

Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109)

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Biography

Anselm of Canterbury, also known as Anselm of Aosta and Anselm of Bec or Saint Anselm, was first a student, then a monk, later prior and finally abbot of the monastery of Bec in Normandy, before being elected Archbishop of Canterbury in 1093. He remains one of the best-known and most readily engaging philosophers and theologians of medieval Europe. His literary corpus consists of eleven treatises or dialogues, the most important of which are the philosophical works *Monologion* and *Proslogion* and the magnificent theological work *Cur deus homo* (Why God Became a [God-]man). He also left three meditations, nineteen prayers, 374 extant letters including *Epistolae de Sacramentis* (Letters on the Sacraments) and a collection of philosophical fragments, together with a compilation of his sayings (*Dicta Anselmi*) by Alexander, a monk of Canterbury, and a compilation of his reflections on virtue, *De morum qualitate per exemplorum coaptationem* (On Virtues and Vices as Illustrated by a Collage of Examples), possibly also by a monk at Canterbury.

At Bec Anselm wrote his first philosophical treatise, the *Monologion*, a title signifying a soliloquy. This work was followed by the *Proslogion*, the title meaning an address (of the soul to God). At Bec he also completed the philosophical dialogues *De grammatico* (On (an) Expert in Grammar), *De veritate* (On Truth), *De libertate arbitrii* (Freedom of Choice) and *De casu diaboli* (The Fall of the Devil). Near the end of his time at Bec, he turned his attention to themes more theological, drafting a first version of *De incarnatione Verbi* (The Incarnation of the Word) before September 1092 and completing the final revision around the beginning of 1094. During his time in office at Canterbury, which included two long exiles from England (1097–1100 and 1103–6), he wrote the *Cur deus homo*, followed by the concisely reasoned treatises *De conceptu virginali et originali peccati* (The Virgin Conception and Original Sin), *De processione Spiritus Sancti* (The Procession of the Holy Spirit) and *De concordia praescientiae et praedestinationis et gratiae dei cum libero arbitrio* (The Harmony of the Foreknowledge, the Predestination and the Grace of God with Free Choice).

Though his principal writings at Bec were more philosophical while his foremost writings as archbishop were more theological, still we must remember that Anselm himself made no express distinction between philosophy and theology, that at Bec he also wrote two meditations and sixteen prayers, and that his *Cur deus homo* and *De concordia*, in dealing with the weighty theological doctrines of atonement, predestination and grace, incorporate philosophical concepts such as *necessitas praecedens* (preceding necessity) and *necessitas sequens* (subsequent necessity).

Anselm's most famous philosophical work is certainly the *Proslogion*, while his most influential theological work is undoubtedly the *Cur deus homo*. The style of the *Proslogion* imitates that

of Augustine in the *Confessiones*, where the soul invokes God as it prayerfully reflects and meditates. By contrast, the *Cur deus homo* is cast in dialogue form because, as Anselm states in I.1, ‘issues which are examined by the method of question and answer are clearer, and so more acceptable, to many minds – especially to minds that are slower.’ About his aims in the *Proslogion* there is no scholarly consensus. The traditional view holds that he is undertaking the twofold task of demonstrating the existence of God and demonstrating certain truths regarding God’s attributes. In carrying out this task, he has recourse to a single consideration (*unum argumentum*), namely, that God is *aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari potest* (something than which nothing greater can be thought). This single consideration gives rise to a single argument form; the logical structure of the reasoning which purports to establish that *quo nihil maius* is actually existent is also the structure of the arguments which conclude that *quo nihil maius* is so existent that it cannot be thought not to exist, is alone existent *per se*, is omnipotent, merciful yet impassable, is supremely just and good, is greater than can be thought, and so on. According to this interpretation, the *Proslogion* seeks to establish most of the same conclusions that were reached in the earlier *Monologion*, but to establish them more directly, simply and tersely.

The central thrust of the *Cur deus homo* may be discerned from the title: namely, to explain why it was necessary for God, in the person of the Son, to become a man (that is, to become incarnate as a human being (*homo*)). Anselm uses the Latin word *homo* generically and not in the sense of male (*vir*). This fact is seen clearly in *Cur deus homo* II, 8: ‘nil convenientius, quam ut de femina sine viro assumat [deus] illum hominem quem quaerimus’ (nothing is more fitting than that God assume from a woman without a male *that* man [human being] about whom we are inquiring). Though the sense of *homo* varies in accordance with whether Anselm is speaking about a human being or about a human nature, there is no doubt about the meaning of the title: the Son of God assumed *a* human nature, thereby becoming *a* man; he did not assume another man (in other words, assume a human person together with a human nature) as the heretical Nestorians had taught, nor did he become man (in other words, become universal man, by assuming unindividuated human nature as such).

Anselm’s detailed theory of satisfaction for sin was in large measure a putative theoretical justification of the institutionalized practices of the confessional and the penitential system as found in the medieval Christian church, which understood every sin to constitute a punishable demerit and to require both the imploring of God’s forgiveness and the making of amends for having dishonoured him. Throughout the intricate and sustained reasoning of the *Cur deus homo*, Anselm seeks to show one central truth: ‘because only God can make this satisfaction and only a man ought to make it, it is necessary that a God-man make it’ (*Cur deus homo* II, 6).

