payment, not because it pleases him but simply out of consideration for the debtor's circumstance. Fourthly, the will is sometimes permitting (*voluntas permittens*). A ruler who does not restrain robbers within his dominion is said to will the evil they do because he permits them their activity, although he is able to curtail it. Anselm further points out that efficient willing is at the same time approving, conceding, and permitting; the approving will is also conceding and permitting; and the conceding will also permitting. By means of these distinctions he hopes to explain how God can be said to will (permissively) Satan's evil deed, while neither effecting, approving, nor conceding this deed. Thereby, even though Satan's actual willing to sin may be said to come from the Creator, it comes only by way of permission—and in this sense, and in this sense only, it "ought to be." In dealing with this final problem, Anselm has rested upon the distinctions of ordinary language by which a responsibility may be acknowledged, but made to seem so remote that it becomes insignificant for the problem at hand.

I. FREEDOM AND FOREKNOWLEDGE.

Anselm's argument now turns back upon itself. For with the very insistence upon Satan's freedom in sinning (so that God's causality is reduced to a bare permitting of Satan's free choice), it appears that God's foreknowledge (which is part of God's nature as Truth) is overthrown. For if Satan's act is truly free, then how can it be foreknown? Or if it is foreknown, then how can it be free? There seems to be no way to defend both God's Goodness and His Truth (which includes foreknowledge). In order to maintain his long argument on Satan's fall, without now imputing to God a lack of knowledge, Anselm must conclude his

treatise with a discussion of the way in which free choice and foreknowledge can be reconciled.

It will be helpful here to draw upon Anselm's discussion in *De Concordia* in order to explicate his view on this problem. If God knows that someone will perform a particular action, then (to repeat) this action will be performed by that person (come what may!). Hence, it seems, the action cannot be free. And if an event be genuinely contingent, it seems unforeknowable. Anselm inherits the problem about future contingencies from both Aristotle (Boethius) and Augustine.⁴¹ Aristotle had discussed the issue in relation to the notion of truth rather than in relation to God's foreknowledge. But the puzzle is much the same. Anselm's solution shows itself to be identical to Augustine's. Assume that an action occurs without necessity. God foreknows this. Therefore, it is necessary that this action occur without necessity.⁴² By similar reasoning, God foreknows not only that I will sin, but that I will sin with or without necessity. If I am to sin without necessity, then I will sin freely. Hence it is necessary that I sin freely.⁴³

A defense of this approach leads Anselm into two directions: (1) He must analyze the expression "It is necessary that" and (2) he must make clear how it is possible for God to foreknow events which occur without necessity (i.e., contingent events).

1. We often say, notices Anselm, that a thing occurs necessarily when there is nothing compelling it to occur.⁴⁴ So when we maintain that God cannot lie and that it is necessary for Him to speak the truth, we do not mean to assert that He is under any compulsion. Rather, we are suggesting that His disposition is of such resolution that necessarily there is nothing which can turn Him away from speaking the truth.⁴⁵ Furthermore, he continues, we may sometimes distinguish "X occurs by necessity" from "It is necessary that X occur." The former always suggests an element

⁴¹ Aristotle, *DI*; Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio*, Bk. 3; Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, Bk. 5. See also DCD, Ch. 21.

⁴² "Necesse est igitur aliquid esse futurum sine necessitate." (*De Concordia*, Q. 1, Ch. 1). S-246.9 (II).

⁴³ *De Concordia*, Q. 1, Ch. 1.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Ch. 2.

⁴⁵ CDH, Bk. 2, Ch. 17. S-123 (II).

of constraint, the latter does not. For oftentimes to say "It is necessary that X occur" is tantamount to affirming "X actually occurs." So there is a sense in which what has occurred, necessarily has occurred; for from the fact of a possibility's having been actualized, it follows that it was to have been actualized. Accordingly,

there is a preceding necessity, which is the cause of something's occurrence; and there is a subsequent necessity, which the thing itself causes. When we say it is necessary that the heavens be turned around, we are speaking about a preceding and efficient necessity, for by necessity the heavens are turned. However, subsequent necessity produces nothing, but is itself produced. Thus when I say that of necessity you are speaking, because you are actually speaking, I mean that it is impossible for you not to speak so long as you are actually speaking; I do not mean that something is compelling you to speak. For a natural chain of circumstances compels the heavens to be turned. But no necessity constrains you to speak.⁴⁶

To say "X happens by necessity" is to ascribe antecedent necessity. But "It is necessary that X happen" is sometimes used to ascribe only subsequent necessity. Just as it follows analytically from the statement of X's happening that X can happen, so it follows analytically from the statement of X's happening that, necessarily, it happened. Here the point of view is in the present, looking at something which has already happened.

A similar case would be if someone were to consider an event which was going to happen *as if* it had already happened. For example, suppose someone could foreknow that an event was going to occur. In such a case, it is known as occurring necessarily. But this necessity is more like subsequent than antecedent, or efficient, necessity—for although foreknowledge is based on the certainty of an event's occurring, foreknowledge *per se* does not necessitate its occurrence. It is possible to maintain that knowing what is going to occur does not determine what is going to occur by being its efficient cause. So when it is certain that something will occur, its being necessary that it occur is

⁴⁶ S-125.8-14 (II). CDH, Bk. 2, Ch. 17. Cf. Aristotle, DI, 19^a23ff.

not the same as its occurring by necessity. Put another way, the assertion "X is foreknown" analytically entails "X will occur," for part of what is involved in insisting that something is *foreknown* is insisting that it will occur.⁴⁷

2. A problem remains. Even if it is possible to suppose that some future events are so certain that they can be foreknown, is it possible to foreknow *free* acts in this way? In order to complete his argument about the compatibility of divine foreknowledge with human freedom, Anselm must explain how it is possible for God to foreknow a contingent event—for if it "really" may not happen, how can God foreknow whether or not it will happen? And if He does foreknow it, how can it really be contingent rather than necessary?

In DCD Anselm contends that Satan could not have foreknown his fall since it might not have happened; i.e., Satan could have willed other than he did and thus not have fallen. Now if by "foreknowledge" one means knowledge of what will certainly take place, then since Satan's fall was able not to happen, prior to its occurrence he could not have known with certainty that it would happen. Reasoning in this manner, Anselm adopts the Aristotelian account of the noetic uncertainty of future contingencies. He then allows for God's foreknowledge of contingencies in the future by claiming that, strictly speaking, God has no foreknowledge of future things but only knowledge of present things. It follows that God views all things as if they were present. He sees all free actions as completed, while *still* knowing that they might have been enacted differently from what they are. In the Divine Mind human (and angelic) actions done by free choice are viewed as having subsequent but not antecedent necessity. They are, therefore, contemplated as actually happening—and hence as certainly happening, or necessarily happening. They are contingent in that they are not the results of antecedent necessity. Yet they are certain (to God) because they belong not to future possibility but, as it were, to present actuality. Now, Satan cannot foreknow a possible free action—for

⁴⁷ *De Concordia*, Q. 1., Ch. 3: "si deus praescit aliquid, non addendo 'futurum': quoniam in 'praescire' intelligitur futurum. Nam non est aliud praescire quam scire futurum, et ideo si praescit deus aliquid, necesse est illud esse futurum." S-250.28-30 (II).

insofar as it is free, it might come not to be chosen; he cannot, then, foreknow whether it will occur or not. Anselm is, therefore, able to argue that finite minds can never know with certainty whether an action which it is possible for an agent either to perform or not (as he chooses) actually will be performed.

With two provisos, Anselm is embracing essentially the same position as Aristotle regarding future contingencies: (1) He shows no signs of adopting the Aristotelian doctrine that statements expressing future contingencies are neither true nor false; (2) he allows that since all actions are actual to God, God can know what we call the future without every future thing's thereby being necessitated. In the end, then, Anselm gives the following sense to "It is necessary that such and such an action be done freely": Such an action is present to the mind of God as a free action. Insofar as God views it as actual, it is already accomplished. Insofar as it is already accomplished, it was going to be (freely) accomplished. Insofar as it was going to be (freely) accomplished, then, necessarily, it was going to be (freely) accomplished. It is therefore necessary that it be performed freely.

Anselm's account of "It is necessary" does not always advance his general argument. For instance, when we say, "Whatever has been, necessarily has been" (or "Whatever is to be, necessarily will be"),⁴⁸ have we said anything more informative than that the proposition "Whatever has been, has been" is necessarily true? Moreover, it is misleading to express God's knowledge of someone's "future" (free) action as involving a necessity that so-and-so's action be freely done. It is indeed necessary that what God knows about the future will take place (and to be sure some things may take place without necessity). It is necessary because, as Anselm notes earlier, "God knows that X will take place" (contextually) implies "X will take place."⁴⁹ And here rests Anselm's argument. If God can know the future, then He can know not only what will happen but how it will happen. There is no *logical* inconsistency in supposing God to know that an agent is going to act freely. To inject into the discussion "It is necessary that . . ." beclouds rather than clarifies. It furnishes

⁴⁸ CDH, Bk. 2, Ch. 17.

⁴⁹ *De Concordia*, Q. 1, Ch. 3. See footnote 47 above.

the temptation to fall back into thinking that what is "foreknown" *must* happen, rather than *will* happen.

Anselm's discussion of evil takes many turns. His major concern has been to show that God is not the source of evil. Incidental to this concern, he has had to defend the possibility of speaking meaningfully about not-being—since, evil, as a privation, has no being. Thus, in order to assert meaningfully "Evil is a privation," we must know in what way it is possible to discourse about what-is-not. Though the particular form of Anselm's argumentation may in places border upon casuistry, the movement of his overall scheme is clear, directed, and coherent.

VI. *Notes on the Translation.*

A translator must always come to a decision about the kind of translation he wishes to make. A good rule is to let the nature of the subject matter determine in part the degree of literalness desirable. Thus a translation of the Scriptures might in most cases be expected to follow the original constructions quite closely. A translation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, on the other hand, must of necessity supply "understood" phrases and transitions in order to round out and make clear the nature and force of the argument. Aristotle's lecture notes are so condensed that they would scarcely make sense in English if rendered in utter literality. Such a rendition would not ordinarily qualify as a translation.

Since Anselm's arguments are highly dialectical, their force can only be preserved by supplying transitions from speech to speech and by making explicit each turn of the argument. Our aim has been both accuracy and clarity. We have sought at all places to preserve the structure of the argument and to make clear the point of view. To this end we have supplied italics, quotation marks, parentheses, and enumerations. The translation attempts to make Anselm's argument as intelligible in English as it was to his Latin-speaking students. Because the Latin dialogue is often so condensed that many transitions are not obvious, it has been necessary to expand these transitions. Chapter headings did not form part of the original manuscript. Their later addition was unhelpful since all too frequently they come

at places where the argument does not actually break. Occasionally they interrupt the student's speech (e.g., DCD, Chs. 23-24), and in general they do not serve to structure the skeletal argument (e.g., DCD, Chs. 15-16). However, these headings belong to a tradition of such long and widespread acceptance that Schmitt has preserved them in the critical edition, and we have reluctantly decided to do the same.

Anselm's Latin syntax presents no special problems of translation. His style is uncomplex and appealing. The considerations involved in the rendition of "*rectitudo*," "*commodum*," "*oratio*," "*essentia*," and other words have already been discussed in the introduction or are to be found in individual footnotes throughout the text. That there is not always an exact English equivalent for a single Latin term does not indicate a general lack of correspondence between Latin and English vocabulary and (more importantly) syntax. Indeed, the fact of such correspondence justifies the attempt to translate with a view to Anselm's thought and argument as well as (and sometimes in place of) seeking word-for-word equivalents. Anselm himself furnishes an admonition which might be taken as a motto for this translation: "We shouldn't so much cling to inappropriate words which conceal the truth, as we should seek to discover the genuine truth which is hidden under the many types of expression." (DCD, Ch. 1) Anselm can give such instruction because he holds that all languages presuppose and embody categories and concepts which are common to every rational being. (*Monologion*, Ch. 10) He is not unaware that there are differences between languages, and that there are subtle discrepancies between the order of reality and the order of language whereby the latter always contains some ideological element, or some bias concerning the character of things. In fact, he explicitly discusses peculiarities of Latin syntax, and gives an example of the discrepancy between language and reality in his discussion of the term "*percutientia*" ("beating"). (See DV, Ch. 8) In spite of his awareness of these relativities of language, he believes that they are not ultimately significant, because concrete languages are but imperfect expressions of the "inner language," or conceptual order, which every rational being comes to possess.

Our procedure in this translation does not presuppose a deci-

sion regarding the general relation between thought and language. For even if categories and concepts were totally embedded in, and peculiar to, particular languages, Latin and English are not so different as *languages* that the persons who speak them can be shown to be *thinking differently*. Hence, even if Anselm were said to be thinking "in Latin," he cannot be said to be thinking very differently from a man who thinks "in English." Peter Geach, in his recent book *Reference and Generality*,⁵⁰ is certainly right that Latin and English syntaxes differ insignificantly and that concepts available to Latin authors are in general translatable into equivalent English expressions. The striking exception is the absence of a definite article in Latin. Geach attempts to show the significance of this in philosophical thought. According to Geach, medieval Latin thinkers *could not* have had a theory of definite descriptions:

The lack of an indefinite article in Latin did not prevent the development of a theory remarkably similar to the theory expounded in Russell's *Principles of Mathematics* about 'denoting' phrases of the form 'an A'. The lack of a definite article, on the other hand, means that no 'theory of definite descriptions' may be looked for in medieval writers.⁵¹

But his claim is too strong. If, as he argues, medieval logicians could have arrived at a theory of indefinite descriptions although possessing no indefinite article, then the lack of the definite article should not rule out, in principle at least, the possibility of their having developed a theory of definite descriptions. It is well known that Greek has a definite, but not an indefinite article, and there is little reason to suppose that Latin authors could not comprehend the syntactical operation of δ , η , $\tau\acute{o}$ in Greek, or that they had no means of rendering in their own language a crucial argument which might happen to turn upon the function of just such a syntactical tool. Consider the following proposition: "*Hic qui nunc Rex Galliae calvus est.*" Medieval philosophers could and sometimes did use the combination of the demonstrative and relative pronouns in order to express

⁵⁰ Ithaca, New York (Cornell University Press, 1962).

⁵¹ p. ix.

uniqueness. Thus Anselm writes, "*Hoc quod dicis, est nihil.*" ("This thing which you are saying is nothing"; or, "The thing you are saying is nothing.") (DCD, Ch. 11)

A language which has a definite article may perhaps be more likely to generate puzzles about definite descriptions; but it does not follow thereby that a language without a definite article could not in principle naturally give rise to such puzzles. In fact, Anselm himself notes that substitutions of one kind or another typically occur within Latin syntax. Consider his example:

It is very well known that we are accustomed to use the perfect passive participle as a substitute for a present passive participle. For Latin lacks a present passive participle, just as it also lacks a perfect participle for active and middle verbs. So too, we can use the present active participle in place of this perfect active participle that we lack. For example, I might say about someone, "He teaches you what he learned while studying and reading (*studens et legens*) only when compelled (*coactus*)"; that is, "He teaches you what he learned while he studied and read only when he is compelled." (DV, Ch. 12)

Geach's failure to show that Latin has no substitute expressions which could fulfill the function of the definite article in either Greek or English disqualifies his discussion of the one major difference between English and Latin syntax.

Conclusion.

Anselm's philosophical dialogues deal with puzzles which are not new in the history of thought. But the analysis they bring to bear upon these puzzles and the specific arguments they utilize, confirm Anselm in the eminence he has been accorded as a major figure of medieval thought. In the last regard, the dialogues furnish a conceptual bridge between Augustine and Aquinas, a bridge which furthers the best traditions of medieval eristic. Anselm's concern with the notions of truth, freedom, and evil is not the concern of the speculative metaphysician, who introduces special terminology by which to generate additional

explanatory power. His concern is, rather, that of the dialectician, who uses commonly received language to explicate, analyze, and recommend.

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Truth, Freedom, and Evil:
Three Philosophical Dialogues

By
Anselm of Canterbury

Preface

At various times I wrote three treatises pertaining to the study of sacred Scripture.¹ They are similar in having been written in dialogue form—questions being posed by the “student” and answers being given by the “teacher.” I also wrote a fourth dialogue between teacher and student, which begins with the question whether the word “grammarian” signifies a substance or a quality.² I think this treatise not unhelpful for introducing someone

¹ The most important single study of the chronology of Anselm’s writings is Father F. S. Schmitt’s “Zur Chronologie der Werke des hl. Anselm von Canterbury,” *Revue Benedictine*, 44 (1932), 322-350. Schmitt’s conclusion respecting the composition of the major treatises is as follows:

Monologion; completed in the second half of 1076.

Proslogion; probably written about 1077-1078. The controversy with Gaunilo occurred the following year.

De Grammatico; *De Veritate*; *De Libertate Arbitrii*: probably written between 1080 and 1085.

De Casu Diaboli: probably completed sometime between 1085 and 1090.

Epistola De Incarnatione Verbi: the first rescension was finished before September, 1092. The final rescension was published about the beginning of 1094.

Cur Deus Homo: begun between 1094 and 1097; completed in the summer of 1098.

De Conceptu Virginali et Originali Peccato: written between summer 1099 and summer 1100.

De Processione Spiritus Sancti: completed in summer, 1102.

Epistola De Sacrificio Azymi et Fermentati; *De Sacramentis Ecclesiae*: written about 1106-1107.

De Concordia: written about 1107-1108.

² The translation is expanded here to incorporate the question from the first sentence of *De Grammatico*. For a survey of the controversy surrounding the translation of the first sentence of *De Grammatico* see Desmond Henry’s *The De Grammatico of St. Anselm* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964).

to dialectic; however, since it pertains to a different topic from the other three, I do not wish to number it with them.

One of the three is *Concerning Truth*: it asks what truth is, what things are true, and what is justice. A second treatise is called *On Freedom of Choice*: it asks what free choice is, whether a man always has it, and the number of distinctions proper to having, or not having, uprightness of will—for freedom of choice was given to man in order to preserve this uprightness. In this treatise, I discuss only the natural strength of the will for keeping the uprightness which it has received, and I don't go into a discussion of the necessity that grace should adhere to the will in order that it might actually keep this uprightness. The third treatise deals with the question why, since God didn't give Satan the perseverance which he couldn't have had without its being given, it was sin for Satan not to persevere in the truth. For if God had given perseverance to him, he would have had it—just as the good angels had it because God gave it to them. And although I spoke about the confirmation of the good angels in this treatise, I entitled it *The Fall of Satan*; for what I said about the good angels was incidental, but what I wrote about the evil angels was essential to the way the question was posed.

Obviously these three treatises are related, although not by any continuity of composition; but their content and their style require that they be bound together in the order in which I have mentioned them. It may be that certain persons have prematurely transcribed them in another order before all of them were completed; nevertheless, I want them ordered as I have listed them here.

—ANSELM

Concerning Truth

(De Veritate)

CHAPTERS

- I. That Truth has no beginning or end.
- II. On the truth of signification, and on the two truths of a proposition.
- III. On the truth of thoughts.
- IV. On the truth of the will.
- V. On the truth of natural and non-natural actions.
- VI. On the truth of the senses.
- VII. On the truth of the essence of things.
- VIII. On the various meanings of "ought" and "ought not," "can" and "cannot."
- IX. That every action signifies what is either true or false.
- X. On the Supreme Truth.
- XI. On the definition of truth.
- XII. On the definition of justice.
- XIII. That the truth in all things is one truth.

Chapter I

That Truth has no beginning or end.

Student. Since we believe that God is Truth, and since we say truth is in many other things, I would like to know whether we ought to believe that truth in all its forms is God. For in the *Monologion*, by appealing to the truth of a proposition, you dem-

onstrate that the Supreme Truth has no beginning and no end, by means of the following argument:

Let anyone who can, try to conceive of when the following proposition began to be true, or was ever not true, namely, that something was going to exist. Or let him try to conceive of when the following proposition will cease being true, namely, that something has existed in the past. Now if neither of these things can be conceived, and if neither proposition can be true unless there is truth, then it is also impossible to conceive that truth might have a beginning or an end. For suppose that truth had had a beginning, or suppose that it would at some time come to an end: then even before truth had begun to be, it would have been true that there was no truth; and even after truth had come to an end, it would still be true that truth had come to an end. But since these statements could not be true unless there was truth, there would have to have been truth before truth came to be, and there would still have to be truth after truth had ceased to be. But these conclusions are preposterous. Therefore, whether someone asserts that truth has a beginning or an end, or whether someone asserts that it has no beginning or end, truth cannot be confined by any beginning or end.¹

You argue thus in the *Monologion*. So I would like to learn the definition of truth from you.

Teacher. I don't recall ever arriving at a definition of truth there; but if you wish, let us inquire as to what truth is by looking at the various things in which we say there is truth.

S. If I cannot do anything else, I will at least help by being a good listener.

Chapter II

On the truth of signification, and on the two truths of a proposition.

T. Then, let's first ask what truth is in a proposition, since we generally call a proposition true or false.

¹ *Monologion*, Ch. 18.

S. Start with your questions, and I'll trust your answers.

T. When is a proposition true?

S. When what it affirms to exist does exist, and when what it denies to exist does not exist.² (I include this latter condition of a proposition's denying the existence of what does not exist because even then it expresses what is the case.)

T. Does it seem to you that the thing which such a proposition either affirms or denies is the truth of the proposition?

S. No.

T. Why not?

S. Because nothing is true except by its participation in truth; therefore, when something is true, it is because of a truth which is in that thing itself. But the thing affirmed or denied by a true proposition is not in the proposition itself, and so must not be said to be its truth; rather, it must be called the *cause* of the proposition's being true. Therefore, it seems to me that the truth of a proposition must be sought only in the proposition itself.³

T. Well, is this truth of a proposition the proposition itself or its signification or something in its definition?

S. I don't think so.

T. What's your reason?

S. Because if the truth of a proposition were any of these, then the proposition would always be true. For the definition of a proposition always remains the same whether the thing the proposition asserts to be the case is or isn't the case. And the proposition, its signification, and other such things also remain the same.

T. Well then, what is the truth in a proposition?

S. All I know is that when a proposition signifies that what is the case is the case, then it is true and there is truth in it.

T. For what purpose is an affirmation uttered?

² This definition of true and false sentences follows Boethius' commentary on Aristotle's *De Interpretatione*. PL, 64, 457ff.

³ Anselm uses "*oratio*," "*enuntiatio*," and "*propositio*" interchangeably throughout this section. Cf. S-177f. (I); 180.11. An *enuntiatio* is a proposition in the strict sense; i.e., it affirms or denies something. An *oratio* is an utterance which may or may not make an assertion; e.g., a prayer is an utterance which makes no assertion. Every true or false *oratio* is, therefore, an *enuntiatio*. Here, as above, Anselm is following Boethius. Cf. PL, 64, 434ff.

S. In order to signify the existence of what exists.

T. Then this is what an affirmation is supposed to do?

S. Yes, of course.

T. So when an affirmative sentence signifies the existence of what does exist, it signifies as it is supposed to.

S. Evidently.

T. And when it signifies as it is supposed to signify, it signifies correctly.

S. That's right.

T. And when it signifies correctly, its signification is correct.

S. No doubt about it.

T. Therefore, when it signifies the existence of what does exist, its signification is correct.

S. This follows.

T. Moreover, when it signifies the existence of what does exist, its signification is true.

S. Yes, its signification is both correct and true when it signifies the existence of what does exist.

T. So for an affirmation to be correct is the same thing as for it to be true, namely, for it to signify the existence of what actually does exist.

S. Yes, this is so.

T. Therefore, the truth in an affirmation is simply its correctness.⁴

S. I now see clearly that this truth is correctness.

T. The situation is the same when a proposition signifies the non-existence of what does not exist [i.e., in the case of a true negation].

S. I understand what you are saying. But teach me how to reply if someone were to say that a proposition signifies as it should even when it signifies that a thing exists which, in fact, does not exist. For such a proposition has the power of signifying that a thing exists both while that thing exists and when it doesn't exist. For if it didn't have the power of signifying that a thing existed even when that thing didn't exist, it wouldn't signify that thing at all when it didn't exist. For this reason, someone might argue that a proposition signifies as it should even

⁴ See Introduction, p. 18 for a discussion of "*rectitudo*."

when it affirms that something exists which doesn't exist. Then if your argument held true—namely, that a proposition is correct and true when it signifies as it should—it would follow that a proposition would be true even when it asserts that something exists which, in fact, does not exist.

T. Well, it is rather unusual to call a proposition true when it signifies that something exists which does not exist; nevertheless, such a sentence has a certain truth and correctness, for it signifies as it should *in one respect*. But when a sentence signifies that something exists which does, in fact, exist, it functions as it should *in two respects*: for it signifies (1) in accordance with its power of signifying and (2) in accordance with the purpose for which it has its power of signifying. Now a proposition is usually said to be correct and true when it signifies in accordance with that correctness and truth by which it affirms a thing to exist which does, in fact, exist; and we do not ordinarily call a proposition correct and true when it signifies only with that correctness and truth by which it affirms a thing to exist which does not, in fact, exist. For a proposition ought to be judged correct and true with respect to the purpose for which it received the power of signification rather than with respect to a purpose for which it didn't receive this power. For a proposition has the power of signifying that a thing exists when it doesn't exist, or doesn't exist while it actually does, simply because there is no way for the proposition to have only the power of signifying that a thing exists while it does exist or that a thing doesn't exist when it doesn't. So on the one hand, a proposition is correct and true because it signifies in accordance with the purpose for which it has the power of signifying; and on the other hand, it is correct and true because it signifies in accordance with its mere power of signifying. The first of these correctnesses can vary from time to time; but the second always belongs to a proposition. A proposition does not always have the first kind of truth; but it always possesses the second. The first kind of truth belongs to a proposition accidentally and follows its usage; the second kind of truth belongs to a proposition naturally. For example, when I say "It is day" in order to signify the existence of what does, in fact, exist, I use the signification of this sentence correctly, in accordance with the purpose for which it is made;

and so it is said to signify correctly. But when, by means of the same sentence, I signify the existence of what does not exist, I don't use it correctly, because it is not made for this purpose; and so, in this respect, its signification is said not to be correct.

Now in certain propositions, the two truths or correctnesses are inseparable, as when we say "Man is an animal" or "A man is not a stone." For the affirmative proposition signifies what is always the case; and the negative proposition signifies what is never the case. Therefore, we cannot use the affirmative sentence for signifying what is not the case (for man is always an animal), and we cannot use the negative sentence for signifying what is the case (because a man is never a stone).

We began our questioning by discussing the truth which a proposition has by virtue of someone's using it correctly, for our common way of speaking judges a proposition to be true in accordance with this kind of truth. We shall put off, to a later time, our discussion of the other kind of truth which a proposition must always have.⁵

S. Now that you have shown how a proposition can have a kind of truth even when it is false, please return to the issue you first took up—for you have distinguished well enough between the two kinds of truth.

T. Let the things we've just said about the truth of signification suffice for now. For the same notion of truth which we have examined in spoken propositions must now be examined in all the signs which are made in order to signify the existence or non-existence of something—for example, written characters or sign language.

S. All right. Let's proceed to these other topics.

Chapter III

On the truth of thoughts.

T. We also call a thought true when what we think is the case, either because of an argument or for some other reason,

⁵ The discussion of this other truth of signification is taken up in DV, Chs. 5 and 13; and this discussion is the argument by which Anselm "proves" that the truth in all things is one truth.

really is the case; and we call a thought false when what we think is the case really is not the case.

S. This is our custom.

T. Then what does truth seem to be in a thought?

S. Following the argument we saw to be true in the case of a proposition, we should say that the truth of a thought is best called its correctness. For we have been given the power of conceiving something either to exist or not to exist so that we might conceive the existence of what is and the non-existence of what is not. For this reason, whoever thinks something to exist which does exist thinks as he ought; therefore, his thought is correct. Now if our thought is correct and true simply because we think the existence of what is or the non-existence of what is not, then the truth of a thought can only be its correctness.

T. Your thinking is correct.

Chapter IV

On the truth of the will.

T. Now God, Who is Himself the Truth, says that there is also truth in the will, for He says that Satan did not stand firm in the truth. (John 8:44) But it was only with respect to his will that Satan was in the truth and deserted the truth.

S. I believe this. For he deserted the truth only by sinning; and if he had always willed what he ought to have willed, then he never would have sinned.

T. Tell me, then, what you think truth in the will is.

S. It is only that correctness of the will which we call uprightness.⁶ For as long as Satan willed what he ought to have willed—namely, the end for which he had received a will—he remained in the truth and in uprightness; and when he willed what he ought not to have willed, he deserted this truth and uprightness. So truth in the will can only be thought to be this uprightness, or correctness, of willing—because the truth, or uprightness, in Satan's will consisted only in his willing what he ought.

T. You are thinking well.

⁶ "uprightness" = "*rectitudo*."

Chapter V

On the truth of natural and non-natural actions.

T. We must no less believe that there is truth in actions, for the Lord says, "He who does evil hates the light" and "He who does the truth comes to the light." (John 3:20,21)

S. I see what you mean.

T. Then, tell me what truth is in regard to actions, if you can.

S. Unless I am mistaken, truth in actions must be sought by the same line of reasoning we used in earlier cases.

T. That's right. Since to do evil and to do the truth are opposites—as the Lord declares when He says, "He who does evil hates the light" and "He who does the truth comes to the light"—doing the truth is the same thing as doing good. For doing good and doing evil are opposites. Therefore, if doing the truth and doing good have the same opposite term, namely, doing evil, then they are not different in their signification. But everyone maintains that whoever does what he is supposed to do does what is good and what is right, or correct. So it follows that to do what is right, or correct, is to do the truth. For it is evident that to do the truth is to do what is good, and to do what is good is to do what is right. Therefore, nothing is clearer than that the truth of an action is its rightness.

S. I see no way of refuting your reasoning.

T. Consider whether every action which does what it ought may properly be said to do the truth. For there are rational actions, such as giving alms, and there are non-rational actions, such as a fire's heating something. Now, would it be proper to say that the activity of fire is doing the truth?

S. Since fire has received its power for heating from God, from whom it has its existence,⁷ then when it heats something, it does what it should. Therefore, I don't see why it would be improper to say that fire does the truth and what is right when it does what it should.

T. What you say seems right. Hence, we should note that the

⁷ "*ab eo a quo.*" Cf. S-183.4 (I); S-186.30; S-265.2.4; S-260.15. The reference is obviously to God. Cf. Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio*, Bk. 2, Ch. 19: *ab illo a quo sunt omnia bona, hoc est Deo.*

rightness or truth of an action is sometimes necessary, and sometimes not. A fire does what is right and true by necessity when it heats; but a man does what is right and true, out of no necessity, when he does what is good. When the Lord says "He who does the truth comes to the light," He wishes us to understand the verb "to do" not only in its proper sense but in a broad sense, as including all other verbs. For He includes under this promise with regard to truth or light the man who *suffers* persecution for the sake of justice, and the man who *is* in the right place at the right time, and the man who is *standing* or *sitting* when he ought to be, and so on. (Matt. 5:10, etc.) No one calls such actions examples of not doing what is good. And when the Apostle says that each man will receive judgment in accordance with his deeds (II Cor. 5:10), we must understand this to include all the things we usually mean when we speak of doing good and doing evil.

S. Yes, in our ordinary way of speaking we call suffering and many other things "deeds," even though they do not involve "doing." So, unless I am wrong, we can also number among right deeds the upright willing, whose truth we previously discussed.

T. You're not mistaken. Whoever wills what he should is said to do what is right and good; and so he is included among those who do the truth. But since we are discussing truth by examining it in a variety of contexts, and since the Lord seems to be speaking especially of a truth in the will when He says that Satan "did not stand firm in the truth," I wanted to examine separately what truth in the will might be.

S. I think this was a good idea.

T. So it is evident that one truth of action is natural and another is not natural. And we can see that the truth of a proposition which cannot be separated from it (which we previously discussed) must be placed under the category of the natural. For just as when fire heats, it does the truth because it has received the power to heat from God, from whom it has its existence; so also the proposition "It is day" does the truth when it signifies that it is day, whether it is day or not, since it is its nature to do this.

S. Now at last I see how truth can be in a sentence that is false.

Chapter VI

On the truth of the senses.

T. Do you think that we have discovered all the instances of truth, aside from the Supreme Truth?

S. I've just recalled a certain truth we've not yet mentioned.

T. What is it?

S. There is sometimes truth in our bodily senses—but not always, for at times they deceive us. Sometimes when I am looking at an object through a glass, my sight is mistaken, because it reports to me that the object I see through the glass is the same color as the glass; yet it really is a different color. And sometimes my sight leads me to believe that the glass is the color of the object on the other side of it, when really the object and not the glass has this color. And there are many other occasions when sight and the other senses deceive us.

T. It seems to me that this truth or falsity is not in our senses, but in our belief about them. The outer sense does not report lies to the inner sense, but the latter deceives itself. This is sometimes easy to realize, other times difficult. For when a boy is afraid of the statue of a dragon posed as if to eat him up, we easily recognize that the sight of the dragon doesn't cause his fear (for the boy's sight reports to him nothing more than an older person's sight reports to him); rather, it is caused by his childish inner sense, which does not yet know well enough how to distinguish between a real thing and its likeness. The same thing happens when we see a person who resembles someone else and we mistake him for that other person—or, again when someone mistakenly thinks he hears the voice of a man, though, in fact, it only sounds like a man's voice. His inner sense causes these mistakes.

Now, what you said about glass happens the way it does because when sight passes through a body which has the color of air, it is no more prevented from receiving the likeness of the color it sees beyond the glass than when it passes through the air.⁸ And this is always the case except insofar as the body it

⁸ Anselm's theory of vision is that the eyes emit a ray which goes forth to receive or assume (*accipere* or *assumere*) the color of its object. Cf. DL, Ch. 7. S-218. 27ff. (I).

passes through is denser or darker than air. For example, this is the case when sight passes through glass which has no color admixed to its own, or when we look through very clear water or through a crystal or through something having a similar color. But when sight passes through some other color (for example, through tinted glass), it receives the color which it first encounters. Thus, having received and been modified by the color of the medium, either it receives imperfectly whatever additional color it encounters, or else it doesn't receive it at all. Therefore, sight reports the color it apprehends first, and reports it to the inner sense either by itself or in combination with the color it apprehends subsequently. So if sight is modified by the first color up to its full capacity for receiving color, then it cannot at the same time sense an additional color. But if sight is not affected by the color in the medium so as to exhaust its capacity to sense color, then it can still sense another color. For example, if sight passes through a certain body, say glass, which is so thoroughly red that sight is fully modified by this redness, then it is unable to be modified by another color at the same time. But if sight first encounters a pane of glass, or something like it, which is not shaded a deep enough red to exhaust the capacity of sight to sense color, then it will be able to sense an additional color at the same time, up to its full capacity to receive color. Whoever is unaware of this fact thinks that sight reports that all the things it perceives in addition to the first color are either partially or entirely the same color. Thereby the inner sense imputes its own error to the outer sense.

We have the same kind of case when an unbroken stick, partly in water, partly not, is thought to be broken; or when we think that the faces we see in a mirror are real. So when sight and the other faculties of sense seem to report to us many things as being other than they really are, the fault is not with the senses, which report in accordance with their natural powers, but must be attributed to the soul's faculty of judgment, which does not clearly discern what the faculties of sense can and should do. I don't think I will take the time to show this in any more detail, since for our purposes it would be more tedious than profitable. Let it suffice to say that whatever the senses seem to report, whether as a result of their nature or for some

other cause [for example, because of a tinted glass], they function as they should. Therefore, they do what is right and true, and their truth falls under the category of the truth which is in actions.

S. Your answer has satisfied me. I see no need to prolong discussing this question.

Chapter VII

On the truth of the essence of things.

T. Now consider—still setting aside the question about Supreme Truth—whether we should think truth to be in anything other than the things we've already mentioned.

S. What could that be?

T. Do you think that there is anything, at any time or place, which is not in the Supreme Truth, or has not received what it is (insofar as it is) from the Supreme Truth? And do you think that there is anything which could be other than what it is in the Supreme Truth Itself?

S. No, we must not think so.

T. Therefore, whatever is, truly is—insofar as it is what it is in the Supreme Truth.

S. Absolutely. Everything which is, truly is—since it is nothing other than what it is in the Supreme Truth.

T. Therefore, there is truth in the essence of all that exists, because all things are what they are in the Supreme Truth.⁹

S. Truth is in the essence of things to such an extent that no falsehood can be there, since what exists falsely does not exist at all.

T. That's a good answer. But tell me whether anything should be different from what it is in the Supreme Truth.

S. No.

T. Well, if all things are what they are in the Supreme Truth, then without doubt they are what they ought to be.

⁹ "*essentiae*." Here "*essentia*" = essence, or being. In DCD it frequently refers to a being, or to the class of all beings. Anselm also uses "*essentia*" interchangeably with "*existentia*." Cf. S-190.10 (I).

S. Yes, all things are what they ought to be.

T. But whatever is what it ought to be, rightly is.

S. It couldn't be otherwise.

T. Therefore, everything which exists, exists rightly.

S. Nothing follows more logically.

T. Now, if truth and rightness are in the essence of things because they are what they are in the Supreme Truth, then it is certain that the truth of things is their rightness.

S. No conclusion is clearer.

Chapter VIII

On the various meanings of "ought"
and "ought not," "can" and "cannot."

S. But suppose we consider the facts of the matter. How can we say that whatever exists ought to exist, since there are many evil occurrences which certainly ought not exist?

T. But why should it be strange to think that the same thing ought both to exist and not to exist?

S. How can this be?

T. I know you believe that nothing at all exists except by God's causing it or by His permitting it.

S. I'm certain of that.

T. Would you dare suggest that God might unwisely cause or permit something to exist? Or would you dare suggest that His doing so might not be good?

S. I would say, rather, that God's doing or permitting something is always wise and good.

T. Would you say that what such a good and wise God causes or permits to exist should not exist?

S. What thinking person would dare think this?

T. Then whether God causes a thing to exist, or whether He permits it to exist, it ought to exist.

S. Yes, this seems clear.

T. Well now, do you think that the effect of an evil will ought to exist?

S. This is the same as asking whether an evil deed ought to exist; and no one with any sense would concede this.

T. Nonetheless, God permits some men to do the evil which they evilly desire.

S. Would that He allowed it less often!

T. Then here is something which both should and should not be. It ought to be, since it is permitted by the wisdom and goodness of God, without whose permission it could not have happened; yet it ought not be, insofar as it is conceived by one whose will is evil. In this way, for example, the Lord Jesus ought not to have suffered death, because he alone among men was innocent, and no one ought to have inflicted death upon him. Yet, in another sense, he ought to have suffered death, because he wisely and graciously and usefully willed to suffer it. So we see that opposite terms may be predicated of the same subject as long as these terms are applied in different respects and for different reasons. This is frequently the case when the subject is an action. For example, consider a "beating" (*percussio*).¹⁰ Now, a beating refers both to one who gives it and to one who gets it; i.e., both to an agent and to a patient. For this reason, a beating may be called both an action and a passion, though in different respects. Now, if we analyze the Latin word *percussio* (i.e., beating), we see that its grammatical form does not fully admit these opposites. For this word is built on the stem of the past participle of *percutere*; and therefore its form is passive, even though we can use it with an active signification. However, although we can use the word with this active signification, it seems, because of its passive stem, to refer more to the patient

¹⁰ Because the passage which follows depends upon distinctions present only in Latin, it has been rendered paraphrastically. The Latin: "Quamvis secundum ipsum nomen actio vel percussio et quae similiter dicta a passivis in activa significatione dicuntur, magis videantur esse patientis quam agentis. Quippe secundum id quod agit, magis proprie videtur dici agentia vel percutientia; et secundum id quod patitur, actio et percussio. Nam agentia et percutientia ab agente et percutiente dicitur, sicut providentia a providente et continentia a continente, quae scilicet agens et percutiens, providens et continens activa sunt; actio vero et percussio ab acto et percusso quae passiva sunt derivantur. Sed quoniam—ut in uno dicam quod in ceteris intelligas—, sicut percutiens non est sine percusso nec percussus absque percutiente, ita percutientia et percussio sine invicem esse nequeunt, immo una et eadem res est diversis nominibus secundum diversas partes significata: idcirco percussio et percutientis et percussi esse dicitur." S-187 (I).

who gets a beating than to the agent who gives it. If our grammar corresponded to the actual character of a beating, we would have not only the word *percussio*, (which seems to refer more to the patient who gets a beating), but we would also have a word for beating which was built on the active stem of the verb *percutere* and which would refer especially to the agent who gives it. Then, we would call the giving of a beating a *percutientia* and the receiving of a beating a *percussio*, and we would describe that one beating by two different words which signified its different aspects. But, of course, we don't use such a word as *percutientia* ordinarily. We simply understand that the word *percussio* signifies both an action and a passion, and we understand that it *must* signify both, because there can be no giving-a-beating without getting-a-beating, and vice versa. Therefore, a beating is said to be both an action and a passion—an action with respect to the one who gives it, and a passion with respect to the one who gets it. I will give only this one example, but the same thing holds true for many other words.

Now, actions may be judged oppositely with respect to an agent and a patient, or they may be judged similarly. (1) For when the one who gives a beating does so rightfully and the one who gets that beating does so rightfully, then the beating is judged fully right, because there ought to be a beating in both respects. For example, this holds true when someone who does wrong is punished by someone who should punish him. (2) In an opposite case, when someone who ought not to get a beating is beaten by someone who ought not to give a beating, then that beating is judged to be fully wrong, because there ought to be a beating in neither respect. For example, this holds true when a just man is beaten by an unjust man. (3) But when someone who does wrong is beaten by someone who shouldn't beat him, then the beating is judged to be both right and wrong, for the one man ought to get a beating, but the other man ought not to give it. (4) But if we consider any beating from the *point of view of divine judgment*, which is both wise and good, and if we ask whether it ought not to have happened at all, or ought not to have happened either with respect to the agent or with respect to the patient, then who will dare to assert that what is permitted by such wisdom and goodness ought not to have happened?

S. Let him say it who dares. I'm not that bold.

T. Now, let's consider the problem from the *point of view of the nature of things*, and let's take as our example the driving of iron nails into the body of the Lord. Will you say that His frail flesh ought not to have been penetrable by nature, or that his body ought not to have felt pain when pierced by sharp iron?¹¹

S. If it weren't this way, then it would have been against nature.

T. So it is possible that with respect to nature, there ought to be either an action or a passion which, with respect either to the agent or to the patient of that action, ought not to be—since either the agent ought not to do it or the patient ought not to suffer it.

S. I can't deny any of this.

T. So you see that it very often is the case that the same action both ought and ought not to happen, though in different respects.

S. You present this so clearly that I can't help seeing it.

T. Now there's one last point that I want you to learn; namely, that we sometimes say "ought" and "ought not" improperly. For example, I use "ought" improperly if I say that I ought to be loved by you. For if I truly ought, then I have an obligation to fulfill, and so I wouldn't fulfill my obligation if I were not loved by you.

S. It follows.

T. But if I ought to be loved by *you*, then love should not be demanded from *me*, but from you.

S. I must agree.

T. So when I say that I ought to be loved by you, it does not mean that I have some obligation, but that you ought to love me. Likewise, if I say that I ought not to be loved by you, then the only thing I mean is that you ought not to love me.

This same mode of speaking also occurs in conjunction with notions of ability and inability. For instance, we say, "Hector could be overpowered by Achilles" or "Achilles could not be overpowered by Hector." But there is no ability in Hector, who is conquered, but only in Achilles, who conquers him. And there

¹¹ I.e., it is the nature of a human body to be capable of being pierced and to feel pain when pierced.

is no inability in Achilles, who cannot be overpowered, but only in Hector, who cannot overpower him.

S. What you say is both useful and pleasing.

T. That's right.

Chapter IX

That every action signifies what is either true or false.

T. Let's return to the topic of the truth of signification. I previously took up this topic to lead you to the less familiar by way of the more familiar; for everyone speaks about the truth of signification, but few consider the truth which is in the essence of things.

S. Your approach has helped me to understand the problem.

T. Then let's see how extensive the truth of signification is. For there is not only a true or false signification in those things which we ordinarily call "signs," but also in the other things we have discussed up to this point [e.g., actions]. Now since a thing ought to be done by someone only because that person ought to do it, then by the very fact that someone does something, he signifies and declares that he ought to do it. And if he does a thing which he really ought to do, then he tells the truth; and if he does what he really ought not to do, then he lies.