As in the *Cur deus homo*, so also in his other treatises Anselm proceeds insofar as he deems possible, *sola ratione* (by recourse to rational considerations alone). Accordingly, he is rightly called the ‘Father of Scholasticism’. He understands *ratio* in a broad sense, broad enough to encompass appeals to experience as well as to conceptual intelligibility. Although the main intellectual influence upon him was Augustine, he is less platonistic than the latter, and the influence of Aristotle’s *De interpretatione* and *Categories* (from Boethius’ Latin translations) is clearly discernible in his philosophical works.

1. Biography

Major details of Anselm's life come down to us through his contemporary secretary and biographer, Eadmer, an English monk at Canterbury and author of the *Vita Anselmi* (Life of Anselm) and *Historia Novorum in Anglia* (History of Recent Events in England). Eadmer knew little of, and reported meagrely on, Anselm's childhood and youth. It is known that Anselm was born of noble lineage in the Burgundian town of Aosta, near the border with the Kingdom of Lombardy (now in Italy). In 1056, however, several years after his mother's death and as a result of his father's hostility, Anselm left home. Some three years later, following intermittent studies, he arrived at the Benedictine Abbey of Bec in Normandy, having journeyed there to place himself under the tutelage of the Abbey's prior and schoolmaster, Lanfranc of Pavia. He was then twenty-six years old.

After his father's death (presumably in 1060), Anselm chose to enter the monastic order at Bec rather than return to the family estate. In 1063 he was elected prior of Bec, succeeding Lanfranc, who had been called to the abbey of St.-Etienne in Caen; in 1078 he was chosen abbot, in spite of his disinclination to assume the office. He showed even more reluctance and protestation when selected as archbishop of Canterbury in 1093, again in succession to Lanfranc. Eadmer tells of Anselm's vigorous and poignantly futile efforts to resist election, first to the abbacy at Bec and later to the archepiscopacy at Canterbury. When the monks of Bec besought Anselm to dispense with the customary protests and agree to become abbot, he threw himself prostrate on the floor, begging them not to weigh him down with so burdensome an office. A similar scene took place in England: when King William II, fearing that his sudden sickness was mortal, named Anselm archbishop and when the bishops carried him forcibly to William's bedside to receive from him the episcopal staff, Anselm kept his fist clenched, thus refusing the staff. Nonetheless, the staff was pressed against his hand by the bishops, the *Te deum* was chanted and he was proclaimed archbishop-elect on 6 March 1093. His consecration followed on 4 December.

Anselm's subsequent quarrels with William II (son of William the Conqueror) and with his brother and successor Henry I are well known. He contested William's exercise of jurisdiction over the church, in particular William's claim that he alone, as king, was entitled to convoke future reform synods and had the right to decide which rival for the papacy – Urban II or Clement III – to recognize. Relations became so tense that Anselm, acting on his own initiative, chose to leave England for three years (November 1097–September 1100) to consult with Urban II in Rome. Upon his return to England after William's death, he then quarrelled with Henry I over Urban's injunction against any bishop doing homage to a king or being invested with his bishop's office by a king or any other layman. Anselm, at Henry's behest, once again departed from England for three years (April 1103–August 1106), this time to consult with Pope Paschal II. The investiture controversy was settled only in 1107, twenty months before Anselm's death, when King Henry formally forswore the right of investiture at the Concordat of London.

Two conflicting portraits of Anselm's mature life and of his attitude towards his roles as theologian and prelate have emerged. The standard portrayal, that of R.W. Southern, who agrees in general with Eadmer, shows Anselm as a devout monk who was committed to the ideals of

monasticism and who aspired to a life of scholarly study and spiritual meditation. Dreading to trade the tranquillity of Bec for the combative milieu of Canterbury, he experienced his elevation to the archbishopric as 'his nearest approach to hell' (Southern 1988: 187). In his preface to the *Cur deus homo* (Why God Became a [God-]man), Anselm spoke of his tribulation of heart and his great suffering, presumably because of his clashes with King William over the extent of regal power. Anselm seemed most content when he could withdraw from the public arena, as he did in the Italian mountain village of Liberi while finishing the *Cur deus homo*, during his first exile.

A contrary portrait of Anselm is that of S.N. Vaughn (1987), who dismisses much of Eadmer's report as tendentious and too intent upon depicting Anselm as a saint. Anselm, says Vaughn, was a man politically astute and personally calculating, manipulative enough to enlist the support of his friends against his enemies and clever enough actively to fashion a positive historical image of himself by omitting from his collection of letters those that would have cast him in a less favourable light. Moreover, his very remonstrations and protestations when assuming high office were not only a formality – the expected and requisite display of humility – but also a test of the intensity of his electors' support. In fact, Vaughn claims, Anselm adroitly schemed to become selected as archbishop once he became convinced that God had destined him for this office. He did not desire the office and its burdens; but, despite this disinclination, he manoeuvred cleverly to obtain it in compliance with the perceived will of God. Once in the office he executed it with talent, protecting against regal confiscation the holdings and preserving from regal encroachment the prerogatives of the previously weakened English church.