S. Well, I seem to understand what you mean; but show me more clearly, since I've never heard these views before.

T. Suppose you were in a place where you knew there were edible herbs and poisonous ones, but you didn't know how to tell them apart; suppose too, that another person were with you, whose ability to discriminate between the two you trusted. Now suppose that you asked him which ones were edible and which were poisonous, and he pointed to one kind, but then, himself, proceeded to eat the other kind. Which would you believe the more: his word or his deed?

S. His deed more than his word.

T. So then, by his action he would be telling you more about which herbs were edible than he would by his word.

S. Yes, that's right.

T. Now, if you didn't know whether or not lying were wrong

and if someone lied in your presence, then even though he were to say to you that he ought not to lie, his very act of lying would outweigh this. Similarly, if someone thought or willed something, and if you didn't know whether he ought to will or think it, then if you could see his will and thought, he would signify to you by this very act that he ought to will and think this thing. Now, if this person really ought to be willing and thinking this, then by this willing and thinking he would be telling the truth; and if he really ought not be willing and thinking this, then he would be lying. There is also a true and a false signification in the existence of things, since by the very fact that they exist, they declare that they ought to exist.

S. I now see clearly what I had not noticed before.

T. Let's go on to the remaining topics.

S. Lead the way. I'll follow.

Chapter X

On the Supreme Truth.

T. You won't deny that the Supreme Truth is rightness, will you?

S. No. I admit it couldn't be anything else.

T. Although all the different kinds of rightness which we mentioned above are what they are because the things they are in either are as they ought to be or else do what they ought to do, nevertheless the Supreme Truth is not rightness because it is under any obligation. All other things are obligated to it, and it is obligated to nothing else. So it has no other reason for being what it is except that it is.

S. I understand.

T. Do you also see how this Rightness is the cause of all other truths and rightnesses, but that nothing is the cause of it?

S. Yes, I do. And I notice among these other truths that some are only effects, but some are both causes and effects. For example, although the truth which is in the existence of things is the effect of the Supreme Truth, this same truth is the cause of the truth which is in a thought and which is in a proposition; but the truth which is in a thought and the truth which is in a

proposition are not themselves causes of any other truth.

T. That's a keen observation. On the basis of it, you can understand how in the *Monologion* I proved by means of the truth of a proposition that the Supreme Truth has neither beginning nor end. For when I asked, "When was it ever not true that something was going to exist?" I didn't mean to suggest that the proposition which asserted that something was going to exist was itself without a beginning; nor was I interested in suggesting that the truth of that proposition was God. I meant only to say that, given the proposition, we could never conceive of a time when truth was not in it; and from the fact that we cannot conceive of a time when the proposition is not true, we see that that other truth which is the first cause of the proposition's truth, had no beginning. Indeed, the truth of the proposition could not always be unless its cause always were. For the proposition which says that something is going to exist, is not true unless something is really going to exist. And something is not going to exist unless it is in the Supreme Truth. We ought to understand the other proposition, which says that something has existed in the past, in the same way. For since every mind must agree that truth will always be in this proposition (given the proposition), then it follows that we cannot conceive of an end to the truth which is the supreme cause of this proposition's truth. For we speak truly when we say "Something has existed in the past," because, in fact, something has existed in the past, and something was in the past, because it is in the Supreme Truth. Therefore, if it could never have been false that something was going to exist and if it could never be false that something has existed in the past, then it is impossible that the Supreme Truth could have had a beginning or could ever have an end.

S. I don't see any possible objections to this argument.

Chapter XI

On the definition of truth.

T. Let's return to the investigation of truth which we began.

S. All that we were just talking about is pertinent to investi-

gating truth. But if you like, go on with whatever you wish.

T. Tell me whether you think there is still another rightness in addition to those rightnesses we've discussed.

S. I don't know of any other except the rightness which is in corporeal things, such as the rightness, or straightness, of a stick. But this is quite different from the other kinds.

T. In what way does this rightness seem to you to differ from the others?

S. Because it can be apprehended by the bodily sight; but the others can be apprehended only by the rational sight.

T. Isn't the straightness of material objects understood and recognized by reason without our even looking at them? Suppose there were doubt about whether the surface of an object which is absent were straight or not. Suppose also that it could be shown that no part of the surface were curved. Then couldn't it be rationally concluded that the surface was straight?

S. Yes, it could. But the same thing which can be known in this way by reason can also be perceived by the eyes, whereas the other kinds of rightness can only be perceived by the mind.

T. Therefore, unless I am mistaken we can define truth as the rightness perceptible only to the mind.

S. There's no mistake in saying this, for this definition of truth contains exactly what is necessary and is neither too broad nor too narrow. The word "rightness" distinguishes truth from everything which is not called "rightness." And "perceptible only to the mind" distinguishes truth from that rightness, or straightness, which is visible to the senses.

Chapter XII

On the definition of justice.

S. But since you have taught me that all truth is rightness and since rightness seems to me to be the same thing as justice, teach me also what I may understand justice to be. For it seems that whatever it is for a thing to be right is also what it is for that thing to be just; and conversely, whatever it is for a thing to be just is also what it is for that thing to be right. It seems to be

both just and right for fire to be hot and for a man to love someone who loves him. For if whatever ought to exist exists both rightly and justly, and if nothing else exists justly and rightly except what ought to exist, then justice is simply rightness. And although the Supreme and Simple Nature is not right or just because it is under any obligation to do or to be anything, nevertheless, rightness and justice are also identical in it.

T. If justice is nothing other than rightness, then you now know the definition of justice. And since we're speaking about the rightness which is perceivable only by the mind—truth, rightness, and justice are definable in terms of one another. Thus, if a person were to know what any one of these is but were not to know what the other two are, he could infer from his knowledge of one to a knowledge of the others. In fact, were he to know one of them, he could not keep from knowing the other two.

S. But if rightness and justice are the same, shall we call a stone *just* because it does what it ought when it seeks to move toward the earth—even as we call a man just when he does what he ought?

T. No, we don't ordinarily call a stone just on the basis of this kind of justice.

S. Why, then, do we prefer to call a man just rather than a stone, if both act justly?

T. Don't you think that the activity of a man differs in some way from the activity of a stone?

S. I know that a man acts freely, but a stone acts by nature and not freely.

T. And this is why we don't call a stone just; for a thing is not called just, even though it does what it ought, if it doesn't will what it does.

S. Shall we say, then, that a horse is just when he wills to eat, because he willingly does what he ought?¹²

T. I didn't say that something is just which willingly does what it ought; rather, I said that whoever or whatever does not willingly do what he ought is not just.

S. Tell me, then, who or what is just.

¹² Cf. DL, Ch. 5.

T. As I see it, you are asking for a definition of that justice which something should be praised for having, even as it should be blamed for having its opposite, namely, injustice.

S. That's the justice I'm seeking.

T. It is evident that such justice is not in any nature which does not know rightness. For any nature which does not will rightness does not merit praise for having it, even if it does have it. But a nature which does not know rightness is not able to will it.

S. That's true.

T. Therefore, the rightness which brings praise to a thing which has rightness is present only in a rational nature, which alone knows the rightness we're talking about.

S. It follows.

T. Therefore, since all justice is rightness, the justice which makes the one who keeps it worthy of praise is present only in rational creatures.

S. It cannot be otherwise.

T. Then where do you think this kind of justice is to be found in a rational man?

S. It must be either in his will or his knowledge or his actions.

T. What if someone were to think rightly and to act rightly, but not to will rightly: would anyone praise him for his justice?

S. No.

T. Then justice is not rightness of knowledge or rightness of action, but rightness of will.

S. It would have to be either this or nothing.

T. Do you think we have adequately defined the justice we are seeking?

S. You decide.

T. Well, do you think that whoever wills what he ought wills rightly and has uprightness of will, which is the will's rightness?

S. No, not if he wills what he should without knowing that he should will it. For example, suppose somebody willed to lock a door without knowing that there was a man outside who wanted to enter the house in order to kill someone inside. It may be that the man who locked the door would have some kind of uprightness of will, but he would certainly not have the uprightness of will that we are interested in.

T. All right. Now what would you say about a person who knows he ought to will what he does will?

S. Well, it could happen that a man knowingly wills what he ought to will and yet does not want to have this obligation.¹³ For when a robber is compelled to return money he has stolen, it is evident that he doesn't want to be obliged to do this, since he is compelled to be willing to return the money because he ought to return it. But he is not at all entitled to be praised on account of this rightness.

T. All right. Now consider the case of someone who feeds a poor, hungry man for the sake of his own hunger for glory. This person wills to have the obligation to will what he does, and he is praised because he wills to do what he ought. But what do you think about him?

S. His rightness must not be praised; and so it is not to be equated with the justice we're seeking. Show me now what *does* adequately define justice.

T. Every will, when it wills something, also wills *for the sake of something*. Therefore, just as we must consider *what* it wills, so we must also notice *why* it wills. For a will is no more upright by willing what it ought to will than by willing it for the reason it ought to will it. Therefore, every will has both a *what* and a *why*, since whatever we will, we will for a reason.

S. We all recognize this in ourselves.

T. But if a man's will is to be praiseworthy, for what reason do you think he ought to will what he does? It is clear *what* he should will, since a man who does not will what he ought to will is not just.

S. And it is equally clear that if a man's will is to be just, he should not only will *what* he ought, but also *because* he ought.

T. You have a good grasp of these two things that are necessary for a will to be just: willing what one ought and willing because one ought. But now tell me whether these two things are sufficient for the will's being just.

S. Why wouldn't they be?

T. When someone wills what he ought because he is compelled to and is compelled to will it because he ought to, isn't

¹³ "*Velle*" means both willing and wanting—wanting in the sense of consenting to or wishing for.

he (in a certain way) willing what he ought to will because he ought to?

S. I can't deny it. But he wills in one way, and a just man wills in another.

T. Distinguish these two ways.

S. When a just man wills what he ought to will, then, insofar as he is to be called just, he keeps uprightness of will only for its own sake; but someone who wills what he ought to will only when he is compelled to, or when induced by external rewards, does not keep uprightness of will for its own sake, but keeps it for the sake of something else—if he can be said to keep it at all.

T. Then that will is just which keeps the uprightness it has for its own sake.

S. Either this will is just or no will is.

T. Therefore, justice is uprightness of will kept for its own sake.¹⁴

S. Yes, this is the definition of justice I was seeking.

T. Consider whether something in the definition shouldn't be amended.

S. I don't see anything to be improved.

T. Nor do I. For there is no justice which is not rightness, and only the uprightness of will is called justice in and of itself. For rightness of action is called justice only when that action is performed with a just will, while uprightness of will does not at all lose the name "justice" even if it should be impossible actually to do what we rightly will.

Now as regards the word "kept," someone will perhaps say: "If uprightness of will is to be called justice only when it is kept, then the original uprightness of will is not justice and we don't receive *justice* when we receive this uprightness, but we make this uprightness become justice by keeping it. For we must receive and have uprightness of will before we can keep it. So we don't receive uprightness and have it for the first time because we keep it, but we begin to keep it because we have received it and already have it."

But to these objections we can reply that at one and the same

¹⁴ "*Justitia igitur est rectitudo voluntatis propter se servata.*" This definition of justice is the key to Anselm's conception of free choice, and hence is the link between this treatise and the one which follows it.

time, we receive uprightness both to will and to have. For we only have it by willing it, and by the very act of willing it we have it. Moreover, just as we both have it and will it at the same time, so we both will it and keep it at the same time; for just as we do not keep uprightness except by willing it, so there is no time when we are willing it that we are not keeping it. As long as we will uprightness we keep it, and as long as we keep it we will it. Therefore, since willing it and having it occur at the same time, and since willing it and keeping it do not occur at different times, then our having it and our keeping it necessarily occur at the same time. And just as we have it as long as we keep it, so we keep it as long as we have it. These assertions involve no contradictions.

Of course, the receiving of this uprightness is by nature prior to having it or willing it, since having it or willing it is not the cause of receiving it, but receiving it makes possible both the having and willing it. Nevertheless, receiving, having, and willing occur simultaneously, for we originally received and had and willed uprightness at the same time. Therefore, as soon as uprightness is received, it is both had and willed. Moreover, having uprightness and willing it occur simultaneously with keeping it, even though having and willing are by nature prior to keeping. Therefore, we receive justice from God, from whom we simultaneously receive the having and willing and keeping of uprightness of will. And as soon as we have and will this uprightness of will, we may be said to have justice.

The phrase “for its own sake,” which we included in our definition of justice, is essential because this very uprightness could in no way be justice unless it were kept for its own sake.

S. I can think of no objections to this.

T. Do you think that this definition can also be applied to the Supreme Justice—at least to the extent that we are able to speak about Something of which nothing, or almost nothing, can properly be said?

S. Well, God’s will is not one thing and His uprightness another any more than His divinity is one thing and His power another. Nevertheless, just as we speak of the “power of divinity” or the “divine power” or the “powerful divinity,” so it is also not inconsistent to speak of His “voluntary uprightness” or His “up-

right will." Moreover, if we say that the will's uprightness is "kept for its own sake," then it seems that this phrase can be applied to no other uprightness more fittingly than to God's uprightness. For just as nothing else keeps God's uprightness, but it keeps itself, and just as it keeps itself through nothing other than itself, so it keeps itself for the sake of nothing but itself.

T. Then, we can say, without any hesitation, that justice is uprightness of will which is being kept for its own sake (*quae rectitudo propter se servatur*).

[There is one last point touching the grammatical form of the verb *servatur* (is being kept).] Since we don't have a passive participle of the present tense in Latin, we can use the perfect passive participle of the same verb to express present time.

S. It is very well known that we are accustomed to use the perfect passive participle as a substitute for a present passive participle. For Latin lacks a present passive participle, just as it also lacks a perfect participle for active and middle verbs. So too, we can use the present active participle in place of this perfect active participle that we lack. For example, I might say about someone, "He teaches you what he learned while studying and reading (*studens et legens*) only when compelled (*coactus*)"; that is, "He teaches you what he learned while he studied and read only when he is compelled."

T. Then we did well to say that justice is uprightness of will kept (*servatam*) for its own sake, i.e., uprightness of will which is being kept (*servatur*) for its own sake. For this reason just men sometimes are called "upright in heart" (i.e., upright in will), and sometimes they are called simply "upright"—without the qualifying phrase "in heart." For no one is understood to be upright except one whose will is upright. Thus the Scripture uses both expressions when it says, "Let all the upright in heart glory" and "The upright shall see and shall rejoice." (Ps. 64:10; 107:42)

S. Your definition of justice will satisfy even children. Let's move on.

Chapter XIII

That the truth in all things is one truth.

T. Since we are talking about rightness perceptible to the mind alone, let's go back to that rightness, or truth (these are two names for the same thing), which is the genus of justice. And let's ask whether there is one truth in all the many things in which we say there is truth, or whether there are as many truths as there are things in which there is truth.

S. I'd very much like to know the answer to this.

T. It's evident that regardless of what things truth is in, truth is nothing other than rightness.

S. I don't doubt this.

T. Then, if there were as many truths as there are things, there would also be many rightnesses.

S. This is equally certain.

T. And if there had to be as many different rightnesses as there are different kinds of things, then these rightnesses would exist in accordance with these various things; and just as the things in which there is rightness vary, so too there would have to be a variety of rightnesses.

S. Show me what I may understand to hold true in all cases by explaining an example of rightness in one case.

T. I mean that if the rightness which is in signification [i.e., correctness] were different from the rightness which is in the will [i.e., uprightness] simply because the former rightness is in the signification and the latter in the will, then the former rightness would owe its existence to signification and would be changed in accordance with it.

S. But isn't this the case? For when a sign signifies the existence of what does exist or the non-existence of what does not exist, then its signification is correct, and it is evident that the correctness exists without which the signification could not be correct. But if a sign signifies the existence of what does not exist, or the non-existence of what does exist, or if it signifies nothing at all, then there will be no correctness of signification, since that correctness could only be in the signification itself.¹⁵ Hence, this

¹⁵ At this point Anselm returns to the discussion of the second truth of signification, which he promised to do at the end of Ch. 2.

correctness has its existence through the signification and changes with it—just as color has its existence or non-existence through a material object. For as long as a material object exists it is necessary that its color exist, but when a material object perishes, it is impossible for its color to remain.

T. Your analogy is faulty, for correctness belongs to signification in a different way from color's belonging to a material object.

S. Show me the difference.

T. If no one wanted to signify by means of a given sign what that sign itself was supposed to signify, then would that sign still have any signification?

S. No.

T. But wouldn't that sign still be correct, so that it is able to signify what it ought to signify?

S. Yes, it would; and correctness would still put a demand on it even when the sign was not being used.

T. Then even when a sign's accidental signification does not exist, the correctness by which that sign is correct and by which it is required to signify as it ought, does not perish.¹⁶

S. If this correctness, or rightness, had perished, then the sign would not be correct and correctness would place no demand upon it.

T. When a sign signifies as it ought to signify, then don't you think that its signification is correct because of, and in accordance with, this very correctness?

S. I can't think any differently. For if its signification were correct by virtue of some other correctness than the correctness by which it signifies as it ought to, then should this correctness, by which it signifies as it ought to, perish, the signification would still be correct by virtue of that other correctness. But no signification is correct which does not signify as it is correct to signify [i.e., as it ought to signify], or which does not signify as correctness demands.

T. So no signification is correct by virtue of any other correctness than that which still remains after its accidental signification has perished.

¹⁶ "accidental" is supplied in order to distinguish between the two truths of signification: one which a proposition always has, and one which a proposition does not always have.

S. Clear enough.

T. Therefore, don't you see that correctness is in a signification not because that correctness began to be when the sign first signified that what existed did exist, or what didn't exist did not exist, but because that signification accords with a correctness which never perishes? So correctness is not absent from a signification because correctness perishes when a sign does not signify as it ought or when there is no accidental signification; but correctness is absent from the signification only if the signification lacks this correctness which never perishes. Don't you see this?

S. I can't help seeing it.

T. Then the correctness by which a signification is correct neither exists from nor changes with the signification, regardless of how the signification changes.

S. Nothing is more clear to me.

T. Can you now show that correctness belongs to a signification in the same way that color belongs to a material object?

S. I can rather show that the two cases are quite unlike.

T. I think you now know what must be thought about the will and its rightness, and about the other things which ought to have rightness.

S. I see that you have proven by your argument that their rightness always remains, no matter how they may change.

T. So what conclusion do you think follows? Are these many rightnesses of things as different as the things themselves, or is one and the same rightness in them all?

S. I have conceded above that if there were as many rightnesses as there are many things in which rightness is considered to be, then it would be necessary for these many rightnesses to vary with the number and kinds of things in which they exist. But you have shown that this never happens. Therefore, the mere fact that there are many things in which there is rightness does not mean that there is a plurality of rightnesses.

T. Do you have any other reason for supposing that there are many rightnesses except that there is a plurality of things in which there is rightness?

S. Well, I see that the argument from the plurality of things is faulty, and I think that a better one than that can't be found.

T. So rightness is one and the same in all things.

S. I'll have to agree.

T. And what's more: if it is only when things are what they ought to be that rightness is in things that ought to have it, and if their being what they ought to be is the only reason for their being right, then it is evident that there is only one rightness for all these things.

S. I can't deny it.

T. So then, truth is one in all these things.

S. It's also impossible to deny this. Nevertheless, if truth is not something different in each thing, show me why we speak of "the truth of this or that thing" just as if we were distinguishing different truths. For many persons will be quite reluctant to concede that there is no difference between the truth of the will and what we call the truth of action, or the truth of something else.

T. We speak improperly when we speak of "the truth of this or that thing." For truth has its own being and is not really *in* or *from* or *on account of* the things in which it is said to be. But when things are in accordance with that truth which is always present when they are as they ought to be, then we say "the truth of this thing" or "the truth of that thing." (For example, we speak of "the truth of the will" or "the truth of an action.") In the same way, we speak of "the time of this thing" or "the time of that thing," although there is one and the same time for all things that are in time at the same time. Time would be the same even if this thing or that thing did not exist; for we do not say "the time of this" or "the time of that" because time is in things, but because things are in time. Now time, when considered in itself, is not called the time of any particular thing; but when we consider things which are in time, we say "the time of this thing" or "the time of that thing." So too, Supreme Truth, subsisting in and of itself, is not the truth of any particular thing; but when some thing is in accordance with Supreme Truth, then we speak of the truth, or rightness, of that thing.

On Freedom of Choice

(De Libertate Arbitrii)

CHAPTERS

- I. That the ability to sin does not belong to freedom of choice.
- II. That, nevertheless, Satan and Adam sinned through this ability to sin and through free choice; and although they were able to serve sin, sin could not master them.
- III. How, after they had made themselves servants of sin, Satan and Adam still had free choice; and what free choice is.
- IV. How Satan and Adam have the ability to keep an uprightness which is no longer theirs.
- V. That no temptation compels one to sin against his will.
- VI. How our will is the power against temptations although it appears to be powerless against them.
- VII. How the will is stronger than temptation, even when it is overcome by temptation.
- VIII. That even God is not able to remove the uprightness of will.
- IX. That nothing is more free than an upright will.
- X. In what sense someone who sins is a servant of sin; and that it is more miraculous when God gives uprightness back to one who has deserted it than when He gives back life to the dead.
- XI. That servitude to sin does not destroy freedom of choice.
- XII. Why we would rather say "A man is free even when he does not have uprightness, because it could not be taken away from him *if* he had it" than say "A man is a servant even when he has uprightness, because he could not recover it by his own power *if* he did not have it."

- XIII. That "the ability to keep uprightness of will for its own sake" is the complete definition of freedom of choice.
- XIV. The distinctions appropriate to freedom.

Chapter I

That the ability to sin does not belong to freedom of choice.

Student. Since free choice seems to be opposed to the grace, predestination, and foreknowledge of God, I desire to know what freedom of choice is, and whether we always have it. For if freedom of choice consists in being able both to sin and not to sin (as some men say) and if we always have free choice, how is it that we sometimes need grace? But if we do not always have free choice, why is sin imputed to us since we sin without a free choice?

Teacher. I don't think that freedom of choice is the ability either to sin or not to sin. Indeed, if this were its definition, then neither God nor the angels who are not able to sin would have free choice. But to say that they have no free choice is blasphemous.

S. What if we were to say that the free choice of God and of the good angels is different from ours?

T. Although the free choice of men differs from that of God and the good angels, nevertheless the definition of this freedom ought to be the same in both cases in accordance with the name "freedom," which is used in both. For example, although animals differ from one another either accidentally or essentially, the definition is the same for all animals insofar as it defines *animal*.¹ For this reason, we should give a definition of "free choice" which is neither too broad nor too narrow. Now, since God and the good angels are unable to sin by free choice, the "ability to sin" does not belong to the definition of free choice. Therefore, neither freedom nor a part of freedom consists in having the ability to sin. Pay attention to what I'm going to say in order that you may understand this clearly.