Both these mutually incompatible pictures of the historical Anselm seem extreme. Neither is likely to be shown conclusively wrong by future scholarly debate, except in the unlikely event that new evidence is forthcoming. Scholarly caution must be exercised, however, in attempting radically to reshape Eadmer's testimony that Anselm neither sought nor desired to become archbishop – testimony corroborated by Anselm's own letters and not clearly contradicted by circumstantial evidence.

2. Philosophical Method

Anselm did not write his first philosophical treatise, the *Monologion*, until he was forty-three. Even his earliest letters, prayers and meditations do not antedate 1070. Thus his entire corpus of writings arises from his mature years, after he had already been a monk at Bec for at least ten to sixteen years. Not surprisingly, his works show a consistency that cannot be found in a more prolific writer such as Augustine, who in later years felt obliged to write *retractationes* (reconsiderations) of his earlier work.

Stylistically, Anselm often uses streamlined Latin sentences that are set out in simple vocabulary. However, his concise style and his well-focused treatment of topics do not ensure that his ideas are easy to understand. On the contrary, understanding is frequently impeded by his failure to introduce more elaborate distinctions and to explore the metaphysical complexities that underlie his ostensibly straightforward assertions. More like Aristotle than like Augustine, he

introduces into his argumentation appeals to common linguistic parlance, as when he explains that our saying 'Nothing caused it' ordinarily means that it is not the case that anything caused it. Similarly, when we say that God is unable to sin (an expression that seems to convey the idea of imperfection because of powerlessness), we usually mean that God has the ability always to keep from sinning (and to have this ability is to have a perfection).

Anselm is called the 'Father of Scholasticism' because he endeavours to show that revealed truths can be established on an independent rational basis. In the Monologion, where he professes to proceed *sola ratione* (by recourse to rational considerations alone), he regards himself as having demonstrated not only that God exists but also that God is triune and that the human soul is immortal. Similarly, in the concluding chapter of the Cur deus homo, he claims unhesitatingly that 'whatever is contained in the Old and in the New Testament has been proved, by the solution of the single problem which we have set forth.' Thus he goes further than his predecessor Augustine and his successor Aquinas, neither of whom supposed that either the doctrine of the Trinity or the doctrine of the inerrancy of Scripture is rationally demonstrable.

An example of Anselm's reasoning as a Scholastic may be drawn from De casu diaboli (The Fall of the Devil) 21, which asks the question of whether Satan was able to foreknow that he would fall. Anselm begins by stating that either Satan did know this or he did not. On the assumption that he foreknew, he either was willing that the fall should occur, or he was unwilling. Were he willing, however, then he did not foreknow a future fall, since he was already fallen by virtue of that evil consent; and if he were unwilling, then he who because of his sinlessness deserved to be happy would because of his foreknowledge have been filled with grief, a theological inconsistency. Hence, concludes Anselm, Satan was not able to foreknow that he would fall. In reaching this conclusion, he extends theological truth beyond what is overtly taught in Scripture.

The scholastic method of *sola ratione* characterizes most of Anselm's philosophical and theological works, ranging from the Proslogion (whose original title was Fides quaerens intellectum (Faith Seeking Understanding)) to the Cur deus homo, which appears to be tacitly oriented toward Scripture in spite of its purporting to presuppose nothing about Christ. In De incarnatione Verbi (The Incarnation of the Word) 6, Anselm explicitly links the method of the Proslogion with that of the Monologion, when he states that both of these works show that 'what we hold by faith regarding the divine nature and its persons – excluding the topic of incarnation – can be proven by compelling reasons (*necessariis rationibus*) apart from appeal to the authority of Scripture.' In this context, to proceed *necessariis rationibus*, as do both the Monologion and the Proslogion, is to proceed *sola ratione*. Moreover, in the Cur deus homo he elaborates upon the notion of *rationes necessariae* but does so without this notion's being at odds with that of *remoto Christo* (arguing without recourse to any knowledge of Christ derived from Scripture or from history). Furthermore, in the terminal chapter of the Cur deus homo, the interlocutor Boso summarizes: 'You prove the necessity of God's becoming a man, and you do so in such a way that even if the few things you have introduced from our books are removed (for example, what you mentioned about the three persons of God and about Adam), you would satisfy not only the Jews but also the pagans *sola ratione*.' Finally, in De incarnatione

Verbi 6, Anselm intimates that even the Monologion can be characterized as *fides quaerens intellectum*. The same is true of the Cur deus homo, as is attested by Boso's last speech in I, 25.

The distinction that Anselm makes in the Cur deus homo between *rationes necessariae* and *rationes convenientes* (fitting reasons) is the following: necessary reasons are reasons that by themselves are compelling, while fitting reasons are weaker reasons that, nonetheless, are compelling in the absence of more powerful contrary considerations. With regard to fitting reasons and their compelling power, Anselm's proposal to Boso in the Cur deus homo is crucial:

I would like for us to agree to accept, in the case of God, nothing that is in even the least degree unfitting and to reject nothing that is in even the slightest degree reasonable unless something more reasonable opposes it. For in the case of God, just as an impossibility results from any unfittingness, however slight, so necessity accompanies any degree of reasonableness, however small, provided it is not overridden by some other more weighty reason.