S. I'm here to learn.

¹ Cf. Aristotle, *Categories*, 1st 10.

T. Which will seems the more free to you: the will whose ability not to sin is such that it can in no way be turned away from the uprightness of not sinning, or the will which can in some way be turned to sinning?

S. It still seems to me that the second will, which is able either to sin or not sin, is the more free.

T. But don't you see that someone who possesses what is fitting and advantageous in such a way that he can't lose it is more free than someone else who possesses the same thing in such a way that he can lose it and be drawn towards what is unfitting and disadvantageous?

S. I think no one doubts this.

T. And is it any less doubtful that sinning is always unfitting and harmful?

S. No one of sound mind thinks otherwise.

T. Then, the will which is not able to be turned away from the uprightness of not sinning is more free than the will which can desert its uprightness.

S. This seems the most reasonable thing that can be maintained.

T. Now, do you think that something which, when added, decreases freedom and which, when subtracted, increases it is either freedom or a part of freedom?

S. I don't see how it can be.

T. Then the ability to sin, which, when added to the will decreases the will's freedom, and when taken away from the will increases its freedom, is itself neither freedom nor a part of freedom.

S. Nothing follows more logically.

Chapter II

That, nevertheless, Satan and Adam sinned through this ability to sin and through free choice; and although they were able to serve sin, sin could not master them.

T. Therefore, whatever is extraneous to freedom does not belong to freedom of choice.

S. I can't at all object to your reasoning; but it rather disturbs

me that an ability to sin originally belonged to the nature of men and angels, for without this ability men and angels would not have sinned. Yet if they sinned through this ability to sin which does not belong to free choice, how shall we say that they sinned by free choice? And if they did not sin by free choice, then it seems that they sinned out of necessity; for certainly they sinned either of their own accord or out of necessity. If they sinned of their own accord, how could it not have been by free choice? And if they did not sin by free choice, then it seems that they certainly sinned out of necessity.

There is something else which bothers me about this ability to sin. Whoever is able to sin is able to be a servant of sin, since "He who does sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34); but whoever can be the servant of sin is able to be mastered by sin. How, then, was that nature of men and angels created free, or what kind of free choice did men and angels have, if sin could be its master?

T. It was through an ability to sin, and of their own accord, and by free choice, and out of no necessity, that human and angelic nature could serve sin and first sinned. Nevertheless, sin could not master this nature to such an extent that either it or its choice could be called unfree.

S. You had better reveal what you mean because it is concealed from me.

T. Because the apostate angel [Satan] and the first man [Adam] sinned by their own choice, which was so free that it could not be compelled by any other thing to sin, they sinned by free choice. Therefore, they are justly blamed, because although they had this freedom of choice, with no external factor or necessity constraining them to sin, they sinned, and sinned of their own accord. They sinned through their own choice, which was free, and not through that by which it was free, namely, the ability not to sin and not to serve sin. Rather, they sinned by the ability they had for sinning, which neither helped them towards the freedom of not sinning nor compelled them into the service of sin.²

² This distinction between the power of freely choosing and the sake for which this power was given, namely, in order not to sin and not to serve sin, parallels Anselm's earlier distinction between the two truths of a proposition. Cf. DV, Ch. 2. See Introduction pp. 27f.

But what seems to you to follow—namely, that if they were able to be servants of sin, then sin was able to master them so that neither they nor their choice was free—is not right. For example, consider someone who, although able to serve by his own ability, has the ability not to serve and is not being compelled to serve by anyone else: as long as such a person doesn't use his ability for serving, but uses the ability he has for not serving, nothing is able to master him and force him to serve. For example, even if a free rich man were able to make himself the servant of a poor man, he is properly described as free as long as he doesn't do this; and the poor man is not said to be able to be his master. (Or if it is said that the poor man can master the rich man, it is said improperly—because ruling is not in his power but in the rich man's power.) From this example we see that nothing prevents either Satan or Adam from having had free choice and from having been free before they sinned.

Chapter III

How, after they had made themselves
servants of sin, Satan and Adam still
had free choice; and what free choice is.

S. You have convinced me that, before Satan and Adam had sinned, certainly nothing prevented their choice being free. But after they had made themselves servants of sin, how could they have kept free choice?

T. Although they yielded themselves to sin, they could not abolish in themselves their natural freedom of choice. However, they could so affect their state that they were not able to use that freedom except by a different grace from that which they had before their fall.

S. I believe what you are saying, but I would like to understand it.

T. Let us first examine what kind of freedom of choice they had before they sinned, since it is obvious that they had free choice then.

S. I am eager to.

T. For what purpose does it seem to you that they had free-

dom of choice? Was it in order to attain what they willed, or was it in order to will what they ought to will and what was advantageous for them to will?

S. To will what they ought to will and what was advantageous for them to will.

T. Therefore, they had freedom of choice for the sake of having uprightness of will. And as long as they willed what they ought to have willed, they had uprightness of will.

S. That's right.

T. But when we say that they had freedom in order to have uprightness of will, there still remains some uncertainty unless we add something else. So let me ask why they had this freedom for uprightness of will: (1) Was it for the purpose of acquiring uprightness, without anyone's giving it, when they didn't yet have it? (2) Or was it for receiving what they didn't yet have, if it were given to them? (3) Or was it for deserting what they had received and for later reclaiming, by their own means, what they had deserted? (4) Or was it for constantly keeping what they originally had received?

S. (1) I don't think that they had freedom for the purpose of acquiring uprightness without anyone's giving it, because they were unable to have anything except by having received it. (2) And we ought not to say that they had freedom for the purpose of receiving, from a giver, the uprightness which they didn't have, because we have to believe that they were created with upright wills—although we must not deny that they had freedom for receiving this same uprightness again, should they once desert it and were it returned to them by the one who originally gave it. We often see an evidence of this in men who are led back to justice from injustice by heavenly grace.

T. It is true, as you say, that Satan and Adam were able to receive back their lost uprightness if it were given to them. But we are not here asking about that freedom which someone would need only after he had deserted the truth; rather, we are here asking about that freedom which Satan and Adam possessed before they sinned—for they surely had free choice then.

S. Well then, I shall proceed to reply to what remains of your question. (3) It is not true that they had freedom in order to desert uprightness, for to desert uprightness of will is to sin, and

you have shown that the ability to sin is neither itself freedom nor a part of freedom. Therefore, they did not receive freedom in order to reclaim, by their own means, the uprightness which they had deserted, since this uprightness was given to the end that it never be deserted. For the power of reclaiming what one has deserted would itself beget a negligence toward keeping what one originally had. (4) But the fourth alternative holds true, namely, that freedom of choice was given to rational nature in order to keep that uprightness of will which it had originally received.

T. You have given a good reply to my questions. But now we must examine the reason why a rational nature was under obligation to keep that uprightness: was it for the sake of the uprightness itself or was it for the sake of something else?

S. If freedom had not been given to rational nature in order to keep uprightness of will for its own sake, then freedom would have been of no avail for justice, since it is evident that justice is uprightness of will kept for itself alone. But we believe that freedom of choice avails to justice; therefore, we must maintain incontrovertibly that the rational nature did not receive freedom except for keeping uprightness of will for its own sake.

T. And since all freedom is ability, freedom of choice is the ability to keep uprightness of will for itself alone.

S. It couldn't be anything else.

T. So it is now clear that free choice is nothing other than a choice which is able to keep uprightness of will for the sake of this uprightness itself.

S. This is certainly obvious, and as long as a rational nature has this uprightness it is able to keep it; but after it has deserted uprightness, how is it able to keep what it no longer has? For after the uprightness which is able to be kept is gone, then the definition of free choice can no longer be "a choice which is able to keep uprightness." For what is not in one's possession cannot be kept.

T. Even if uprightness of will were absent, the rational nature would still have what essentially belongs to it. For it strikes me that we have no ability which, if taken by itself alone, would suffice to any actual deed; nevertheless, when those things are absent without which our abilities cannot do the least thing, we

are still said to have these abilities in us without any diminution. In the same way, any instrument, taken by itself alone, does not suffice to do anything; nevertheless, even when those conditions necessary for its use are not present, we are still properly said to have the instrument for doing a certain kind of work. You often notice this fact. For example, no one who has sight is ever said to be unable to see a mountain.

S. If someone can't see a mountain, then he surely has no sight.

T. So, anyone who has sight has the ability and the instrument for seeing a mountain. But if there were no mountain around, and you said to someone "See the mountain," he would answer: "I can't, because there is no mountain around; but if there were one, I could see it." Yet suppose there were a mountain, but no light; and suppose you said "See the mountain." This time he would reply to you, "I can't see it because there is no light; but if there were light, I could see it." Or suppose, in another case, that the man were to have sight, and that there were a mountain, and that light were present, but something obstructed his vision—as if someone covered the man's eyes—then he would say, "I can't see the mountain." But if nothing obstructed his vision, then, without doubt, he could see the mountain.

S. Everyone knows all this.

T. So don't you understand that the ability to see any given body is one power in the seeing, a second power in the thing to be seen, and a third power in something in between, which is neither in the seeing nor in the thing to be seen? And isn't this third power which is in something in between to be distinguished into (3a) a power which helps the sight, and (3b) something which doesn't hinder sight, i.e., something which could impede seeing but does not?

S. I see this clearly.

T. Therefore, these powers are four in number [i.e., 1, 2, 3a, 3b], and if ever any one of them is missing, the other three are not able to accomplish anything either singularly or collectively. Nevertheless, in the absence of any of these, we don't deny either that a man who has sight is able to see (i.e., we don't deny that he has the instrument, or ability, for seeing), or that a visible object can be seen, or that light aids his sight.

Chapter IV

How Satan and Adam have the ability
to keep an uprightness which is no longer theirs.

T. The fourth thing we mentioned above [i.e., 3b] is called a “power” improperly. For we say that the removal of a thing which impedes our sight will give us “the power to see” only because it can *obstruct* our seeing, not because it can *aid* our sight.

And, with respect to seeing light itself, we enumerate not four, but only three terms; for in this case, the thing to be seen [i.e., 2] and the thing which aids our sight [i.e., 3a] are one and the same. Doesn’t everyone know this?

S. Certainly no one is ignorant of it.

T. Finally, even if we were not in the presence of an object which could be seen, and if we were placed in darkness and had our eyes closed or covered, we would still have the ability (as far as we ourselves are concerned) to see any visible thing. So I ask, what prevents our also having the ability to keep uprightness of will for its own sake—even in the absence of this uprightness—as long as we have the *reason* by which to recognize it and the *will* by which to hold it fast? For the above-mentioned freedom of choice is constituted by this reason and this will.

S. Your arguments have convinced me that the ability to keep uprightness of will always belongs to a rational nature; and I agree that this ability was free in the choice of the first man and the first angels, whose uprightness of will could not be removed against their will.

Chapter V

That no temptation compels one to sin against his will.

S. But in what way is the choice of the human will free by means of this ability, since oftentimes a man who has an upright will deserts uprightness by the pressure of temptation, and so against his will?

T. No one deserts uprightness except by willing to desert it. If "against one's will" means "unwillingly," then no one deserts uprightness against his will. A man can be bound against his will because he can be bound unwillingly; a man can be tortured against his will because he can be tortured unwillingly; a man can be killed against his will because he can be killed unwillingly. But a man cannot will against his will because he cannot will unwillingly to will. For everyone who wills, wills willingly.

S. Why, then, do we sometimes say that a man who lies in order not to be killed lies against his will, if, as you say, he can only do this willingly? For if he lies against his will, he wills to lie against his will. And whoever wills to lie against his will, unwillingly wills to lie.

T. Perhaps he is said to lie against his will because he so much wills the truth that he lies only to save his life. For he wills a lie for the sake of his life and not for the sake of the lie itself—since he wills the truth. In this case, he lies both willingly and unwillingly. For there is one will by which we will something for its own sake, as when we will health for its own sake; and there is another will by which we will a thing for the sake of something else, as when we will to drink absinthe for the sake of health. Therefore, perhaps it can be said that a man lies both against his will and not against his will, in accordance with these two wills.³ For insofar as a man wills the truth and not a lie, we say that he lies against his will; yet this statement would not contradict my assertion that no one deserts truth and uprightness of will against his will. For a man, by *means* of lying, wills to desert truth and uprightness in order to save his life; and in accordance with this will, by which he wills a lie for the sake of his life and not for its own sake, he deserts truth and uprightness willingly and not against his will. This is the will we are now discussing. To be sure, he does tell this lie "unwillingly" since, against his will, he is faced with the choice of either lying or being killed; i.e., against his will he finds himself in such straits that one or the other alternative must necessarily occur. But although it is necessary that he "either lie or be killed,"

³ On the distinction between these two wills, see V. J. Bourke, "Human Tendencies, Will and Freedom," *Actes du premier congrès international de philosophie médiévale: L'homme et son destin* (Louvain/Paris, 1960).

neither one of these is necessary: for (1) it is not necessary that he be killed, since he can avoid being killed if he lies; and (2) it is not necessary that he lie, since he can avoid lying if he lets himself be killed. Neither one of these is necessarily determined, because either option is in his power. And so he may be said "either to lie or to be killed against his will," but it doesn't follow from this that he either "lies against his will" or "is killed against his will."

We commonly hear another reason explaining why it can be said that a man does something by necessity, or against his will, or unwillingly, even though he is doing what he wants to do. For whenever we would be able to do something only with difficulty and therefore don't do it, we say that we are not able to do it, or we say that we are abandoning it out of necessity or against our will. And whenever we are able to stop doing something only with difficulty and so continue to do it, we often say that we are doing it against our will, or unwillingly, or out of necessity. From this point of view, a man who lies in order not to die is said to lie by necessity or against his will, or unwillingly—because he cannot avoid a lie except on the pain, or difficulty, of death. Moreover, just as it is improper to say that a man who lies to save his life lies against his will (since he lies willingly), so it is even improper to say that a man *wills to lie* against his will, since he only wills this willingly. For just as he wills to lie when he lies, so he wills to will when he wills to lie.

S. I can't disagree with anything you say.

T. So why isn't this will free—since another power cannot bring it into subjection without the will's own consent?

S. But wouldn't this definition of freedom also apply to the will of a horse? For the will of a horse is willingly subject to appetites of the flesh; hence it is a free will.⁴

T. No, this isn't a similar case. For the will of a horse doesn't subject itself to the appetite of the flesh, but always serves it by necessity since it is naturally subjected to it. But in the case of a man, as long as he has an upright will, he neither serves what he ought not nor is he subjected to it; and he is not turned away from his uprightness by any alien force, unless he willingly

⁴ Cf. DV, Ch. 12. "Shall we say, then, that a horse is just when he wills to eat, because he willingly does what he ought?"

consents to do what he should not. A man's consent is clearly seen to come from himself, and not from necessity or nature (as in the case of a horse).

S. You have satisfied me with your example about the will of a horse; so let's return to what we were talking about.

T. Will you deny that a thing is free from another if it cannot be forced or restrained by that other thing except as it wills to be?

S. I don't see how I can deny this.

T. Tell me, then, how an upright will overcomes and how it is overcome.

S. To overcome is for it to will uprightness constantly; and to be overcome is for it to will what it ought not.

T. Therefore, temptation can drive an upright will from uprightness, or can compel it to do what it should not, only if that will itself consents, so that it is not willing what is right, but willing what it should not will.

S. I don't see anything wrong with this argument.

T. Can anyone deny that his will is free to keep uprightness, and free from both temptation and sin, if no temptation can turn his will, against his will, from uprightness to sin, i.e., to willing what it ought not? If the will is free to this extent, then when it is overcome, it is by no other power than its own.

S. What you have said proves this.

T. Don't you see it follows from these considerations that no temptation can conquer an upright will? For if temptation can conquer the will, it has the power to conquer it, and conquers the will by its own power. But temptation cannot do this because the will can be overcome only by *its* own power. Therefore, temptation is not at all able to overcome an upright will; and when we say that it can, we are speaking improperly. For it makes sense to say only that the will is able to *subject itself* to temptation. Notice that in the converse case, we affirm the opposite. For example, when a weak man can be overcome by a strong man, we don't say that the weak man is able to be overcome by *his* own power; rather we say that he is able to be overcome by the power of another. This is the case since it only makes sense to say that a strong man has the power to overcome a weak man.

Chapter VI

How our will has power against temptations
although it appears to be powerless against them.

S. You make our will superior to all attacks and do not grant that any temptation may master it, so that I am unable to rebut your position. Nevertheless, I cannot refrain from mentioning that particular powerlessness of the will which we usually experience when we are overcome by the force of "irresistible" temptation. Therefore, unless you can show that the power of the will, which you are establishing, is consistent with this powerlessness of the will which we all feel, my mind cannot be at rest.

T. What do you think this powerlessness of the will is?

S. It is the will's not being able constantly to cling to uprightness.

T. If because of this powerlessness, the will does not cling to uprightness, then it is turned away from it by means of an alien force.

S. I'll have to admit as much.

T. What is this force?

S. The force of temptation.

T. This force does not turn the will from uprightness unless the will wants what the temptation suggests.

S. That's right. But the temptation, by its own force, compels the will to want what it is suggesting.

T. How does temptation compel the will to want? (1) Does it compel the will conditionally, so that the will can keep from wanting only with the consequence of suffering injury? (2) Or does it compel the will unconditionally, so that the will can in no way keep from wanting?

S. Well, I'm prepared to admit that at any given time we may be so sorely pressed by temptations that only with difficulty can we keep from wanting what they suggest; but I'm not really prepared to say that temptations sometimes so oppress us that we are utterly unable to resist willing what they urge.

T. I agree with you. For if a man wills to lie in order to save himself from physical death, who will say that it is impossible for him to will not to lie so that he might avoid eternal death and

live forever? For this reason you need not hesitate to assert that the powerlessness to keep uprightness (which you say is present in our will when we yield to temptations) is not the consequence of impossible, but only of difficult circumstances. It is customary to say that we cannot do something because to do it is difficult, not impossible, for us. And no difficulty destroys the freedom of the will; for although an alien force can attack the will without the will's consent, it cannot overcome the will without its consent. In this way, then, I think you are able to see how the power of the will (which our rational argument ascribes to it) and the powerlessness of the will (which our human nature feels) are consistent with each other. For just as no difficult circumstance ever destroys the freedom of the will, so the powerlessness, which we say is in the will only because it is difficult for the will to keep its own uprightness, does not remove from the will its ability to persevere.

Chapter VII

How the will is stronger than temptation, even when it is overcome by temptation.

S. Although I can't deny what you assert, I still can't agree that the will is stronger than temptation when it is overcome by it. For if the will for keeping uprightness were stronger than the force of temptation, then whenever temptation urged the will to desert its own uprightness, the will would resist the insistence of temptation by willing its uprightness still more strongly. For how can I know that I have a stronger or weaker will except that I will more or less strongly? Therefore, when I will what I ought to do less strongly than a temptation urges me to do what I should not, I don't see why the temptation is not stronger than my will.

T. As I see it, an equivocal sense of the word "will" is deceiving you.

S. Tell me what it is.

T. There is the same equivocal sense in the word "will" as there is in the word "sight." In one sense, "sight" means the instrument for seeing, i.e., the ray which passes through the eyes

by means of which we sense light and the objects in the light.⁵ In another sense, "sight" means the actual using of this instrument, i.e., actually seeing. In the same way, "will" means the instrument for willing which is in the soul, and which we direct towards willing this or that particular thing (just as we direct our sight in order to see various objects). And another sense of the word "will" signifies the actual using of the instrument for willing, just as "sight" is called the using of "sight," or the using of the instrument for seeing. Therefore, we can have sight in the sense of "the instrument for seeing" even when we are not seeing anything; but we cannot have sight in the sense of "the actual using of the instrument" unless we are seeing something. In the same way, the will as "the instrument for willing" is always in the soul, even when it is not willing anything (for example, we have it when we are sleeping). But we only have will in the sense of "the actual using of the instrument" when we are willing something.

The will which we call "the instrument for willing" is always one and the same regardless of what we are willing; but the will which is "the actual using of the instrument" is as multiple as the number of objects that we will and the number of occasions on which we will. We can make the same distinction in the case of sight: for the sight which we have when our eyes are closed, or when we are in the dark, is always the same whether we are actually seeing anything or not; but the sight which is the using of the instrument of sight, and which we call "seeing," is as numerous as the objects we see and the occasions on which we see them.

S. I see this clearly, and such a distinction with respect to the word "will" appeals to me. Now I seem to see the error which I suffered because of my ignorance. But let's continue with your argument.

T. All right. Since you now see that there are two wills—the instrument for willing and its activity of willing—in which of these do you think the strength of the will resides?

S. In the will which is the instrument for willing.

T. Good. Now suppose you know a man so strong that when he is holding a wild bull, the bull cannot get away. What if you

⁵ Compare the discussion on the two truths of signification, DV, Ch. 2.

should see the same man holding a ram, and see the ram shake himself loose from the man's hands: would you think the man less strong when he is holding a ram than when he is holding a bull?

S. I should think that his strength was the same in both cases, but that he didn't use his strength equally—for to hold a bull is harder than to hold a ram. The man is strong because he has strength, but his action is said to be strong because it is done in a strong way.

T. So now you can see that the will which I call the instrument for willing has a strength which is both indivisible and not able to be overcome by any alien force. But when this instrument for willing is actually willing, it sometimes uses more of its strength, and sometimes less of it. So it follows that the will, when offered something, never abandons what it wants more for what it wants less. But when it is offered something that it wants more than what it already has, it immediately leaves the thing that it does not want as much. Therefore, the will which we call the actual using of the instrument (*actionem instrumenti*), because it does the work whenever the will wants anything, is said to be more or less strong since it does things more or less strongly.

S. I'll have to admit that your explanation has made this clear to me.

T. Now you see that when a man who has uprightness of will deserts this uprightness under an assault of temptation, he is drawn away by no alien force, but he turns himself to something which he really wants more.

Chapter VIII

That even God is not able to
remove the uprightness of will.

S. Now, I wonder whether even God could remove uprightness from a man's will. Could He?

T. I'll show you that He cannot. For although He can reduce everything which He has made from nothing back to nothing, He does not have the power to separate uprightness from a will that has it.

S. I await a good argument for these claims, for they are new to me.

T. Let's keep in mind that we are talking about that uprightness of will with respect to which the will is called just, i.e., the uprightness which is kept for its own sake. Moreover, no will is just except one which wills what God wills it to will.