(Cur deus homo I, 10)

The fact that an overall consistency of method characterizes Anselm's treatises does not mean that he never relied upon Scripture to furnish a premise needed for a given argument. However, he sought to avoid doing so, and it is interesting to note that he did not write a single commentary on any book of Scripture.

All of the foregoing serve to distinguish Anselm from Augustine, to whom he is nevertheless deeply indebted. The Proslogion's very description of God as *aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari potest* (something than which nothing greater can be thought) seems to be drawn from Confessiones 7.4, and its theme *fides quaerens intellectum* is taken from Augustine's Sermon 44.6.7 (and ultimately from Isaiah 7: 9), just as in the Monologion the main ideas regarding the Trinity are appropriated from Augustine's De trinitate (On the Trinity). Likewise, Anselm's analysis of free choice in terms of the distinction between having an ability and exercising it, together with his reasoning about the impossibility of an upright human will's being overpowered by the force of temptation, harks back to Augustine. Yet, Anselm is no mere reiterator of Augustine's points. Just as his Proslogion argument advances well beyond any cognate systematic reasoning found in Augustine, so his theory of atonement lays a foundation different from Augustine's Devil-ransom theory, though a summary of that theory is incorporated into the Cur deus homo. Likewise, his definition of free choice has no parallel in Augustine's writings, even though his concept of 'free choice' is allied with that of Augustine.

3. Philosophical Works: *Monologion*

The Monologion and the Proslogion should be studied together, since each in certain respects elucidates the other. Anselm himself never thought of the Proslogion as replacing the Monologion. Although the more creditable (and traditional) view maintains that chapters 1–4 of the Monologion aim at proving the existence of God, this view has been challenged by F.S. Schmitt and others. Schmitt (1969) regards Anselm as striving to demonstrate something not about the existence of God but about God's essence: Anselm does not undertake to show that a

Supreme Being exists as the cause of the universe, but endeavours instead to prove that the cause of the universe, a cause that is presupposed to exist, is a supreme being (Analecta Anselmiana vol. I: 45). Furthermore, Schmitt contends that in these chapters Anselm self-consciously deplatonizes Augustine, from whose *De trinitate* 8.3 he is borrowing. Anselm, he says, leaves aside three Neoplatonistic tenets found in Augustine's discussion: (1) that the concept of the good is impressed (by God) upon the human mind; (2) that the mind beholds both good things and the Good itself; and (3) that good things participate in the Good itself. Critics of Schmitt, however, question whether Anselm is actually borrowing from *De trinitate* 8.3 anything more than Augustine's topic; and if he is not borrowing, then he cannot be said to be deliberately leaving some particular doctrines aside (see Augustinianism).

There is a clear strand of Neoplatonism that runs throughout the *Monologion*. In *Monologion* 9 Anselm teaches the doctrine of exemplarism, although he goes on to maintain that there is only a single Form, or Exemplar, of creation: namely, the second member of the Trinity, or the Eternal Word of God (*Monologion* 30–3). He also accepts a doctrine of degrees of existing, whereby a plant exists more than does a stone, whereas a horse exists more than does a plant (*Monologion* 31). Moreover, he implies that existence is a perfection:

No one doubts that created substances exist in themselves very differently from the way they exist in our knowledge. For in themselves they exist in virtue of their own being; but in our knowledge their likenesses exist, not their own being. It follows, then, that the more truly they exist anywhere by virtue of their own being than by virtue of their likenesses, the more truly they exist in themselves than in our knowledge.

(*Monologion* 36)

Since Anselm correlates existing truly with existing greatly (*Monologion* 31; *Proslogion* 3), he regards something as existing more greatly (in other words, more perfectly) if it exists 'in its own being' in addition to existing in someone's knowledge. In contrast to the Neoplatonists, however, Anselm holds to a doctrine of analogy on the basis of which some of our predicative discourse about God bears some real but very remote likeness to the Divine Nature (*Monologion* 65; *Responsio* 8). He links our conceiving of God with our conceiving of ourselves:

The mind, then, can very fittingly be called its own mirror, as it were, in which it beholds, so to speak, the image of this Being which it cannot see face to face. For if of all created things the mind alone can remember itself, understand, and love, then I do not see why we should deny that there is in it the true image of this Being, which exists as an ineffable trinity of self-remembrance, understanding and love.

(*Monologion* 67)

Speaking more generally, Anselm states that 'every being in the degree to which it exists is in that degree similar to the Supreme Being' (*Monologion* 66). These resemblances, though very distant, serve as the foundation for analogical predications (see *Existence*; *God*, concepts of; *Trinity*).