S. The will that doesn't will this is obviously unjust.

T. Therefore, to keep uprightness of will for its own sake is, for anyone keeping it, to will what God wills him to will.

S. Yes, it is appropriate to say this.

T. If God were to separate this uprightness from the will of someone, He would have to do this either willingly or unwillingly.

S. Well, He can't do it unwillingly.

T. If, then, He were to remove uprightness from anyone's will, He would will to do what He does.

S. Without doubt.

T. Now it is certain that if He wills to separate uprightness from a man's will, He does not will that man to keep uprightness of will for its own sake.

S. This follows.

T. But we have already established that to keep uprightness of will is, for anyone who keeps it, to will what God wills him to will.

S. Well, even if we hadn't established it, nevertheless, it is so.

T. Thus, if God ever took this uprightness away from any man, He would not be willing that man to will what He wills him to will.

S. Any other conclusion would be impossible.

T. So nothing is less possible than for God to remove uprightness of will from anyone. However, we sometimes say that God removes this uprightness when He does not prevent a man from deserting it. And in the same way, we sometimes say that temptation or Satan removes uprightness, or overcomes the will, or lures it away from the rectitude which it has; and we speak this way because unless temptation or Satan allowed the will to have something, or threatened to take away something the will preferred to uprightness, then the will would never turn away from that uprightness which it otherwise wills.

S. What you say seems so obvious to me that I can think of nothing against it.

Chapter IX

That nothing is more free than an upright will.

T. Now you can understand why nothing is more free than an upright will, since no alien force is able to remove its uprightness. For it is not true to say, when a man wills to lie in order not to lose his life or his health, that he is *compelled* to will life more than truth. Since he is prevented by an alien force from keeping both at the same time, he chooses the one which he prefers. He is placed under the necessity of deserting one or the other against his will, and not freely; but he keeps the one he prefers, and he does this freely and *not* against his will. He has no less strength to will truth than to will safety, but he wants safety more.⁶ Yet if he had a vivid sense of the eternal glory which he would immediately attain upon choosing the truth, and if he had the same vivid sense of the torments of hell into which he would be delivered without any delay after lying, then, without any doubt, we would see that he had sufficient strength to hold to the truth.

S. This seems clear, because he would display greater strength for willing eternal salvation for its own sake, and truth for the sake of this reward, than for preserving his temporal salvation.

Chapter X

In what sense someone who sins is a servant of sin;
and that it is more miraculous when God gives
uprightness back to one who has deserted it
than when He gives back life to the dead.

T. A rational nature always has free choice because it always has the ability to keep uprightness of will for the sake of that

⁶ "Safety" renders "*salus*." The Latin term means both safety and salvation; the unity of Anselm's illustrations and argument at this point depends on this broader meaning of the word.

uprightness itself, even though this is sometimes difficult. But after a free will deserts uprightness because of this difficulty of keeping it, it serves sin because it is impossible for it to regain uprightness by its own means. Thus man becomes a wind which passes away and does not come again (Ps. 78: 39), since "he who does sin is the servant of sin." (John 8:34) For just as before the will had any uprightness, it could not take it from God if He did not give it; so also, when the will deserts the uprightness it has received, it cannot regain it unless God gives it back.

Moreover, I think it a greater miracle when God restores to the will the uprightness which it has deserted than when He restores to a dead man the life which he has lost. For the body is under the necessity of dying; and so by dying it does not sin. Hence there is no reason why it ought never receive life again. But when the will deserts uprightness of its own accord, it sins and merits always to be deprived of uprightness. If a man freely takes his own life, he does not take away something which would not eventually have been lost anyway. But a man who deserts uprightness of will throws away something which he was under obligation always to keep.

S. I see that what you say about the servitude by which "he who does sin becomes the servant of sin" is absolutely true. And it's also true that it is impossible to regain uprightness once it has been deserted unless it is returned by God, who originally gave it. Finally, I agree that men and angels were always supposed to observe the uprightness which was given to them, so that in this way they might keep it forever.⁷

Chapter XI

That servitude to sin does not
destroy freedom of choice.

S. But your conclusion has greatly curbed my joy, because I used to think that I was always secure in possessing freedom of choice. Therefore, I want you to explain the relation between servitude and the will to me, so that servitude won't by chance

⁷ "Supposed to observe" = "*considerandum est.*"

seem to be opposed to freedom. For you have shown that both freedom and servitude are in the will, and a man is free or servant in accordance with whichever he has. If, then, he is a servant, how is he free? And if he is free, how is he a servant?

T. If you take a close look, you will see how a man is both servant and free, without contradiction, when he does not have the uprightness we've been talking about. For it is never in his power to acquire uprightness when he doesn't have it; but it is always in his power to keep it when he does have it. In one respect, because he is unable to escape from sin, he is a servant; in another respect, because he is unable to be forcibly drawn away from uprightness, he is free. But he can be turned away from sin and from servitude to sin only by another; and he can be turned away from uprightness only by himself; but he cannot be deprived of his freedom at all—either by himself or by another. For a man is always naturally free to keep uprightness, whether he has it in his possession or whether he does not.

S. This consistency which you have worked out between servitude and freedom convinces me that they both can be present in the same man at the same time.

Chapter XII

Why we would rather say "A man is free even when he does not have uprightness, because it could not be taken away from him *if* he had it" than say "A man is a servant even when he has uprightness, because he could not recover it by his own power *if* he did not have it."

S. But now, I would like to know why it is more proper to say: "A man is free even when he does not have uprightness, because it could not be taken away from him by someone else if he had it" than say "A man is a servant even when he has uprightness, because he could not recover it by his own power if he did not have it." For in one case, we call him a servant because he cannot withdraw from sin; and in another case, we call him a free man because he cannot be drawn away from

uprightness by anyone else. And just as when he has uprightness, he can never be drawn away from it by anyone else; so too, when he does not have uprightness, he can never withdraw from sin. Therefore, just as a man always has freedom, so he always seems to have servitude. [And if this is the case, why do we prefer to call him free rather than a servant?]

T. Because this servitude is nothing other than an *inability* to avoid sinning. Whether we call this servitude "the inability to return to uprightness" or "the powerlessness to recover it and possess it again," a man is a servant of sin for no other reason than this: that he can't avoid sinning, because he is unable to return to uprightness, or to recover rectitude and have it again. When he has uprightness, he does not have this inability to avoid sinning; i.e., when he has uprightness, he is *never* the servant of sin. But he *always* has the ability to keep uprightness, both when he has uprightness and when he does not. Therefore, he is always a free man.

Now to return to the question which you are asking, namely, why would we rather say "A man is free even when he does not have uprightness, because it could not be taken away from him by anyone else if he had it" than say "A man is a servant even when he has uprightness, because he could not recover it by his own power if he did not have it"? Your question is analogous to asking: Why do we prefer to say "A man has the ability to see the sun even when the sun is absent, because he would be able to see it if it were present" than to say "A man lacks the power to see the sun when the sun is present, because, if it were absent, he could not make it present"? Now even as when the sun is absent, we have sight in us by which to see it when it is present; so also, when uprightness of will is lacking to us, we have the aptitudes of understanding and willing by which we could keep uprightness for its own sake if we had it. And just as when we lack nothing for seeing the sun except the sun's presence, so that the only thing we don't have is the power which the sun's presence causes in us: so when we lack uprightness, the only inability we have is that which the absence of uprightness causes in us. Therefore, a man always has freedom of choice; but he is not always "the servant of sin." He is the servant of sin only when he lacks an upright will.

S. If I had thought carefully about what you said earlier when you distinguished the ability to see into four powers, then I should not have been puzzled here. I confess that my confusion was my own fault.

T. If you will keep those things which we have discussed present in your mind so that when we need them it won't be necessary to repeat them, I'll spare you the trouble of going over them again.

S. Thank you for your kindness; but you should not be surprised if all the things which are new to me are not present in my memory after only one hearing.

T. Tell me whether you now have any qualms about our definition of freedom of choice.

Chapter XIII

That "the ability to keep uprightness
of will for its own sake" is the complete
definition of freedom of choice.

S. There is one thing which disturbs me a little about our definition up to now. For we often have an ability to keep something, and yet that ability is not free to the point that it can escape being overcome by an alien force. So when you define freedom of choice as "the ability to keep uprightness of will for its own sake," shouldn't you consider whether something else doesn't have to be added which stipulates that this ability is so free that it cannot be overcome by another force?

T. If the ability to keep uprightness of will for its own sake could at any time be found without that freedom which we have been discussing, then it would be useful to add what you are saying. But since the proposed definition is so complete with respect to genus and differentia that it neither excludes anything essential nor includes anything non-essential to freedom, nothing can conceivably be added to or subtracted from it. For "ability" (i.e., "power") is the genus of "freedom." But when "to keep" is added to "ability," this "ability" is distinguished from every ability which is not "ability to keep" (for example, there is an ability to laugh

and an ability to walk). And by adding "uprightness," we distinguish the "ability to keep uprightness" from the ability to keep whatever is not uprightness (e.g., money). Then, by adding "of will," we distinguish the "ability to keep uprightness of will" from the ability to keep the uprightness of other things (e.g., the uprightness, or straightness, of a stick; or the uprightness, or correctness, of an opinion). And by adding "for its own sake," we distinguish the "ability to keep uprightness of will for its own sake" from the ability to keep uprightness of will for the sake of something else (e.g., as when uprightness of will is kept for the sake of financial gain or because of natural inclination—for a dog keeps uprightness of will by natural inclination when he loves either his puppies or the master who cares for him). Therefore, since there is nothing in this definition which is not necessary to defining the freedom of choice of a rational will, essential things being included and non-essential things being excluded, the definition is neither too broad nor too narrow.⁸ Doesn't it seem that way to you?

S. Yes, the definition seems perfect.

T. Tell me, then, whether you wish to know anything more about this freedom, without which we cannot judge men to do good or evil. This is the only thing we have left to discuss.

Chapter XIV

The distinctions appropriate to freedom.

S. Now it remains only to make the distinctions appropriate to freedom. For although, according to your definition, freedom is common to every rational nature; nevertheless, the freedom of God is quite different from the freedom possessed by rational creatures, and the freedom of creatures differs from one to another.

T. [Here are the distinctions appropriate to freedom:]

I. There is an "unoriginated freedom of choice," which is neither created nor received, and this freedom belongs to God alone.

⁸ Cf. Plato's method of diaeresis, *Sophist*, ca. 221^b. Note also Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics*, 96^a 20 ff.

II. There is a “created freedom of choice,” which was created by and received from God, and this freedom is characteristic of men and angels. This “created freedom” either (A) *does* have an uprightness which it may keep, or (B) *doesn’t* have an uprightness to keep.

II-A. The “created freedom which has uprightness” keeps this uprightness either (1) so as *to be able* to lose it, or (2) so as *not to be able* to lose it.

II-A-1. The “created freedom which has uprightness so as to be able to lose it” was characteristic of all angels before the good ones were confirmed and the evil ones fell; and it characterizes, throughout their earthly lives, all men who keep uprightness.

II-A-2. The “created freedom which has uprightness so as not to be able to lose it” is characteristic of elect angels and elect men: it characterized elect angels immediately after the fall of the reprobate angels, and it characterizes elect men immediately after their death.

II-B. The “created freedom which does not have uprightness” either (1) *is able* to regain it, or (2) *is not able* to regain it.

II-B-1. The “created freedom which does not have uprightness and yet is able to regain it” characterizes, throughout their earthly lives, all men who lack it—although many may never regain it.

II-B-2. The “created freedom which does not have uprightness and is not able to regain it” is characteristic of reprobate angels and reprobate men—of the angels after their fall, and of these men after their death.

S. Through the favor of God, your definitions and distinctions have so satisfied me that I can find nothing more I think necessary to ask you.

The Fall of Satan

(De Casu Diaboli)

CHAPTERS

- I. That it is even said to the angels, "What do you have that you have not received?" And from God comes nothing except goodness and being; and every good is a being, and every being a good.
- II. Why it seems that Satan did not receive perseverance because God did not give it.
- III. That God did not give perseverance because Satan did not receive it.
- IV. How Satan sinned and willed to be like God.
- V. That the good angels, before the fall of the evil angels, were able to sin.
- VI. How the good angels were confirmed in their uprightness and the evil angels in their fallenness.
- VII. The question whether the will and its turning to what it should not do is the very evil which makes the angels evil; and why a rational creature cannot turn himself from evil to good in the same way that he can turn himself from good to evil.
- VIII. That neither the will nor its turning is evil itself.
- IX. That injustice is evil itself and that it is nothing.
- X. How evil seems to be something.
- XI. That from their name, evil and nothing cannot be shown to be truly something, but only "as if they were something."
- XII. That Satan was not able to have his original willing from himself; and that many things are said "to be able" through another's power, and "to be unable" on account of another's impotence.

- XIII. That when Satan had received only the will for happiness, he could will only happiness and couldn't keep from willing it; and no matter what he willed thereby, his willing was neither just nor unjust.
- XIV. That the case would be similar if only the will for uprightness were received; and therefore he received both wills at the same time, so that he might be both happy and just.
- XV. That justice is something.
- XVI. That injustice is nothing except the absence of justice where justice should be.
- XVII. Why the angel who deserted justice couldn't return to it.
- XVIII. How the evil angel made himself unjust and the good angel made himself just; and that the evil angel ought to give thanks to God for the good things which he received and deserted, just as the good angel ought to give thanks to God for the good things which he received and kept.
- XIX. That the will, insofar as it is, is good; and that no thing is an evil.
- XX. How God is the cause of evil actions and evil wills; and how they are received from Him.
- XXI. That the evil angel was not able to foreknow that he was going to fall.
- XXII. That he knew he should not will what it was sin to will, and he knew that he ought to be punished if he sinned.
- XXIII. That he was not supposed to know that if he sinned he would be punished.
- XXIV. That even the good angel was not supposed to know that if he sinned he would be punished.
- XXV. That even supposing the good angel cannot sin only because he now has this knowledge from Satan's fall, still it would be to his glory not to sin.
- XXVI. What we dread when we hear the name "evil"; and what does the works which injustice is said to do, since injustice and evil are nothing.
- XXVII. Whence came evil in an angel who was created good.
- XXVIII. That the ability to will what should not be willed is always a good, and that willing is itself always good to the degree that it is.

Chapter I

That it is even said to the angels, "What do you have that you have not received?" And from God comes nothing except goodness and being; and every good is a being, and every being a good.

Student. When the Apostle says, "What do you have that you have not received?" is he speaking only to men, or also to angels? (I Cor. 4: 7)

Teacher. No created being has anything from itself. So how can something which doesn't have itself from itself have anything from itself? For since there are only two states of being, one which has created and the other which has been created, it is evident that nothing else can exist except the Creator and His creations.

S. Clear enough.

T. But neither the Creator nor what has been created can have existence except from the Creator Himself.

S. This is no less clear.

T. Therefore, the Creator is the only one who has whatever He has from Himself, while all other things have whatever they have only from Him. And just as created beings have only nothing from themselves, so they have only something from God.

S. I don't clearly see why you say that creatures have nothing else from God than *something*. For who but God causes the many things which we see passing from being to not-being to become other than they were—even if they don't become absolutely nothing?¹ Or who makes not to be whatever is not, except He who makes to be whatever is? If there is something only because God makes it, then it follows that whatever is not is not because He *doesn't* make it. Therefore, just as those things which exist have their "being something" from Him, so those things which do not exist, or which pass from being to not-being, seem to have their "being nothing" from Him.

T. The one who causes something to be other than it was, or something to be different from what it is, is said "to cause something to be" or "to cause something not to be." We also apply these

¹ "*de esse ad non esse*": "from being to not-being" or "from existence to non-existence."

same expressions to someone who *could* cause something not to be, but doesn't, or *could* cause something to be, but doesn't.² For example, not only is the man who attacks someone said to make him naked and undressed, but also the man who could restrain such an attacker and yet does not. But we say this of the first one properly, and of the second improperly. For if we say that the second man caused another to be naked or undressed, we mean only that when this man was able to restrain the attacker he didn't do it—and thus did not cause the other not to be naked, or did not cause him to remain clothed. According to this second and improper mode of speaking, even God is said to do many things which He does not do; for example, He is said to lead a man into temptation, since, although He could keep him from temptation, He doesn't. Or again, He is said to make what is-not not be, since, although He is able to make something to be, He doesn't.

However, God Himself does not actually cause the non-existence of those things that are passing from being to not-being. A being only exists by His causing it to exist, and a being only remains what He has made it be by His preserving it. When He stops preserving what He has made, then that thing returns to not-being, not because He makes it not to be, but because He ceases to make it to be. For when, as though through anger, God destroys a thing and removes its existence, He is not the cause of its not-being; but by His reclaiming what He had bestowed, then that thing which He had made and was keeping in existence returns into not-being. It had this not-being before it was made, and hence had it from itself and not from Him.

Or again, if you reclaim a tunic which you once loaned to a naked man to use for a time, then he does not have his nakedness from you; for when you take back what is yours, he returns into the state he was in before he was clothed by you. In like manner, just as nothing but good comes from the highest good, so nothing but being comes from the highest being; and just as every good comes only from the highest good, so every being comes only from the highest being. Moreover, since the highest good is the highest being, it follows that every good is a being, and every being is a good. Therefore, just as nothing and not-being are not beings, so

² Cf. DL, Ch. 11.

they are also not good. And thus, nothing and not-being are not from God, because from God come only being and good.

S. I now see clearly that being and good come only from God, and that only being and good come from God.

T. Watch out lest you should think that I am denying the thing on account of which Scripture says that God does cause evil or not-being; or that I would find fault with someone if he, following the use of Scripture, were to say this.³ But we shouldn't so much cling to inappropriate words which conceal the truth, as we should seek to discover the genuine truth which is hidden under the many types of expression.

S. You need only tell these things to the ignorant and the blasphemous.

T. All right. Return to where you began and see whether it can be said to an angel, as well as to a man, that he has nothing which he has not received.

S. It is clear that this applies to an angel as well as to a man.

Chapter II

Why it seems that Satan did not receive
perseverance because God did not give it.

S. So it is evident that the angel who remained upright in the truth persevered because he had perseverance; moreover, he had perseverance because he received it, and he received it because God gave it. It follows, then, that the angel who did not "remain upright in the truth" (John 8:44) did not persevere because he did not have perseverance; moreover, he did not have perseverance because he did not receive it, and he did not receive it because God did not give it. So if you can, I want you to show me Satan's blame in not persevering when God did not grant him perseverance and when he could have nothing without God's giving it. For I am sure, even if I don't see why, that Satan was damned justly by the One who is supremely just, and that he could not have been justly damned except for something blameworthy in him.

T. Why do you think it follows that if the good angel received

³ Isaiah 45:7.

perseverance because God gave it, then the evil angel did not receive perseverance because God did not give it?

S. Because I think that if giving is the cause of the good angel's receiving, then not-giving is the cause of the evil angel's not-receiving; and if not-giving is postulated, I see not-receiving as a necessary consequence. We all know that when we do not receive what we want, it is not the case that it is not given because we do not receive it, but it is rather the case that we do not receive it because it is not given. As far as I remember, everyone I've read or heard dealing with this question has put it in the form of the following argument: that if the good angel received perseverance because God gave it, then the evil angel did not receive it because God did not give it. I do not recall ever having seen a reply to this inference.

Chapter III

That God did not give perseverance because Satan did not receive it.

T. The above argument doesn't hold. For even if giving were always the cause of receiving, not-giving would not always be the cause of not-receiving.⁴

S. But if not-giving were not necessarily the cause of not-receiving, then there could be a receiving even if there were no giving.

T. No, this is wrong.

S. Then give me an example of what you are saying.

T. If I give you something and you receive it, then I don't give it *because* you receive it, but you receive it *because* I give it; in this case, giving is the cause of receiving.

S. That's right.

T. What if I give something to someone and he does not receive it? Is it because I don't give it that he doesn't receive it?

S. It seems rather that you do not give it because he does not receive it.

T. That's right. In this case, my not-giving is not the cause of his not-receiving; however, if I hadn't given, then my not-giving

⁴ "Potest enim non dare non esse causa non accipiendi, etiamsi dare semper causa esset accipiendi."

would have been the cause of concluding that he did not receive. So we speak of "cause" in two ways: as the actual cause of something else, and as something posited is the cause of anything which follows from it. For example, burning is not the actual cause of fire, but fire of burning; nevertheless, if we say that there is burning, this is the cause (or reason) for concluding that there is fire. For if there is burning, it is necessary that there be fire.

S. And it is necessary that I agree.

T. So I think you see that if you have received something because I have given it, it does not necessarily follow that someone else who has not received something has not received it *because* I haven't given it; but it does follow that if I have not given it he has not received it.

S. I see the argument, and I'm happy because I understand it.

T. Do you have any more doubt that the angel who did not fall received perseverance *because God gave it*, and that God did not give perseverance to the fallen angel *because he did not receive it*?

S. You have not yet shown this to me, but you have shown only this much: that we cannot argue from the good angel's having received perseverance because God gave it, to the evil angel's not having received perseverance because God did not give it. For if you wish to maintain that God did not give it to him because he did not receive it, I will ask why he didn't receive it: Was it because he could not, or was it because he would not? Moreover, if he *didn't* have the ability or the will to receive perseverance, then it was because God didn't give them—for if God had given them he certainly would have had them. Therefore, if the evil angel couldn't have the ability or the will to receive perseverance without God's giving them, how did he sin in not receiving what God did not give him either the ability or the will to receive?

T. God did give him the ability and will to receive perseverance.

S. Then he received what God gave him and he had what he received?

T. Yes, he received it and he had it.

S. Then, he received and had perseverance?

T. No, he didn't receive it and he didn't have it.

S. But didn't you say that God gave him the will and the ability to receive perseverance, and that he received this will and ability?

T. I said this; but I didn't say that God gave him the receiving of perseverance, but only the will and the ability to receive it.

S. Then if he willed to have perseverance, and was able to have it, he received it.

T. Not necessarily.

S. Show me why not.

T. Have you ever begun anything with the will and ability to complete it, but didn't complete it because your will was changed before you finished?

S. Frequently.

T. So you willed and were able to persevere in what you did not persevere?

S. I certainly willed to do so, but I didn't persevere in the willing, and therefore I didn't persevere in the action.

T. But why didn't you persevere in the willing?

S. Because I didn't will to.

T. Isn't it the case that as long as you willed to persevere in the action, you willed to persevere in the willing itself?

S. I can't deny that.

T. Why, then, do you say that you did not will to persevere in the willing?

S. Again, I might reply that I did will to persevere, but that I did not persevere in this willing to persevere; but then the argument would continue to infinity, with you always asking the same question and me always giving the same answer.

T. Then you should not say, "I did not will to persevere in the willing because I did not will to persevere in the willing of this willing to persevere." But rather, when you are first asked why you did not persevere in an activity in which you were willing and able to persevere, you should answer, "Because I didn't persevere in willing." But if you are asked again why you didn't persevere in willing, you must not answer that you did not persevere in willing to will to persevere, but you must give another reason which explains the failure of the will. For unless you give this other reason, you merely repeat the question in your reply, viz., that you *haven't* persevered in willing to persevere in the action.

S. I see that I didn't know what I was talking about.

T. Tell me in one word exactly what it is to persevere in doing something.

S. "*Perficere*," i.e., completing a thing or accomplishing what one has set out to do. For we call perseverance in writing something "*perscribere*," i.e., writing something out completely; and we call perseverance in leading "*perducere*," i.e., leading through to the end.

T. We may similarly say, even though such an expression is not in use, that to persevere in willing is "*pervelle*," i.e., willing something completely.

S. So we may.

T. Then, when you didn't complete what you willed to complete and were able to complete, why didn't you complete it?

S. Because I didn't will it completely (*Quia non pervolui*).

T. Then you should likewise say that Satan, who received the will and ability to receive perseverance and the will and ability to persevere, did not receive perseverance and did not persevere because he did not will it completely.

S. Now I ask you why he didn't will it completely. For when you say that what he willed he did not will completely, it is as if you were saying that what he willed at first, he didn't will afterwards. But why didn't he keep willing what he first willed except because he did not have the will to keep willing it? By this, I don't mean the will which he had when he first willed it, but the will which he didn't have when he no longer willed it. Why didn't he have this will except because he didn't receive it? And why didn't he receive it except because God didn't give it?

T. And again I repeat: it is not the case that he didn't receive the will to persevere because God didn't give it; rather, God didn't give it because he didn't receive it.

S. Show me this.

T. Satan freely lost the will which he had; and just as he received the will *to have* what he had, so also he could have received the will *always to have* what he deserted. But because he deserted what he had, he didn't receive the will to keep it. So it is not the case that he didn't receive a persevering will (or a will to keep what he had) *because* God did not give it, but rather that God did not give it *because* he would not receive it.

S. But doesn't everyone see that Satan deserted what he had because he was unwilling to keep it, rather than being unwilling to keep it because he deserted it? For being unwilling to keep it

always prior to willing to desert, as long as someone has something. Therefore, someone wants to desert what he has because he does not want to keep it. I ask, therefore, whether there is any other reason for Satan's being unwilling to keep what he had than that God didn't give him the will to keep it.

T. It is not the case that being unwilling to keep is always prior to willing to desert.

S. Show me when it isn't.

T. Well, it may be that when a lighted coal is placed in your bare hand, your not wanting to keep it is, in fact, prior to your wanting to desert it. And perhaps you "will to desert" because you are "unwilling to keep" in every case where you do not will to have something for its own sake, but will to desert it. For *before* you have something like a hot coal in your bare hand, you can be unwilling to have it; but you cannot will to desert it except when you already have it.

However, suppose you have something that you do not want to keep, simply because you prefer something else: you do not will to desert such a thing except for a thing you would rather have; and you prefer to have this other thing which you are not able to have without giving up what you already have. In *this* case, willing to desert is prior to being unwilling to keep. For example, suppose there is a miser who wants to keep his money, yet prefers to have bread, which he is not able to have unless he gives up some of his money. He wills to give up (or desert) some of his money before he is unwilling to keep it. For he does not will to give up his money because he is unwilling to keep it, but he is unwilling to keep it [only] because he must give it up to get bread. For before he had his money, he wanted to have it and to keep it; and while he has it, he wants to keep it as long as he has no need to give it up.

S. True enough.

T. Then, it is not always the case that being unwilling to keep something is prior to willing to desert it; but sometimes willing to desert is prior to being unwilling to keep.

S. I can't deny this.

T. Therefore, I say it is not the case that Satan did not will what and when he should have willed because his will had a deficiency which came from God; but when he willed what he should not have willed, he expelled his good will by means of a supervening evil

will. For this reason, it is not the case that Satan didn't have, or didn't receive, a good persevering will because God did not give it; rather, God didn't give him a good persevering will because he deserted it by willing what he ought not; and by deserting it he didn't keep it.

S. I understand your point.

Chapter IV

How Satan sinned and willed to be like God.

T. Do you doubt that Satan did not will to desert what he had because he was unwilling to keep it, but rather that he was unwilling to keep it because he willed to desert it?

S. I don't doubt that this could be the case, but you have not yet made me certain that it is. First of all, show me what Satan willed to have that he didn't have, so that he willed to desert what he did have—just as you have shown in the case of the miser. Then, if nothing can contradict it, I will agree that it is true.

T. You do not doubt that Satan sinned, since he could not be unjustly damned by a just God; but what you are asking is how he sinned. Is that right?

S. That's right.

T. If he had continually held to justice, he would never have sinned nor have been wretched.

S. We believe this.

T. No one holds to justice except by willing what he ought, and no one deserts it except by willing what he ought not.

S. No doubt.

T. Therefore, by willing something which he ought not to have willed at that time, he deserted justice and thereby sinned.

S. That follows, but I want to know what he willed.

T. Well, he was supposed to will what he already had in his possession.

S. Yes, he was supposed to will what he had received from God, and he did not sin by willing that.

T. Therefore, he willed something which he did not already

have and was not supposed to will at that time—just as Eve willed to be “like a god” before God willed it for her.⁵

S. I cannot deny that this follows.

T. But Satan was able to will nothing except what was just or what was beneficial (*commodum*).⁶ Happiness, which every rational nature desires, consists in these beneficial things.

S. We can recognize this in ourselves, for we will nothing unless we think it is either just or beneficial.

T. Satan was not able to sin by willing justice.

S. That's true.

T. Therefore, he sinned by willing something beneficial, which he neither possessed nor was supposed to will at that time, even though it was able to increase his happiness.

S. This is clear, since there's no other possibility.

T. So I think you now see that he extended his will beyond justice by a disordered willing of something that was more than he had received.

S. I now see clearly that Satan sinned both by willing what he ought not and by not willing what he ought. And it is evident that he did not will more than he should because he was unwilling to hold to justice, but rather that he did not hold to justice because he willed something else; and by willing this, he deserted justice, as you have shown in your example of the miser with his bread and money.

T. And when Satan willed what God did not want him to will, he willed inordinately to be like God.

S. But if God cannot be conceived except as a unique being, so that nothing else can be conceived to be like Him, how was Satan able to will what he could not conceive? He was not so obtuse that he thought something else could be conceived to be like God.⁷

T. Even if he did not will to be completely like God, but willed

⁵ “*diis*.” (plural). “Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” (Genesis 3:5).

⁶ “*Commodum*” refers to whatever one judges to be useful, advantageous, beneficial. Thus such things as life, health, pleasure—and in general all that we call goods and think to be conducive to happiness—are *commoda*. Cf. *De Concordia*. Q. 3, Ch. 11. S-281 (II).

⁷ Cf. the ontological argument of the *Proslogion*, Chs. 2-4.

to be something less than God which was against God's will, then he still willed inordinately to be like God—for he willed something by his own will, which was subject to no one else. For it is supposed to be characteristic of God alone to will something by His own will and to obey no higher will.

S. Yes, that's right.

T. And not only did Satan will to be equal to God because he presumed to have his own will, but he even willed to be greater than God by willing what God did not will for him to will, for he placed his own will above the will of God.

S. This leaves me satisfied.

T. Now then, from the above arguments, I think I have shown you that Satan freely departed from willing what he ought and so justly lost what he had. This is so because he freely and unjustly willed what he didn't have and what he wasn't supposed to will.

S. Nothing is more evident.

T. Therefore, although the good angel received perseverance because God gave it, it is not the case that the evil angel did not receive it because God did not give it. But rather, God did not give it because Satan did not receive it, and he did not receive it because he was unwilling to receive it.

S. Your arguments and your conclusions have dealt with my questions so convincingly that I can't think of anything to shake their truth.

Chapter V

That the good angels, before the fall
of the evil angels, were able to sin.

T. Do you think that the good angels were likewise able to sin before the evil angels fell?

S. Yes, but I wish to understand this rationally.

T. You are certain of this much: that if the good angels were not able to sin, then they held to justice not by their own free ability, but by necessity. If this were the case, they would no more have merited grace from God because they remained up-

right while others fell than because they preserved rationality, which they were unable to lose. And then, if you carefully consider the matter, the good angels would not properly be called just.

S. So reason shows.

T. Moreover, if the fallen angels had not sinned when they possessed the ability not to sin, then to the degree that they might have been truly just and might have merited grace from God, they would have been better than the good angels who were not able to sin. From this supposition, it follows that either (1) the men who are elect will eventually be better and greater than the good angels, or (2) the full number of the reprobate angels will not be perfectly restored, since the men who are being raised up to complete their number will not be as those angels would have become.⁸

S. I think both of these possibilities must be completely denied.

T. Then, if you deny these two possibilities, you must affirm that the good angels were able to sin before the fall of the evil angels—just as the evil angels were also able to sin.

S. I don't see how it could be otherwise.

Chapter VI

How the good angels were confirmed
in their uprightness and the evil angels in their fallenness.

T. The angels who preferred the justice which they had to that thing which they didn't have, received through the reward of this very justice the good which they had seemed to lose on account of their choosing justice; and they also remained eternally secure in the justice which they had. For this reason, they were raised to honor, so that they obtained whatever they were

⁸ See also DCD, Ch. 23. In his later writing, CDH (Chs. 16-18, Book I), Anselm develops an argument to show that the number of elect men is *greater* than the number of fallen angels. See also D. P. Henry, "Numerically Definite Reasoning in the *Cur Deus Homo*," *Dominican Studies*, 6(1953), 48-55.

able to will, and they no longer saw anything to will which exceeded what they already had. Therefore, they were unable to sin.

But the angels who preferred what God had not yet willed to give them (rather than preferring to remain upright in the justice in which they had been made) received the judgment of justice: not only did they fail to obtain what they preferred to justice and what made them despise justice, but they even lost the good that they had.

Then the angels were separated into two groups, so that the angels adhering to justice could will no good that they did not already enjoy, and those who deserted justice would be deprived of every good that they could will.

S. Nothing seems more just and lovely than this separation. But if you could tell me, I would like to hear what kind of advantage it was which the good angels gained by justly not willing, and the evil angels lost by unjustly desiring.

T. I don't know exactly what it was. But whatever it was, it's enough to know that it was something towards which they were able to grow, which they didn't receive when they were created, in order that they might later attain it by their own merit.

S. Fine. We can let our investigation of this question be sufficient for the time being.

Chapter VII

The question whether the will and its turning
to what it should not do is the very evil
which makes the angels evil; and why a rational
creature cannot turn himself from evil to good
in the same way that he can turn himself from good to evil.

S. I don't know why it is, but just when I was hoping to come to the end of this inquiry, new problems have started growing up from the roots of the questions we've already felled. For although I can see very clearly that Satan could have come to a state utterly bereft of goodness only because of his excessive desire, I am still greatly troubled to know how he had so disordered a will.

For if his will were good, then he fell from lofty good into wretched evil by reason of this good will. And if his will were good, then God gave it to him, because from himself he had absolutely nothing. If then, he willed with the will which God gave him, how did he sin? But if he had this will from himself, then he had something good which he did not receive.

On the other hand, if his will were evil and if an evil will is something, again it follows that his will is only from God, because "everything that is something" comes from Him. If this were the case, it could be asked how he sinned by having a will which God gave him, or how God could have given him an evil will? But if this evil will were from Satan himself and if it were something, then Satan would have had something from himself, and not every being would be good. For if an evil will had being, then it would not be nothing—as we are accustomed to say. But if an evil will were nothing, then Satan would be utterly damned for nothing at all and so without cause.

What I am saying about the will can just as well be said about desire and concupiscence, since the will is desire and concupiscence. For just as there is both a good and an evil will, so there is both a good and an evil desire, and a good and an evil concupiscence.

But suppose we were to say that the will is a kind of being and also that the good is something, so that when the will was turned to what it ought to will, it would be a good will; and when it was turned to what it ought not will, it would be called an evil will. In this case, I can see that the things which I said about the will could also be said about the turning of the will. For I am still troubled by the question from whence Satan had that perverse turning of the will, and I am disturbed by those other things that relate to this problem.

There is something else I really wonder about when I consider this turning of the will: namely, why God made that angelic creature who possessed so much excellence to be such that he could turn his own will away from what he ought to will towards what he ought not will, and yet did not make him so that he was able to turn his will from what he ought not will towards what he ought to will. For it seems that so magnificent a creature from such a Creator ought to have received the ability to do the good

for which he was made, rather than to have received the ability to do the evil which he was created to avoid. This question can be asked with regard to human nature as well, since we believe that no man can have a good will unless God gives it, and that a man can have an evil will only by the permission of God.

Chapter VIII

That neither the will nor its turning is evil itself.

T. I think that both the will and the turning of the will are something. For although they are not substances, nevertheless it cannot be denied that they are beings of some sort, since there are many beings besides those which are properly called substances. For a good will is not more "something" than an evil will, and the one is not more a good thing than the other is an evil thing. The will which wills to give a thing mercifully is not more "something" than the will which wills to take something rapaciously; and the latter is as much an evil as the former is a good. Therefore, if an evil will were the evil itself by which someone were called evil, then a good will would be the good itself which would make someone good. But an evil will would be nothing if it were the evil itself which we believe to be nothing; and conversely, a good will, since it is not more "something" than an evil will, would be nothing also.

If we followed this line of argument, we would have to say that the good which makes men good is nothing, for we would have identified this good with the good will, which itself would be nothing. But in fact, no one thinks that a good will or the good itself is nothing. So we must conclude that an evil will is no more the evil itself that makes creatures evil, than a good will is the good itself that makes creatures good.

Now what I've just said above about the will can also be applied to the turning of the will. For the turning which turns the will from robbery to charity is not more "something" than the turning which turns the same will from generosity to greed. And all the other arguments which I have just given above also relate to this problem.

S. I agree.

T. Therefore, neither the evil will nor the depraved turning of the will is the evil itself by which Satan and Adam became evil, for we say that the evil by which they became evil is nothing; and conversely, neither the good will nor the good turning of the will is the good itself by which they become good.

Chapter IX

That injustice is evil itself and that it is nothing.

S. Then what is the evil itself which makes rational natures evil and the good itself which makes them good?

T. We should believe that justice is the good itself by which just men and just angels are good and by which their wills are called good or just. And we should believe that injustice is the evil itself which we say to be nothing other than the privation of the good. This is what makes men and angels evil, and what makes their wills evil; and this injustice is nothing other than the privation of justice. For when a will was first given to the rational nature, it was—in the moment of giving—turned by the Giver towards that which it was supposed to will; or better, it was not *first* given and *then* turned upright, but it was originally *made upright*. As long as the will stood firm in this uprightness in which it was made (and which we call truth or justice), it was just. But when it turned itself away from that which it was supposed to will towards that which it was not supposed to will, it no longer stood fast in the original uprightness in which it was made. When the will deserted this uprightness, it lost something noble, and it received nothing in place of it except the privation of it. And this privation, which we call injustice, has no being.

Chapter X

How evil seems to be something.

S. I concede what you say, namely, that evil is a privation of good. But nonetheless, I see good to be a privation of evil. For I perceive that when something is deprived of evil it becomes something else which we call good; and similarly, I notice that when something is deprived of good it becomes something else,

which we call evil. Now, given these considerations, there may be certain arguments which prove that evil is nothing. For example, I might say that evil is only corruption, or defect, which has no being except as it is in some being. The greater the corruption, the more it reduces towards nothing the being it is in; and if the being it is in becomes absolutely nothing, we find that its corruption, or defect, is nothing also. So it can be proven by this argument that evil is nothing, and there may be other arguments to the same effect.

But my mind can't really be at ease (except by faith, of course) unless the following arguments which seem to prove that evil is something can be refuted. (1) If nothing were signified by the name "evil," then when we heard the word "evil," our hearts would tremble needlessly at what we understand by this signification. But if the word "evil" is a name, then it is certainly significative; and if it is significative, it signifies. But it can only signify something. How then is evil nothing, if what its name signifies is something? (2) As long as there is justice, it is accompanied by such serenity and peace that in many cases justice seems to be nothing other than the cessation of evil. (For example, this is also true of chastity and patience.) But when justice departs, so many harsh and diverging passions take possession of the mind that they compel it—as a cruel master compels a wretched servant—to be loaded down with the worry of many shameful and burdensome tasks and to labor constantly under their weight. It's incredible to argue that *nothing* produces all these effects.

Chapter XI

That from their name, evil and nothing
cannot be shown to be truly something,
but only "as if they were something."

T. I think you are not so mad that you would say nothing is something only because you can't deny that "nothing" is a name, or a meaningful noun. Therefore, if you can't prove that nothing is something simply by the meaning of the word "nothing," how do you think you can prove that evil is something simply by the meaning of the word "evil"?

S. Your introducing one difficulty in order to resolve another doesn't accomplish anything, for I don't even know what this *nothing* is. So since the question before us is the nature of evil, which you say is nothing, you must first teach me what nothing is if you wish me to understand the nature of evil. Then, in addition to explaining the word "evil," you can go on to reply to those other arguments which disturbed me because they seemed to show that evil is something.

T. Since "to be nothing" and "not to be something" mean the same thing, how can we say what anything which is "not something" is?

S. If something is not signified by the name "nothing," then nothing is meant by it. But if nothing is meant, then "nothing" is not a name. But it is a name.⁹ Yet although no one would say that nothing is something, and although we are always compelled to say that nothing is nothing, nevertheless, no one can deny that the name "nothing" is significative. But if this name can only signify something, and not nothing, then it seems that what it signifies cannot be nothing, but must be something. If, then, what is signified is not nothing, but something, how can it be true that what is nothing is signified by this name?

If the thing signified is *properly* called nothing, then it really is nothing, and for this reason it is not something. And if what is signified by this name is not nothing, but something, then it is falsely and improperly called by the name "nothing"—at least this seems to follow. But if people are right in saying that what is called nothing really is nothing and never is something, then what else could follow except that the word "nothing" simply means nothing, i.e., it does not signify anything at all. So we come to this problem: how can the word "nothing" signify not nothing, but something; and how can it signify not something, but nothing?¹⁰

⁹ The term "name" (*nomen*) has for Anselm the meaning conveyed in Boethius' commentary on Aristotle's *De Interpretatione*. Cf. PL, 64, 419ff. "*Nomen igitur est vox significativa, ad placitum, sine tempore, cuius nulla pars est significativa, separata.*"

¹⁰ A name is a sign signifying, or determining something. If, however, there is nothing to be signified, or determined, then the name is not significative, i.e., not meaningful. Hence, the problem of the meaning of the word "nothing" arises. Anselm's final solution to this problem is to intro-

T. Perhaps "nothing" and "something" are not opposed in signification.

S. If they are not opposed, then either the same word means both nothing and something in different respects, or else a thing must be found which is both something and nothing.

T. What if both alternatives can be found to be the case: both that the word has different senses, and that there is a thing which is both something and nothing?

S. I would like to know both.

T. It is evident that this word "nothing" does not at all differ from what I am calling "not-something," i.e., as far as its signification goes. Also, nothing is clearer than that this word "not-something" indicates that absolutely every thing and all that is something should be removed from the mind, and that no thing whatever nor anything that is something should be retained in the mind. But the removal of anything cannot be signified except by using the signification of that thing whose removal is intended, for no one knows what "not-a-man" means except by knowing what a man is.¹¹ Therefore it is necessary that the word "not-something" signify something by removing that which is something. By removing every thing that is something, the expression "not something" signifies no being to be left in the mind of the hearer; therefore it signifies no thing, nor anything that is something.

So this word "not-something," for these various reasons, in some sense signifies something and in no sense signifies something. For it signifies by removing and it does not signify by determining.¹²

duce the distinction between signification *secundum formam* and signification *secundum rem*.

¹¹ "Not-man," writes Boethius (following Aristotle), is not a noun. See his commentary on *De Interpretatione*, PL, 64, 424.

¹² "Constituo" is generally translated throughout this section as "determine." Note Anselm's account in his *Incomplete Work*: "We call injustice 'something' when we assert that someone who is punished on account of injustice is punished on account of something. And we call nothing 'something' if we say of some thing or other 'It is nothing' or 'It is not nothing.' For since a proposition is true or false, we say that it either affirms something about something or denies something about something [as in the above two propositions]. But, nevertheless, injustice and nothing are not concepts in our minds, even though they admit of being understood, as do countless names. Indeed, to admit of being understood (*constituere intellectum*) and

For this same reason, the name "nothing," which negates whatever is something, signifies something rather than nothing by its removing, and it signifies nothing rather than something by its determining. For it is not necessary that nothing be something simply because its name somehow signifies something; rather, nothing must be nothing, because the word "nothing" signifies something only in the sense we've mentioned. So in this way, it is not repugnant to think that evil is nothing or that the name "evil" is significative; for this name is determinative of no thing when it signifies the negation of something.

S. I can't deny that the word "nothing" somehow signifies something according to this argument you've given. But it is well known that the something which is signified in this way is not what we call nothing; for when we hear the word "nothing," we don't accept it as meaning this something that it signifies. Now, I want to know what we refer to by means of the word "nothing," and what we understand when we hear *this* word. For this word signifies properly; therefore, it is a name because it is significative, and not because it signifies something by negating it. "Nothing" is distinguished from other names on account of its own particular signification, and what it names is called "nothing." Now I ask, how that can be something if it is *properly* called nothing? And I ask how it could be nothing if its significative name signifies something? And I ask how the same thing can then be both something and nothing? And I ask the same questions about the word "evil," and about what it signifies, and about what we call evil.

T. You are right to ask this because, on the basis of the argument given above, "evil" and "nothing" do signify something;

to be something in the intellect are not the same. For 'not-man' admits of being understood, because it causes the hearer to understand that the concept 'man' is not contained in the signification of this utterance, but is removed. But there is not something in the intellect which is the thing signified by this utterance; however, the utterance 'man' does determine and signify a concept in the mind. So 'injustice' signifies the removal of justice where justice ought to be, and it does not determine something in the mind; and 'nothing' signifies the removal of something and likewise does not determine something in the mind."