4. Philosophical works: *Proslogion*

No portion of Anselm's literary corpus has evoked as much controversy as has his Proslogion. Interpretation of this 'pious breathing', as one translator calls it, is beset by a maze of criss-crossing textual and conceptual problems. Textually, a number of questions are raised. Does Anselm here aim to set forth a proof or proofs of God's existence, and if so, in what chapter(s) is the proof located? Does Anselm's use of the description *id quo maius cogitari nequit* and its variants differ from his use of the description *aliquid quo nihil maius cogitari potest* and its variants; are these really descriptions, or are they definitions? If they are descriptions, are they interchangeable with the description 'greatest conceivable being'? What is meant by *maius*, by *cogitari*, by *intellectus*? If *cogitari posse* means 'to be conceivable', can it be equivalently replaced by 'to be logically possible'? In the opening sentence of Proslogion 2, is Anselm asking to be granted to understand *quia es sicut credimus*, or *quia es, sicut credimus*? Does Proslogion 2 presuppose that existence is a perfection (an attribute or a property)? In Proslogion 4, what is the proper English rendering of *Qui ergo intelligit sic esse deum*? When Anselm writes in Proslogion 15, *es quiddam maius quam cogitari possit*, is he claiming that God is inconceivable?

Such textual problems cannot be resolved simply by re-examining the Latin passages, for the proper construal of the respective texts requires the elimination of ambiguities. Invariably, all such translations will be interpretative. Some translators, for example, construe the opening sentence of Proslogion 2 as Anselm's request to be granted to understand 'that You exist, even as we believe [You to exist]', so that *sicut credimus* is parenthetical. Others have taken *sicut* to mean 'in the manner that' and have dropped the editorial comma that precedes it, so that Anselm is seen as asking to understand 'that You exist in the manner that we believe [You to exist]'. According to this latter rendering, Anselm is not aiming to prove the existence of God; rather, he wants to show that God, whom he believes to exist, exists in a manner different from the mode of existence of all finite beings: that is, he exists so truly and eternally and immutably that he cannot even conceivably not exist. In comparison with this mode of existence, finite beings are as nothing. In this interpretation, first advanced by Stolz (1933) and subsequently repeated in modified form by many others, the Proslogion is primarily an exercise in mystical theology.

By contrast, Malcolm (1960) maintains that Proslogion 3 contains the elements of a second version of Anselm's argument, which Malcolm takes to be aiming at demonstration (as does also the first). This second version is supposed to be superior to the reasoning in Chapter 2, inasmuch as it does not require the dubious presupposition that mere existence is a perfection. Instead, it acceptably presupposes that necessary existence is more excellent than is contingent existence. Disagreeing with Malcolm and with almost everyone else, Anscombe (1985) views Anselm as proposing a decidedly different argument. She punctuates a key sentence in Proslogion 2 as *Si enim vel in solo intellectu est, potest cogitari esse et in re quod maius est*, and interprets this as: 'For if it [*quo nihil maius*] is only in the intellect, what is greater can be thought to be in reality as well.' Campbell, in turn, perceives Anselm as engaged in the analysis of a speech-act: Anselm's argument 'shows that if one speaks of something-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought one is committed to asserting that such a thing exists' (Campbell 1976: 193–4), but nothing prevents an atheist from refusing to speak of something-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought.

Even one of Anselm's earliest interpreters, Gaunilo, a monk from the Abbey of Marmoutier, had difficulty with Anselm's text. He misinterpreted Anselm to be saying that if *quo nihil maius* 'existed solely in the understanding, then whatever existed also in reality would be greater than it'. He also failed to see that his own counter-argument about an island that excelled in perfection above all other lands did not have a logical structure parallel to the structure of Anselm's argument. For he speaks of something than which no other actually existing land is more perfect; but Anselm speaks of something than which nothing conceivable is more perfect. In other respects, Anselm himself also partly misapprehended Gaunilo's critique. He did not recognize that Gaunilo's phrasemaius omnibus is shorthand for *illud maius omnibus quae cogitari possunt* and not for *illud maius omnibus quae sunt*. Moreover, he incorrectly accused Gaunilo of contradicting himself, an accusation resulting from a misreading of Gaunilo's words *non [posse] hoc aliter cogitare, nisi intelligendo, id est scientia comprehendo, re ipsa illud existere*. Anselm wrongly takes Gaunilo to be defining 'understanding *x*' as 'apprehending with certainty that *x* really exists', whereas Gaunilo is merely defining 'understanding' as 'apprehending with certainty'.

Going beyond the many textual issues, contemporary philosophers have also noted a variety of conceptual problems with the Proslogion 2 argument. First, does it confuse two different domains, *de dicto* and *de re*; that is, from something's inconceivable nonexistence, does it follow that that thing exists in reality? Second, does the argument beg the question by assuming that the existence of God is possible? Third, does it beg the question inasmuch as the proposition 'that than which a greater cannot be thought is not that than which a greater cannot be thought' is not self-contradictory unless the existence of that than which a greater cannot be thought is presupposed? This question involves a theory about the logic of definite descriptions: for example, 'the prime number between 3 and 5 is not between 3 and 5' is self-contradictory only if 'the prime number between 3 and 5 is between 3 and 5' is true; and it is true only if there is a prime number between 3 and 5.

Does the argument successfully establish the compossibility of the various perfections that it ascribes to *quo nihil maius*, and does it successfully demonstrate that *quo nihil maius* is indeed a unique being? Is the very concept of *quo nihil maius* intelligible, or is it like the concept of an integer than which none greater can be thought? Can a being that is maximally and absolutely perfect be intelligibly said to be comparatively greater than all existing things, things that are subject to degrees of perfection (greatness)? These and other questions have perpetuated continuing disagreement about just where and how Anselm's argument goes wrong. Among philosophers, the strong feeling that the argument is unsound has contributed to a tendency to regard the entire Proslogion as a meditation on the majesty and greatness of God rather than as an attempted, and failed, set of proofs. However, the fact remains that Anselm, at the end of his reply to Gaunilo, spoke of himself as having engaged in proving:

I have now showed, I believe, that in the aforementioned treatise I proved – not by inconclusive reasoning but by very compelling reasoning – that something than which a greater cannot be thought exists in reality.... For the signification of this utterance ['something than which a greater cannot be thought'] contains so much force that what is spoken of is, by the very fact that

it is understood or thought, necessarily proved to exist in reality and to be whatever ought to be believed about the Divine Substance.

(Responsio 10)

Anselm is not a mystic, as some have claimed him to be. Nor should his meditative reflections in the *Proslogion* misleadingly be called confessions, even though their style is reminiscent of Augustine's *Confessiones* (see God, arguments for the existence of).

5. Philosophical works: *De grammatico*

This dialogue reflects the emphasis at Bec on studying the trivium (dialectic, grammar and rhetoric, as opposed to the quadrivium: arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music); moreover, it bears witness to the esteem in which Aristotle and his *Categories* were held within the School of Bec. The Latin word *grammatica* indicates not only the subject matter that we today call grammar but also the subject matter that we call literature. Anselm himself expresses a disaffection for teaching the former (*Epistola* 64). Contemporary interest in *De grammatico* is due largely to D.P. Henry (1964), who insightfully recognised it as a serious study in paronymy. Paronyms are words (such as *grammaticus*, meaning 'expert in grammar') that derive from other words from which they differ only in case ending (such as *grammatica*, meaning 'expertise in grammar') and that function as both adjectives and nouns (for example, we can say both that someone is expert in grammar and that someone is *an* expert in grammar). Accordingly, the title *De grammatico* is properly translated not as 'On the Grammarian' but as 'On (an) Expert in Grammar', where the parentheses around the indefinite article 'an' serve to signal that it is operative in English when 'expert in grammar' functions as a noun, but is dispensed with when 'expert in grammar' functions as an adjective. (Latin has neither a definite nor an indefinite article.)

In this light, the central question raised within the dialogue is *utrum grammaticus sit substantia an qualitas* (whether (an) expert-in-grammar is a substance or a quality)? Aristotle and medieval textbooks cited *grammaticus* as an example of quality because the word itself signifies a quality (namely, *grammatica*). However, in the work, Anselm's fictional interlocutor, the Student, points out that in customary parlance *grammaticus* is spoken of as a substance and not as either a quality or an accident. Anselm resolves the question by showing the Student that *grammaticus* signifies both a quality and a substance, for it signifies both expertise in grammar and man, in different ways. Principally and *per se* and substantially it signifies expertise in grammar; and because expertise in grammar is a quality, being expert in grammar is also a quality. Improperly and *per aliud* and accidentally it signifies man; and because man is a substance, being an expert in grammar is also a substance.

Anselm understands a word to have signification insofar as that word calls something to mind. 'Expert in grammar' calls to mind both expertise in grammar and man, though it does so in different ways. A word which signifies *per aliud* (that is, which does not in and of itself call something to mind but instead calls that thing to mind on the basis of something else and accidentally) is said by Anselm to be appellative of the thing that is thus signified *per aliud*. At this point Anselm tightens his terminology, reserving the word 'signifying' for properly

signifying, that is, signifying *per se*: ‘expert in grammar’ signifies, but is not appellative of, expertise in grammar, while it is appellative of, but does not signify, man. Indeed, only man is called (an) expert in grammar because only man has the accident (the quality) of expertise in grammar. A term is appellative of a thing, says Anselm, ‘if this thing is called by this name in the customary course of speaking’. Names signify things, not concepts (though there might be second-order names, which signify other names).

In interpreting *De grammatico*, we must beware of two traps: first, that of supposing that *significatio per se* has to do exclusively with meaning and that *significatio per aliud* (that is, *appellatio*) has to do exclusively with reference; and second, that of supposing that Anselm considers *grammaticus est grammatica* to state a logical truth (Henry 1974: 183). With regard to the first misconception, Anselm regards a speaker as at times able to refer to an object either by using the word that *per se* signifies that object, or by using a word that is an appellative of that object. In a proffered example, he notes that someone might refer to a horse by using the word ‘horse’, which *per se* signifies a horse, that is, which in and of itself calls (the thought of) a horse to mind. Or he might refer to a horse by using the appellative *albus* (‘the white one’), in a situation where a white horse is standing next to a black ox. The hearer would know – not purely on the basis of the signification of the word ‘white’, but also and additionally on the basis of his knowledge that of the two animals, only the horse is white – that the horse was being referred to. Concerning the second misconception, neither Anselm nor the Student regards the phrase *grammaticus est grammatica* as stating a logical truth (while trespassing against *usus loquendi* (ordinary usage)). Rather, both agree that *grammaticus* signifies *grammatica* because it signifies *sciens grammaticam* (having expertise in grammar). Since *grammaticus* is an accident only of man, we say *grammaticus est sciens grammaticam*, rather than saying *grammaticus est grammatica*. This latter sentence is no more a logical truth than it is meaningful. By contrast, the former sentence (*grammaticus est sciens grammaticam*) has a double meaning which results from the fact that *grammaticus* is a paronym: ‘being (an) expert in grammar is having expertise in grammar’.