Ein neues unvollendetes Werk, p. 42f.
(See bibliography)

nevertheless, what they signify is neither evil nor nothing. But there is another argument which not only shows that they *signify* something, but also shows that what they signify is *something*—not truly something, but as if it were something (*quasi aliquid*).

Many things are said according to form (*secundum formam*) which are not said according to fact (*secundum rem*). For example, "*timere*" ("to fear") is said to be active according to the form of the word, but it is passive according to fact. So also, "blindness" is called something according to the form of speaking, although it is not something according to fact. For just as we say of someone that he has sight and that sight is in him, so we also say that he has blindness and that blindness is in him—although this blindness is not "something," but rather is "not-something." For to have blindness is not to have something, but to lack what is something, since blindness is not anything other than not-seeing, or the absence of sight where sight should be. But not-seeing, or the absence of sight, is not something more in a case where there should be sight than where it should not be. For this reason, *blindness* is not something more in the eye because sight ought to be there than not-seeing, or the absence of sight, is in a stone, where no sight ought to be. And likewise we call many other things something according to the form of speaking (although they are not something in fact), since we speak of these things just as if they were existing things.

Therefore, in this way, "evil" and "nothing" signify something; and what they signify is something not according to fact, but according to the form of speaking. For "nothing" only signifies not-something, or the absence of whatever is something. And evil is nothing else except not-good, or the absence of good where good should be, or where it is useful for it to be. But what is nothing other than the absence of that which is something is certainly not something. So evil truly is nothing, and nothing is not something. Nevertheless, in a certain sense, evil and nothing *are* something, because we speak of them as if they were something when we say, "Nothing caused it," or "Evil caused it"; this is just like saying "Something caused it," or "Good caused it." So too, when we absolutely deny someone's assertion, we say, "This thing which you are saying is nothing." But "this" and "which" are

properly said only of that which is something. And when they are said in the manner I have just mentioned, they are not said about that which is something, but about that which is *spoken of* "as if it were something."

S. You have convinced me that we cannot argue that "evil" is something simply because we use this word as a name.

Chapter XII

That Satan was not able to have his original willing from himself; and that many things are said "to be able" through another's power and "to be unable" on account of another's impotence.

S. It remains now for you to teach me how to reply to those other arguments which tend to persuade me that evil is something.

T. If we are ever going to get to the heart of this issue, then we'll have to begin a little more elaborately. But you should not be content to understand the things I'm going to say merely by considering them one after the other; rather, you should try to gather them together in your mind so that you can behold them as if under a single view.

S. I will follow what you say as carefully as I can, but please don't let it annoy you if you have to wait a bit because I am slower than you had hoped.

T. Let us suppose that God created Satan step by step, and not all at once; and that God wished to make him happy. And let us suppose that Satan has been created up to the point of being suited for willing, but without yet having willed anything.

S. Suppose what you wish, but explain what I wish.

T. Do you think that Satan, in this condition, could will anything through himself (*per se*)?

S. I don't really know why you say "through himself." For you have already said above that no creature has anything which he has not received, and so can do nothing through himself.

T. When I say "through himself," I mean, "through that which

he *already* has"; for example, whoever already has feet, and whatever is necessary in order to walk, can walk by his own efforts (*per se*). And whoever has feet, but has some injury to his feet, is not able to walk by his own efforts. In this sense, then, I am asking whether Satan, when already suited for willing, but not yet having willed anything, was able to will something through himself.

S. I think that he could, if he ever wanted to.

T. You are not answering my question.

S. In what way?

T. I am not asking about Satan's willing anything, but about an *ability* which precedes willing something; and you are replying in terms of Satan's willing something, and in terms of the ability which is used in willing something. For everything, by the very fact that it *is*, is able to be. But not everything that is was able to be before it was. When, therefore, I ask whether someone who is not willing anything is *able* to will, I am asking about an ability which precedes willing, by which someone can move himself to will. But when you reply, "He could if he wanted to," you are talking about the ability which is used in a particular willing. For of course it's true that if someone wills, he is able to will.

S. I know that there are two abilities: (1) an ability which is not yet in use, and (2) an ability which is already in use.¹³ For I can't deny of/whatever is able to be in such a way that it already is, that if at some time or other it had not been, it would still have been able to be. If it had not been able to be, then it never would have been. So I think that I have made a good reply by saying that whoever is able to will because he already has willed must have been able to will before he actually willed.

T. Do you think that whatever is nothing has nothing at all, and thus has no ability, and with no ability is able to be nothing at all?

S. I can't deny this.

T. I think that the world was nothing before it was made.

S. True enough.

T. Therefore, before it was, it had absolutely no ability.

S. This follows.

¹³ Cf. DL, Ch. 7, where this distinction is introduced and explained.

T. Then before it was, it was not able to be.¹⁴

S. I don't agree. If it were not able to be, it would have been impossible for it ever to be.

T. Before there was a world, it was both possible and impossible for it to be. It was impossible for the world, since the world had no ability to be; but it was possible for God, since it was in God's power to make the world be. Therefore, the world exists because God had the ability to make a world before there was a world, and not because the world itself possessed an ability to be, before it was.

S. I can't refute you rationally, but our common way of speaking does not agree with this.

T. It's not surprising. For we say many things improperly in our ordinary way of speaking. But when we wish to come to the heart of a matter, it is necessary to analyze, as far as the subject matter allows, the improper usage which is troubling us. Because of this impropriety of speaking, it happens that we very frequently say "a thing can . . ." not because it can, but because something else can; and we say that a thing which can cannot, because something else cannot. For example, I might say "A book can be written by me"; yet a book can do nothing, although I can write a book. Or we might say, "This man cannot be conquered by that man"; we understand this to mean only that that man cannot conquer this man.¹⁵

Hence we say that God cannot do anything perverse or contrary to Himself, since He is so powerful in happiness and justice that nothing can occur which might harm Him, the Highest Good. (Actually beatitude and justice are not diverse in Him but are one good, and so He is all-powerful in simplicity of goodness. He also cannot be corrupted and cannot lie.) Therefore, whatever is not *is not able to be* by its own power before it is; but if another thing is able to make it be, then it is *able to be*, because of this other power.

Although we can make a number of distinctions with respect to ability and inability, let's settle on this: Many things are said

¹⁴ This argument introduces a qualification of the Boethian table of modalities. See D. P. Henry, "Remarks on Saint Anselm's Treatment of Possibility," *Spicilegium Beccense*, 1 (Paris: J. Vrin, 1959), 19-22.

¹⁵ Cf. DV, Ch. 8.

“to be able” not by their own ability, but by another’s; and many things are said “not to be able” not by their own inability, but by another’s. Now with reference to Satan, whom we have imagined as created to the point where he has the capability for willing, but without yet willing anything, I refer to his own ability and ask, “Was he then able to will something through himself?” In relation to what I’ve just said, give your answer.

S. If Satan were so fit for willing that nothing else was lacking to him than actually to will, I don’t see why he was not able to will through his own ability. For whoever is capable of seeing, but sees nothing because he is standing in the light with his eyes closed, is still able to see by his own ability. Now, just as a person who is not seeing is still *able* to see by his own powers, so I should think that a person who is not willing would also be able to will by his own powers. The cases seem similar; so why not?¹⁶

T. Because the person who does not see has sight and the volition by which he is able to control his sight. But we are now talking about Satan when he had no volition. So can you tell me how someone moves himself from not-willing to willing? Does he will to move?

S. If I should say that someone is moved, but not by his own willing, then the consequence would be that he was not moved by himself, but by something else. Of course, a person might suddenly blink when he sees a blow coming, or might be compelled by some distress or other, to will something he previously was not willing. But I don’t know whether in such a case he first wills to move to this willing.

T. No one is compelled by fear or a sense of any disadvantage, nor attracted by love of any benefit, to will any particular thing, unless he first has the natural will, or inclination, to avoid what is disadvantageous and to enjoy what is beneficial. By this natural will he moves himself to other willings.

S. I can’t deny it.

T. Therefore, you should say that whoever moves himself to willing any particular thing must first will that he move.

S. That’s right.

T. But whoever is not willing anything at all can in no way move himself to willing.

¹⁶ Cf. DV, Ch. 3.

S. I can't contradict this.

T. So it turns out to be the case that Satan, in the moment when he was created with a capability for willing, but not yet willing anything, couldn't have had his first willing from himself.

S. I'm convinced that he who has never yet willed anything is able to will nothing through himself.

T. No one can be happy unless he wills happiness. I mean simply happiness; not happiness together with justice, but the happiness which everyone wills—even the unjust. Everyone wants happiness very much. Now, except for that good ascribed to things by virtue of their good nature, there are usually said to be two goods and two corresponding evils. One good is that which is called justice, and injustice is its corresponding evil; the other good is that which seems best called benefit, and its corresponding evil is disadvantage. Not everyone wills justice, and not everyone flees injustice; but every rational nature, as well as every nature which can sense, wants to have what is beneficial and wants to avoid what is disadvantageous. For no one wants any particular thing unless he thinks it will be beneficial to him in one way or another. Therefore, in this way, everyone wants what is good for him and does not want what is harmful to him. So no one can be happy who doesn't want happiness in general; and no one can be happy by having what he does not want or by not having what he does want.

S. It's not to be denied.

T. On the other hand, someone who does not want justice *should not* be happy.

S. I concede this as well.

Chapter XIII

That when Satan had received only the will for happiness, he could will only happiness and couldn't keep from willing it; and no matter what he willed thereby, his willing was neither just nor unjust.

T. Let us suppose that at first God gave Satan only the will for happiness; and let us ask whether he could move himself to

willing something other than what he had received to will, simply because he had received a will.

S. Continue with what you have begun. I'm ready to understand.

T. It is evident that Satan wouldn't yet will anything other than happiness, because he had not received anything else to will.

S. That's true.

T. Therefore, I ask you whether he could move himself to will something else.

S. I can't see how he could move himself to will something other than happiness when he didn't want anything else. For if he willed to move himself to some other willing, then he wanted something else.

T. Just as when he had been given no will, he was able to will nothing through himself (*per se*), so when he had received only the will for happiness, he was able to have no other will from himself (*a se*).

S. That's correct.

T. Isn't it the case that if he should think something to be of advantage for acquiring happiness, he could move himself to will it?

S. I am in doubt about what to answer. For if he could not, then I don't see how he would will happiness—for he could not will that by which he thought he could acquire happiness. But if he could, then I don't understand why he could not will something other than happiness.

T. Someone may will something for the sake of something else; i.e., not for the sake of the thing he seems to will. In such a case, which of the following should he be judged properly to will: that which he is said to will, or that for the sake of which he wills what he is said to will?¹⁷

S. The latter.

T. Therefore, whoever wills something for the sake of happiness does not will anything other than happiness. For this reason, he both can will a thing he thinks to be of advantage to happiness and can will happiness itself.

S. That's plain enough.

¹⁷ Cf. DL, Ch. 5.

T. At the time Satan had received only the will for happiness, was he able *not to will* happiness?

S. Well, he couldn't both will and not will at the same time.

T. True enough, but I'm not asking that. Rather, I am asking whether he could desert this willing and move himself from willing happiness to not willing it.

S. If he could do this unwillingly, it would not be he himself doing it. And if he did it willingly, he would be willing something other than happiness. But he couldn't will anything else; and so I think it is evident that, through himself, he could never keep from willing the only thing which he had received to will.

T. You're coming along well. But tell me whether Satan, when he willed nothing but happiness, and could not avoid willing happiness, could avoid willing happiness more if he understood there to be a greater happiness.

S. If his will for happiness did not increase to the degree that he thought there to be a better and a greater happiness, then either he did not will happiness at all or else he willed something other than happiness and thereby did not will the better happiness. But we said that he willed happiness and nothing else.

T. Therefore, the more he could understand that there was a happiness higher than his own, the happier he willed to be.

S. Without doubt, he so willed.

T. Therefore, he willed to be like God.

S. Nothing clearer.

T. Does it seem to you that his willing was unjust if, in this way, he willed to be like God?

S. I don't want to call it just, because he willed what was not proper; and yet I don't care to call it unjust, because he willed from necessity.

T. But we posited that he who wills happiness alone only wills things that are beneficial.

S. Yes, we did.

T. Therefore, if he who could will only what was beneficial was unable to have higher and truer things, wouldn't he have willed whatever lesser things he was able to use?

S. Certainly, for he was unable to avoid willing even the meanest things when he could not have the higher.

T. If Satan willed these base and unclean pleasures (*commoda*),

by which his irrational and carnal sensibilities were delighted, wouldn't his will be both unjust and blameworthy?

S. How could his will be unjust and worthy of blame if he willed only what he had received, and thus was unable to keep from willing?

T. So it is evident that this will is the work and gift of God, whether it wills the highest benefits or the lowest pleasures—just as life and sensibility are also gifts; and it is clear that justice and injustice are not in this will.

S. No doubt about it.

T. Therefore, insofar as this will has being, it is something good; but insofar as it is related to justice and injustice, it is neither good nor evil.

S. Nothing is clearer than this.

T. Yet someone *ought not* be happy if he does not have a *just* will; moreover, he *cannot* be perfectly and laudably happy if he wills what could not or should not be.

S. That's fairly obvious.

Chapter XIV

That the case would be similar if only the
will for uprightness were received; and
therefore he received both wills at the
same time, so that he might be both happy and just.

T. Now, let's suppose that only a will for justice had been given to Satan for him to will only what would be fitting for him to will. Might he also have willed something else, or might he, through himself, have been able to keep from willing what he had received to will?

S. Everything applicable to the will for happiness must be brought forth in this case, too.

T. So you see that, in this case too, he would have a will which could be neither just nor unjust. For even as the will for happiness wouldn't be unjust if it willed unfitting things which it couldn't keep from willing, so this will for justice wouldn't be just by virtue of willing fitting things, since it had received no ability to do anything else.

S. That's right.

T. Then since Satan could be called neither just nor unjust simply because he necessarily willed happiness alone or justice alone, and since he could not, and ought not, be happy unless he wanted happiness and justly wanted it, it was necessary for God to make both wills agree in him, so that he could both will to be happy and will this justly. Since justice was added, it would so temper the will for happiness that its excesses would be curtailed and yet its ability to transgress not be destroyed. Because Satan willed happiness, he could exceed the mean; and yet because he willed justly, he would not want to exceed it. So, having a just will for happiness, Satan could and should be happy. For whoever does not will what he should not will, although he could will it, merits to be able never to will what he should not will. And whoever always holds to justice by an ordered will merits never to be in need of anything; on the other hand, whoever deserts justice by an immoderate will deserves to be in need in every way.

S. No thought seems more fitting.

T. Remember that when we were previously considering only the will for happiness, without yet having added that other will by which someone keeps himself subordinate to God, we said there was no justice or injustice in that will regardless of what it willed.

S. I remember well.

Chapter XV

That justice is something.

T. Do you think that whatever, when added to the will, tempers it, so that it wants no more than is proper and advantageous, is something?

S. No one with any sense will think it is nothing.

T. I believe you are sufficiently aware that this is nothing other than justice.

S. It couldn't be anything else.

T. Therefore, it is certain that justice is something.

S. In fact, it's something good.

Chapter XVI

That injustice is nothing except the absence
of justice where justice should be.

T. Before the will received this justice, was it under obligation to will and not will in accordance with justice?

S. It was not obliged to will what it did not have, since it had not yet received it.

T. But you do not doubt that after the will had received justice, it ought to have willed according to it—unless this justice were lost because of some violence?

S. I think the will was always bound to this obligation, whether it kept the justice it received or whether it deserted it of its own accord.

T. You judge correctly. But what if the will should desert this justice which was so usefully and wisely added to it? And what if it deserted justice by freely using its own power, not being forced by any need or any violence, but simply by willing more than it should? Would there then remain in the will anything besides what belonged to it before the addition of justice?

S. Since nothing else had been added to the will except justice, then once justice had been separated from it, certainly nothing else could remain in the will except what was there first. Of course, having received justice would make the will a debtor, for even after justice has been deserted, certain lovely vestiges of it remain in the will. For the fact that the will remains a debtor to justice shows that it was once adorned with the honor of justice; for it is completely just that whoever once received justice should always be in its debt—unless the justice were taken away by violence. And certainly we regard that nature which once had justice, and so is always in its debt for such an honorable good, as more worthy than a nature which never had justice and is not its debtor.

T. You are thinking well. But now add to your thought that the more praiseworthy the nature which is in debt to justice because it once had it, the more blameworthy the person who doesn't have the justice to which he is in debt.

S. I agree wholeheartedly.

T. Tell me now what shows a nature to be praiseworthy and what makes a person blameworthy.

S. To have had justice and to owe justice are natural dignities; but not to have justice is a personal dishonor. For owing results from the one who gave, but not-having results from the one who deserted. And so someone owes because he has received, but one does not-have because he has deserted.

T. Therefore, what you are blaming in a will which did not remain upright in justice is not that it owes justice, but that it doesn't have justice.

S. All I blame is the absence of justice or the not-having of justice. For as I've already said, it is an honor to be in debt to justice, but a dishonor not to have justice; and the more the debt honors the will, the more the not-having disgraces it. So the will's not having justice, through its own fault, disgraces it only because having and owing justice, through someone's goodness in giving it, honors the will.

T. Isn't it the case that you judge a will to be unjust if it doesn't have the justice it should have, and you judge that there is injustice in it?

S. Who wouldn't so judge?

T. If it were not unjust, and if there were no injustice in it, then I think you would be blaming nothing in it.

S. Nothing at all.

T. So you are blaming nothing else in it except injustice, and you blame the will because it is unjust.

S. There's nothing else in it to blame.

T. Then, if you blame nothing else in the will than the absence of justice and its not having justice, as you've now said, and if it's true that you blame nothing else in it than the fact that injustice is in it, or that it is unjust: then it is evident that the injustice in the will, or its being unjust, is nothing other than the absence of justice, or its not having justice.

S. These two things can in no way be different.

T. Then, just as the absence of justice and not having justice have no being, so injustice and being unjust have no being; and for this reason they are not something but nothing.

S. Nothing else.

T. Remember, now, we agreed that when justice departs from the will, nothing else remains in the will except its debt to justice and what it had before it received justice.

S. That's obvious.

T. But the will was not unjust, nor was there any injustice in it, before it had justice.

S. Not at all.

T. So when justice departs from the will, one of the following alternatives must be true: either the will is not unjust and there is no injustice in it, or to be unjust and injustice are nothing.

S. Nothing seems more necessary than this.

T. But you have conceded that the will has injustice in it, and is unjust, after it has deserted justice.

S. Of course, I couldn't avoid it.

T. So to be unjust is nothing and injustice is nothing.

S. What I earlier believed without understanding, you have now caused me also to know.

T. I think now that you know—since injustice is only the absence of justice and to be unjust is simply not to have justice—why it is that we call the absence of justice “injustice” only after justice is lost, and not before it is given; and you now know why we call not-having justice “being unjust,” and regard both injustice and being unjust as reprehensible. For the absence of justice is never disgraceful except in a case where it ought to be present. For example, it is no shame for a man who should not yet have a beard not to have one; but when he ought to have a beard, his not having one is unseemly. In the same way, it is no defect to possess a nature which is not supposed to have justice, but it is dishonoring to have a nature which should have justice and does not. So the more it seems that someone ought to have a manly nature, the more it dishonors him not to have a manly appearance.

S. I see well enough that injustice is only the absence of justice where justice should be.

Chapter XVII

Why the angel who deserted justice couldn't return to it.

T. When we posited that only the will for happiness had been given to Satan, we saw that he was able to will nothing else.

S. Yes, we saw this clearly.

T. Now after Satan had deserted justice, so that the only will he had was that will which he first had for happiness, was he able to return to the will for justice by his own means [*per se*], and so regain that will which he could not have gained by his own means before it had been given to him?

S. He was even less able to gain it after he had lost it than before it had been given. Before it had been given, he was unable to have it because of the condition of his nature; but after he had lost it, he also didn't deserve to have it because of his guilt.

T. Satan could in no way have had justice from himself when he didn't have justice, because he could have it from himself neither before he had received it nor after he had deserted it.

S. He was not supposed to have anything from himself anyway.

Chapter XVIII

How the evil angel made himself unjust and the good angel made himself just; and that the evil angel ought to give thanks to God for the good things which he received and deserted, just as the good angel ought to give thanks to God for the good things which he received and kept.

T. Isn't it the case that when Satan had justice, there's a sense in which he could have given it to himself?

S. How could he have done this?

T. Well, we say "to do" in many senses. For we say that we do something when we cause a thing to be, and also when we are able to cause something not to be and yet don't cause it not to be.

And so, because Satan was able either to remove justice from himself or not to remove it from himself, he was, in a sense, able to give justice to himself. In the same way, the good angel, who remained constant in the truth in which he was created, did not cause himself to lose justice when he could have done so. By remaining constant, the good angel gave justice to himself, even though he received all this from God. For the two angels received from God both the ability to keep and the ability to desert justice. For God gave them the ability to desert justice so that they might be able, in some sense, to give it to themselves. If they were in no way able to remove justice from themselves, then they were in no way able to give it to themselves; yet whoever in this way has given justice to himself has received from God the very ability to give justice to himself.

S. I see that by not removing justice, they were able to give justice to themselves; and the one angel gave justice to himself and the other one didn't.

T. Don't you see, then, that they ought to give thanks to God for His goodness? And isn't it right that Satan should return to God what is God's, since he cast off from himself what God gave him and was unwilling to receive what God offered [viz., the gift of perseverance]?

S. Yes, I see this.

T. So the evil angel ought always to give thanks to God for the happiness which he removed from himself, just as the good angel ought to give thanks for the happiness which he gave to himself.

S. You are absolutely right.

T. I think you are now able to see that God can in no way do what is unjust, unless it is an unjust deed for Him not to do a just deed which He could do. For before someone has received justice, he is neither just nor unjust; and after someone has received justice, he becomes unjust only if he deserts justice willingly. Therefore, as the good angel made himself just by not removing justice from himself when he was able, so God made the evil angel unjust by not giving justice back to him even though He could have done so.

S. That's easy to understand.

Chapter XIX

That the will, insofar as it is,
is good; and that no thing is an evil.