The real importance of *De grammatico* for Anselm lay in its pedagogical usage as an exercise in dialectic. Its contemporary importance lies in the fact that it attests to Anselm’s awareness of the need to be clear about the elusive relationship between signifier and signified; and it witnesses, further, to his desire to do so by recourse to *rationes necessariae* (*De grammatico* 1) (see Language, medieval philosophy of; Language, philosophy of).

6. Philosophical works: *De veritate*, *De libertate arbitrii*, *De casu diaboli*

These three dialogues centre around the notion of *rectitudo* (rectitude, rightness, uprightness). ‘Truth’, says Anselm, is definable as ‘rectitude perceptible to the mind alone’. Justice is rectitude kept for its own sake, and freedom is, also by definition, rectitude of will kept for its own sake. In eliciting his definition of ‘truth’, Anselm examines truth insofar as it is found in statements, thoughts, acts of will, actions, the senses and in the very being of things. A statement is true when it signifies what it ought to, that is, when it signifies correctly; and it signifies correctly when it either signifies to be the case that which actually is the case, or signifies not to be the

case that which really is not the case. Thus, a statement's truth is its rightness, correctness or rectitude.

However, a statement does not always do what it is designed to do (namely, signify correctly what is, or is not, the case), for the statement is also capable of being used to signify falsely (that is, to signify that what-is is not, or that what-is-not is). Even when the statement signifies falsely, it retains the capability to signify truly, because it remains a meaningful set of words. Indeed, such a statement never loses its capability to be used to signify truly and correctly. Insofar as the statement retains this capability, we may also say of it that it is as it ought to be, that it is correct and has correctness, or rightness, or truth.

Thus, reasons Anselm, a true statement has two truths: the truth that accords with its signifying what it is designed to signify, and the truth that accords with its being capable of signifying what it is designed to signify. This latter truth belongs to the statement naturally, inasmuch as it is retained even when the statement signifies otherwise than it is designed to (that is, even when it signifies that what-is is not or signifies that what-is-not is). The former truth belongs to the statement accidentally and only at such time as the statement signifies a correct state of affairs. Anselm follows Aristotle in regarding the statement 'Socrates is sitting' as true so long as Socrates is seated but as becoming false when Socrates stands up.

Anselm goes on to point out that the foregoing distinction between two truths applies to thoughts, acts of will, actions, the senses and the very being of things insofar as they all both do what they ought to do and are capable of doing what they ought to do, whether they actually succeed or not. He develops a sense in which thoughts, acts of will and so on may be said to signify, in a twofold way. For example, truth (which is a form of rightness) is said to be in the being of things when these things are as they ought to be (that is, when they conform to what God designed for things of their kind to be); in another sense they 'signify' by their very existence that what they are is what they ought to be, whether or not they are defective specimens. For example, a misbegotten animal is not what it ought to be, as measured by the perfection of its species; but it is what it ought to be insofar as it is an existent thing (because otherwise God would not have allowed it to be).

Since a natural rightness belongs to statements, thoughts, acts of will and so on (even when they do not do what they are designed to do, or are not what they are designed to be), this rightness through which they are right continues to exist when the different statements, thoughts, beings and so on signify falsely. Indeed, this rightness accords with a Rightness that is one and the same in them all, and that continues to exist even when the things themselves and their natural rightness perish. Anselm (borrowing from his own *Monologion* 18) infers that this Rightness, which is perceptible by the mind alone, is eternal. The statement 'something was going to exist' was always true in the past, and the statement 'something has existed' will always remain true in the future; and since each of them can be true only if there is truth, truth is eternal.

Like Augustine in *De libero arbitrio* (On Free Choice of the Will), and like Scripture itself in John 14: 6, Anselm identifies Eternal Truth with God.

In *De libertate arbitrii* (Freedom of Choice), Anselm searches for a definition of ‘free choice’ that will elucidate the essential freedom of God, unfallen angels, fallen angels, pre-fallen Adam, post-fallen Adam, Adam’s earthly descendants and redeemed Adamic human beings in their sanctified, heavenly state. He concludes that ‘freedom of choice’ is unexceptionably definable as ‘the ability to keep uprightness-of-will for its own sake’, an ability which every rational being always possesses. This definition has both philosophical and theological aspects.