T. Let us return to considering the will and let us remember what we have already discussed, namely, that regardless of what the will for happiness wills, this will is not something evil, but is something good before it receives justice. Whence it follows that, after it has deserted the justice it received, the will for happiness is something good to the extent that it is (if it is the same being that it was before); but to the extent that the justice which was in it is no longer in it, it is called evil and unjust. For if to will to be like God were evil, the Son of God would not have willed to be like the Father. Or if to will the meanest of pleasures were evil, the will of irrational animals would be called evil. But the will of the Son of God is not called evil, because it is just; and the will of an irrational animal is not called evil, because it is not unjust.

It follows that a will is not evil but good, to the extent that it is, because it is the work of God; and a will is evil only to the extent that it is unjust. So no thing is called evil except an evil will, or else on account of an evil will (e.g., an evil man and an evil action); therefore, nothing is more apparent than that no thing is an evil, and that evil is nothing other than the absence of that lost justice in the will, or the absence of justice in another thing on account of an evil will.

Chapter XX

How God is the cause of evil actions and evil wills;
and how they are received from Him.

S. Your argument is bound together by such true, necessary, and clear reasons that I can't see how what you say can be unloosed by any counter-argument; but I see that something follows from it which I believe ought not be affirmed, and I do not see how to avoid this implication if what you are saying is true.

For if to will to be like God is neither nothing nor evil, but a certain good, then this will could only be had from Him from whom all things come. For if Satan didn't have what he had not received, then whatever he had he had received from the One who had given it—for what did he receive from God except what God had given? Wherefore, if he had the will to be like God, he had it because God had given it.

T. What's so strange about this? For just as we say that God leads someone into temptation when he doesn't free him from it, so we say He gives an evil will by not prohibiting it when He can—especially since the ability to will anything at all comes only from God.

S. In this way, the implication I pointed out seems acceptable.

T. Then if there is no giving without a receiving, it will not be unusual to say "someone gives . . ." both when he freely grants something and when he merely allows something although not approving it; so too, it will not be inconsistent to say "someone receives . . ." both when he receives what is freely granted and when he dares take forbidden things.

S. It seems that what you say is neither inconsistent nor unusual.

T. So what's wrong with saying that when Satan willed what he should not have willed, he both received this willing from God, because God permitted it, and yet did not receive it, because God did not consent to it?

S. Nothing seems wrong with this.

T. So when Satan turned his will to what he should not, both that willing and that turning were something; and yet he had this something only from God and by the will of God,¹⁸ since he could neither move his will nor will anything except through the permission of the One who makes all substantial and accidental and universal and individual natures. Insofar as Satan's will and its turning, or movement, are something, they are good and they are from God. But insofar as his will lacks the justice that it shouldn't lack, it is something evil—though not purely an evil; and whatever is evil is not from God but from willing, or from the moving of the will. Of course, injustice is an absolute

¹⁸ Reading with Migne, "*de dei voluntate*."

evil, since it is not other than the evil which is nothing. But the nature in which there is injustice is something evil, since such a nature is something and is something other than the injustice which is evil-and nothing. Therefore, what is something is made by God and is His; but what is nothing, i.e., what is evil, is made by an unjust creature and is his.

S. To be sure, we must confess that God makes every nature; but who will allow that He makes the singular actions of evil wills, as for instance, the depraved movement of the will by which an evil will moves itself?

T. Why is it so strange for us to say that God causes those singular actions which occur by means of an *evil* will, since we already say that he causes those individual things which come into being by means of an *unjust* willing or dishonorable action?

S. I don't have anything to argue against this. For indeed, I am unable to deny actions in general to be something, and I do not wish to deny that whatever has being comes from God. Nor does your argument in any way accuse God or excuse Satan; rather, it completely excuses God and accuses Satan.

Chapter XXI

That the evil angel was not able to
foreknow that he was going to fall.

S. Now I wish to know whether the angel who deserted justice foreknew that he would desert it.

T. When you ask whether the angel who did not stand firm in the truth foreknew that he would fall, what kind of knowledge are you talking about? For if you are talking about the knowledge by which we know something with certainty, then I answer that what was *able not to happen* couldn't be thus known. For what is able not to happen cannot be known with certainty by rational inference. Therefore, it is evident that Satan was not at all able to foreknow his fall, since it was not necessary for this event to occur in the future. For let's suppose that his fall had not been going to happen. If his fall had not been going to happen, do you think that his fall could have been foreknown?

S. It seems that what is foreknown *must* happen in the future, and that what is able not to happen in the future can't be foreknown. Yet I am reminded now of that famous question about divine foreknowledge and free choice. Although it is asserted with great authority that divine foreknowledge and free choice are not incompatible, and although this teaching is held to be so useful that we ought not doubt it, nevertheless, as far as reason can view the matter, the two don't seem to get along with each other very well. So we see that some men, when dealing with this question, incline so much towards one of the alternatives that they completely desert the other and perish under a wave of unbelief; other men try to maintain both terms, but alternatively, as if being blown here and there by contrary winds. Yet since it is evident that there is divine foreknowledge of all things which are done by free choice, and since none of these things occurs by necessity, it seems that what is foreknown is able not to happen in the future.

T. I'll give a quick answer to this. The foreknowledge of God is not properly called foreknowledge. For all things are always present to Him, and so He does not have *foreknowledge* of future things, but *knowledge* of present things. Therefore, since the definition of foreknowledge of a future thing is different from the definition of knowledge of a present thing, it is not necessary that the divine "foreknowledge" and the foreknowledge which we are asking about entail the same consequences.

S. Agreed.

T. Then, let's return to the question which we were previously discussing.

S. Your answer sounded good, but it's not quite a reply to my question. So don't refuse to tell me as much as God will deign to show you. For the solution to this problem is quite necessary, if one can be given. It may already have been given somewhere; but I confess that I have nowhere read an argument which would satisfy me as a solution—leaving aside what is said in Scripture, which I believe without doubting, of course.

T. When we come to this question—if by chance we do come to it—the solution will be whatever God gives. Now, because Satan's fall might not have happened, it is clear that Satan could not have foreknown his fall by means of that foreknowl-

edge which entails the necessity of an event; and to this argument I shall add another one which also excludes his having had any premonition, not only by foreknowledge, but by any thought or suspicion whatsoever, that he would fall.

S. I await this.

T. Let us suppose that while Satan was persisting in a good will he foreknew that he was going to fall in the future, then either he would have been willing for it to happen or he would not have been willing for it to happen.

S. One of these must be true.

T. Now, if together with this foreknowledge of his fall, Satan were ever willing to fall, he would already be fallen because of that evil will itself.

S. What you say is clear.

T. So if we suppose he were willing to fall, it would not be the case that he knew he was going to fall *before* he did fall [since to be willing to fall is to be *already* fallen].

S. There can be no objection to your conclusion.

T. On the other hand, if Satan were not willing to fall when he foreknew he was going to fall, then he would have been wretched with grief to the same degree that he wished to remain upright.

S. It can't be denied.

T. But the more he willed to remain upright in justice, the more just he was; and the more just he was, the more he should have been happy because of it.

S. This can't be denied either.

T. Therefore, if he foreknew that he was going to fall and if he were not willing to fall, he would have been as wretched as he should have been happy. But this is not consistent.

S. I'm not able to deny that this conclusion follows logically; but it is well known that persons who deserve happiness often are not happy. And situations like this occur not merely without contradiction, but even with our approval and by God's grace. For many times—to recall only a few things regarding the troubles of the righteous—the more just someone is, the more he is afflicted with the sadness of sympathy for the misfortunes of another. Often, too, we see that the more steadfast a person is in justice, the more injury he suffers from unjust persecutions.

T. The argument is not the same with respect both to men and Satan. For human nature, because of the sin of our first parent, was made capable of suffering unnumbered troubles; from this passibility, of course, grace works incorruptibility in us in many ways. But Satan had not yet deserved to suffer evil because of any preceding sin.

S. You have met my objection. For your argument excludes not only Satan's foreknowing his fall, but even his imagining it.

T. There is something else which seems sufficient to show me that Satan could in no way have thought of his future transgression before it occurred. For he would have thought himself to be either compelled or free. But there was no way in which he might suspect himself ever to be compelled, and as long as he willed to persevere in the truth, there was no way in which he could think himself going to desert the truth solely by his will. For I have shown above that as long as he had an upright will, he willed to persevere in this will; and as long as he willed always to keep what he had, I see no way in which he could even have suspected that he would desert what he had by changing this will, in the absence of some other intervening cause. I don't deny that he knew he could have changed the will that he had; but I say he was not able to think that at some time, without the intervention of any other cause, he would freely change that will which he was willing constantly to keep.

S. Whoever carefully understands what you are saying sees clearly that Satan was in no way able to know or to think that he was going to do what he so evilly did.

Chapter XXII

That he knew he should not will what it was
sin to will, and he knew that he ought to be
punished if he sinned.

S. I want you also to show me whether Satan knew that he should not will whatever was a transgression to will.

T. You ought not be in doubt with regard to this question, if you consider what we have just said. For if he hadn't known

that he was not supposed to will what he unjustly willed, then he would not have known that he was supposed to keep the will which he deserted. In such a case, he could not have been just by keeping justice, nor could he have been unjust in deserting justice, for he wouldn't have known justice. For if he hadn't known that he was supposed to be content with what he had received, then he couldn't have avoided willing more than he received. Moreover, since he was a rational being and was in no way prevented from using his reason, he knew what he should and should not will.

S. I don't see that your reasoning can be refuted, but a certain question seems to arise from it: for if Satan knew that he ought not desert the justice he had received, then certainly he also knew that he ought to be punished if he were to desert it. How then could Satan, who had received an unfailing will towards being happy, freely will a thing that would make him wretched?

Chapter XXIII

That he was not supposed to know that
if he sinned he would be punished.

T. Just as it is certain that Satan couldn't be ignorant that he *ought to be punished* if he sinned, so it is also certain that he ought not to have known that he *would be punished* if he sinned.

S. But how could he have been ignorant of this, if his reason were not prevented from knowing the truth, as ours often is when it is impeded by the burden of a corruptible body?

T. Because he was rational, he was able to understand that he deserved to be punished if he were to sin. But since "the judgments of God are deep and His ways past finding out" (Romans 11:33), Satan was unable to discern whether God would do what He justly could do. Now, if anyone were to claim that Satan wasn't even able to believe that God would damn His own creature on account of his guilt, i.e., damn the very one He had created out of His own goodness, then I ask, what is so objectionable in this? For such a person might argue as follows: "There had been no previous instance of justice

punishing injustice. Moreover, it was certain that the number of angels who had been created to enjoy God was fixed by His wisdom, without any superfluity, so that if that number were diminished, it would be imperfect; but so excellent a work of God could not continue to be imperfect in any respect. Moreover, even assuming that man had already been created, Satan couldn't in any way know that God was going to substitute a human nature for an angelic or an angelic nature for a human, if either nature fell; rather, he would think that God was going to *restore* the fallen nature to its own place and not to the place of another. And if man had not yet even been created, then still less could Satan imagine that such a being was going to be created for the express purpose of serving as a substitute for another nature." So if anyone were to claim that Satan wasn't able to believe that God would damn His own creature on account of his guilt, why would we have any objection?

S. Well, it does seem to be consistent, doesn't it.

T. Then, let's go back to what I said before: that Satan ought not to have had the knowledge that he would be punished if he sinned. For if he had known this, then even while willing and possessing happiness, he wouldn't have been able freely to will that thing which would make him wretched. And in such a case, he wouldn't have been just when he didn't will what he shouldn't, because he couldn't have willed it. Now keeping this argument in mind, consider whether Satan ought to have known the thing you are asking, namely, that he would be punished if he sinned. For if he had known this, either he would have sinned or he would not have sinned.

S. One or the other must be true.

T. If, having *foreseen the punishment*, he sinned without being in any need or without being coerced, then he ought to have been punished all the more.

S. I think so, too.

T. Then this foreknowledge was not advantageous to him.

S. That's right; for one who was going to sin, it was no advantage to foreknow that he would be punished if he did.

T. And if Satan had not sinned when he foreknew he would be punished for sinning, then it was either solely because of a good will or because of a fear of this punishment.

S. What else can we say?

T. But his very deed showed that he would not have avoided sin solely because he loved justice.

S. There's no doubt about this.

T. And if he had refrained from sinning because of fear, he would not have been just.

S. So it is obvious that Satan should in no way have known that the punishment which fell upon him was going to occur after he sinned.

Chapter XXIV

That even the good angel was not supposed to know that if he sinned he would be punished.

S. We believe that both the angel who remained upright in truth and the angel who did not remain upright were endowed with equal knowledge in their first condition; but I don't see why the knowledge we are talking about was denied to the angel whose good will was so steadfast that it sufficed to avoid sin.

T. If the good angel had foreknown there was a punishment for sinning, he wouldn't have been able to regard such a punishment lightly, nor should he have so regarded it.

S. So it seems.

T. But either the love of justice alone or the hatred of punishment alone would have sufficed to keep him from sinning.

S. Clear enough.

T. So if he had foreknown there would be a punishment for sin, then he would have had two reasons for not sinning—the one honorable and helpful, and the other dishonorable and useless: these are the love of justice and the hatred of punishment. But it is not honorable to refrain from sinning simply because of hatred of punishment, nor is the hatred of punishment helpful for avoiding sin, since the love of justice suffices by itself.

S. There is nothing I can object to in this.

T. Then what shall we make of it? Doesn't the good angel's perseverance strike us as having much more splendor when its

sole cause is seen to be that which is honorable and helpful, because freely chosen? And isn't this better than if the other motive, which is both dishonorable and unhelpful, because against one's free accord, were also present at the same time?

S. What you say is so clear that I now rejoice because the good angel didn't know what I previously wished that he had known; but now, of course, he has this knowledge from the example of Satan, whose fall he surely knew.

Chapter XXV

That even supposing the good angel cannot sin only because he now has this knowledge from Satan's fall, still it would be to his glory not to sin.

T. Of course, both the good angel and the evil angel now know that guilt of this kind is followed by punishment; but just as there are two different kinds of knowledge, so there are different causes and different results of their knowledge. For what Satan knew by his own experience, the good angel learned by Satan's example; the former learned in his way because he did not persevere, and the latter learned in his way because he did persevere.

Just as Satan's knowledge was to his disgrace, since he was blameable for not having persevered, so the good angel's knowledge was to his glory, since he was worthy of praise for having persevered. If, then, the good angel is said to be unable to sin only because he has this knowledge, it is sufficiently clear that just as the knowledge which is obtained from laudably persevering is glorious, so the inability to sin which was the result of this glorious knowledge is likewise to the good angel's glory. Therefore, just as the evil angel must be blamed because he is not able to return to justice, so the good angel must be praised because he cannot depart from justice. And just as the evil angel cannot now return to justice, because he deserted it by an evil will alone, so the good angel cannot now depart from justice, because he continued in it by a good will alone. Therefore, it is obvious that just as it is the penalty of sin for Satan not to be able to regain what he lost, so it is the reward of

justice for the good angel not to be able to desert what he kept.

S. Your reflections upon the good angel's knowledge and inability to sin would be very lovely if, as you say, the good angel attained to this knowledge and inability to sin by virtue of his own prevering. But he doesn't seem to have attained these things because he himself persevered, but rather because Satan did not persevere.

T. If what you say is true, then the good angel would be able to rejoice over the fall of Satan, inasmuch as it was advantageous for him that Satan should fall; for the good angel would then have attained to the knowledge by which he was able never to sin nor become less happy, not because he merited good, but because another merited evil. Yet that he should have all these benefits in this way is absurd.

S. The more absurd it seems that the fall of Satan should so benefit the angel who didn't fall, the more it is necessary for you to show that the good angel did not obtain this knowledge that sin would be punished simply because of the sin of Satan.

T. You shouldn't say that the good angel gained this knowledge *because* Satan sinned, but you should say that the good angel gained this knowledge *by the example* of Satan's falling because he sinned. For if neither had sinned, God was certainly going to give that same knowledge to both of them in some other way than by the example of anyone's fall, for he would have given it because of the merit of perseverance. For no one will say that God was not able to give this knowledge to his own angels in some other way. Therefore, when Satan sinned, God simply used his example to teach the good angel what He was going to teach him in any case; and God used this example not because He was unable to teach in any other way, but because He was able—by His greater power—to make good come from evil by so using this example. God did this so that not even evil might remain unordered within the realm of omnipotent wisdom.

S. What you say is especially agreeable to me.

T. So it is clear that if the good angel were not now able to sin only because he knows that punishment followed the sin of the evil angel, nonetheless this inability to sin would not be to

the lessening of his praiseworthiness; rather, it would be his reward for having preserved justice. But, as you know, we have already made it clear that he is not able to sin since, through the merit of his perseverance, he was elevated so that he can no longer see anything more to want.

S. I have not forgotten what we have already learned on this subject.

Chapter XXVI

What we dread when we hear the name "evil";
and what does the works which injustice is
said to do, since injustice and evil are nothing.

S. Although you have answered all my questions up to now, yet I await your explaining what it is that we dread when we hear the name "evil," and what causes things like robbery and lust, which injustice and evil seem to do, if evil is nothing?

T. I shall give a brief answer. The evil which is injustice is always nothing; but the evil which is disadvantage sometimes is nothing, as in blindness, and sometimes is something, as in sadness or grief. We always regard with aversion the disadvantage which is something. Therefore, when we hear the word "evil," we do not fear an evil which is nothing, but an evil which is something, and which follows the absence of good. For the evil of many disadvantages which are something, follows upon the evil of injustice and blindness, which are nothing; these disadvantages are what we dread when we hear the name "evil."

And when we say that injustice causes robbery, or that blindness causes a man to fall into a pit, we should not think that injustice or blindness do something. But we are to think that if justice were in the will and sight in the eyes, then neither the robbery nor the fall into the pit would have taken place. It is as if we were to say, "The absence of a rudder drives the ship onto the rocks," or "The absence of reins causes the horse to run wild." In these statements we mean only that if a rudder or reins were present, then the winds would not drive the ship

onto the rocks nor would the horse run wild. For just as a ship is steered by a rudder and a horse restrained by reins, so the will of a man is restrained by justice and his feet are steered by sight.

S. You have satisfied me concerning this evil which we call injustice, so that every question about it which used to be in my mind is now cleared up. For my question about this evil which we call injustice seems to have arisen from the fact that if injustice were to have any being, it would be from God, from whom everything that is something must come, and from whom sin and injustice cannot possibly come. But I see nothing that could be against right faith if the evil which we call pain were ever something.

Chapter XXVII

Whence came evil in an angel who was created good.

S. But please don't be too weary to reply briefly to my last foolish question so that I may know how to reply when I am asked the same thing. I know that it is not always easy to give a wise answer to a foolish questioner, and yet I wonder whence came the *first evil* (which we call injustice or sin) in an angel who was created just.

T. Tell me from whence nothing comes to be something.

S. Nothing neither comes nor goes.

T. Then why do you ask from whence comes injustice, which is nothing?

S. Because when justice withdraws from where it was, we say that injustice approaches.

T. Well then, speak more properly and clearly, and ask rather about the withdrawal of justice. For indeed, an apt question often conduces to an apt response, while an inept question produces a more encumbered reply.

S. Then why did justice withdraw from a just angel?

T. If you wish to speak properly, you shouldn't say that it withdrew from him, but that he deserted it by willing what he shouldn't have willed.

S. Why did he desert it?

T. When I say that he deserted it by willing what he was not supposed to will, I am showing clearly why and how he deserted it. For he deserted it because he willed what he was not supposed to will: and he deserted it in this way, i.e., by willing what he shouldn't have willed.

S. But why did he will what he was not supposed to will?

T. No cause preceded this willing except his mere ability to will.

S. Then he willed to desert justice because he was able to will?

T. No, because the good angel was also able to will, but he didn't will to desert justice. For no one wills what he is able to will simply *because* he is able to will; there must be still *another* cause—although, of course, he would never will anything at all if he were *not able to will*.

S. Why, then, did he will?

T. Only *because he willed*. For there was no other cause by which his will was in any way driven or drawn; but his will was both its own efficient cause and its own effect—if such a thing can be said!

Chapter XXVIII

That the ability to will what should not be willed is always a good, and that willing is itself always good to the degree that it is.

S. Well, if Satan's ability to will and actually willing are something, then they are good and they come from God.

T. Both are something. The ability to will is only something good and it is a free gift from God; and actually willing, in its essence, is something good. For even though Satan's will became evil by willing unjustly, nevertheless it is from God, from whom comes everything that is something. Now, not only does someone have from God that which God freely gives, but he also has what he unjustly steals with God's permission—for just as God is said to do whatever He permits to be done, so He is

said to give whatever He permits to be stolen. Therefore, since God permitted Satan to use that freely given ability for the purpose of robbery, Satan had the use of this ability from God. This use is nothing other than his actually willing. For just as speaking is using the ability to speak, so willing is nothing other than using the ability to will.

1

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ANSELM OF CANTERBURY

PHILOSOPHY / RELIGION

TRUTH, FREEDOM, AND EVIL THREE PHILOSOPHICAL DIALOGUES

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY

JASPER HOPKINS & HERBERT RICHARDSON

"The present volume originated in the recognition that there are not sufficient translations available to provide students in the history of philosophy and theology with an adequate knowledge of the methods and conclusions of medieval thought. The translation of Anselm's works is doubly justified as a means to fill this lacuna. For not only is he fully the equal of Augustine and Thomas in his speculative power, but he also employs a consciously pedagogical style which is adapted to the needs of the beginning student. Hence these treatises will continue to be in our day what Anselm intended them to be in his own: useful tools for theological and philosophical education....

"[Anselm] refurbished the dialectic of the monastic schools by turning his intellectual powers to analyze the philosophical issues implicit in, and inextricably bound up with, the theology of the medieval church. Thus philosophy and theology are inseparable in his writings: he is both dialectician and exegete.... The keenness of Anselm's thinking lies in his ability to develop an argument and follow it doggedly to its conclusion. The assumptions of his argument are sometimes theological and determined by Scripture; but this never interferes with his quest for consistency nor with the rigor of his argument. He is led into examining the notions of possibility and necessity, ability and inability, signification and reference....

"In *De Veritate*, *De Libertate Arbitrii*, and *De Casu Diaboli*, he combines appeals to three sources: (1) ordinary use of language expressions, (2) *a priori* rationalistic judgments, and (3) experience in general. His scholasticism consists precisely in his intent to understand and defend the dogmas of faith in terms of the dialectics fostered by these three sources. Each of the dialogues here presented begins with a biblical or theological problem; but its development carries one into what, today at least, would be called distinctly philosophical ramifications."—JASPER HOPKINS & HERBERT RICHARDSON