Philosophically, the definition is meant to exclude the view that having freedom of choice consists essentially in having the power of alternative choice: the ability to choose either that which is morally right or that which is morally wrong. Neither God, the good angels, nor human beings in the heavenly state have this power; and yet Anselm considers them all to have free will. Even regarding cases where agents do have the power of alternative choice, their freedom does not consist therein. For example, when Satan and Adam first sinned (although they were under no necessity to do so), each sinned ‘by his own choice, which was free’, viz., the ability; but neither did so ‘by means of that in virtue of which his choice was free’, the ability to maintain a righteous will. Instead, each used another ability, namely, the ability to abandon uprightness of will. Anselm’s distinction between having an ability and using that ability – a distinction appropriated from Augustine – allows him to assert, paradoxically, that evil acts of will and evil actions are done freely even though they are not done by means of that ability whose possession is essential to freedom (see *Free will; Freedom, divine*).

In further expounding his theory of freedom, Anselm encounters a second paradox. He distinguishes ability not only from use but also from motivation; in other words, he distinguishes being *able* to will from being *motivated* to will. However, in some contexts he proceeds to talk as if certain intense motivations were so disabling that they deprived one’s will of freedom:

If the faithful were immediately transformed at baptism or at martyrdom into the state of incorruption, then merit would perish and men would be saved without merit.... For since men would see those who would be converted to Christ pass over immediately into the state of incorruptibility, there would be no one who would be able even to will to turn away from this very great happiness which he would behold.

(*De concordia III, 9*)

This point of view is reinforced by Anselm’s notion that in the future life, redeemed human beings will be like the good angels: they will be unable to sin because they will no longer see anything more to will than that which they shall already have (*De casu diaboli* 6). Anselm also closely links motivation and ability/inability when he states that if Satan had known that he would actually be punished if he sinned, rather than knowing simply that he could deservedly be punished, then ‘he would not have been able freely to will what would have caused him to be unhappy’ (*De casu diaboli* 23). In other words, he would not have been able to sin. However, if certain patterns of intense motivation are disabling, how is it plausible that the will of a rational creature is really always free?

On the more centrally theological plane, a third paradox arises. Although Anselm teaches that each human being always retains the ability to keep uprightness of will, he also teaches that no

human being has the ability, by his own efforts, to regain uprightness of will once it has been abandoned. Only God can restore this uprightness; but God does so only with respect to those who repent. This doctrine leaves Anselm in the awkward position of maintaining that if someone's will lacks uprightness, then he cannot will uprightly, even though he is still free by virtue of his having the ability to keep uprightness of will if uprightness of will were restored to him. In having an ability that cannot be used, such a man is said by Anselm to resemble someone who has the power of sight but who cannot use this power because he is located in a totally darkened room; still, he could actually see if light were restored to the room. There is something strange about Anselm's calling someone's will free when it is not free actually to will uprightly. Recognizing this point, Anselm refers to a man as both a servant and free. This paradox reaches its most concise expression in *De concordia* III, 13: 'without justice the will is never free, because without justice the natural freedom of choice is futile'.

A fourth paradox emerges in conjunction with the third. If one's will is no longer upright by virtue of one's having willed evilly, and if God restores uprightness only to the will of those who repent, how can one be willing to repent unless one's will is to some extent already upright prior to the restoration of uprightness? Anselm expresses this paradox in terms of conversion (though it applies, as well, after conversion): 'Those who say "Convert us, O God" are already to some extent converted, because in willing to be converted they have an upright will' (*De concordia* III, 6). By prevenient grace, maintains Anselm, God guides toward repentance those whom he has foreordained.

A fifth paradox surfaces when Anselm contends that the force of temptation can never overpower an upright will. The force of temptation, if it were to succeed, would have to compel an individual to accede; but, philosophizes Anselm, again following Augustine, no one can be constrained to will. A soldier, for example, can be tortured or even killed against his will; however, he cannot be made to will against his will, for anyone who wills consents to will, that is, wills willingly. Anselm construes 'being constrained to will' as 'being made to will unwillingly'; and this latter expression he regards as incoherent, on the grounds that if one were unwilling to will, then there would be no actual willing. However, a critic could contend that Anselm's analysis of 'constrained to will' is tendentious and oversimplified.

A sixth paradox has to do with Anselm's view that Satan's will to persevere in justice both failed him and did not fail him. It failed him because, although he was created with a preponderant, supernatural inclination-for-justice, he nonetheless willed unjustly. On the other hand, it did not fail him because the supernatural inclination for justice, with which he was created, did not wane. In attempting to dissolve the paradox of how Satan, who was created with a strong inclination for justice and who was placed in an environment with reinforcing incentives, would have been motivated to will evilly, Anselm introduces a 'Scholastic-like' distinction: it is not the case that Satan's willingness to desert justice was caused by an antecedent waning of the willingness to keep justice but, rather, the willingness to desert caused the not-willingness to keep. Satan willed to desert justice in order to secure a desired benefit that it was unjust for him to have at that time. The deeper paradox now becomes one of why Satan, a rational creature, would irrationally and knowingly choose to have a benefit the choosing of which would risk the

loss of all happiness? Anselm's answer, 'only because he willed to', transforms the paradox into a mystery.

A final paradox relates to Anselm's statement that:

God causes all the things which are done by a just or an unjust will, viz., all good and evil deeds. Indeed, in the case of good deeds he causes what they are [essentially] and the fact that they are good; but in the case of evil deeds he causes what they are [essentially] but not the fact that they are evil.

(De concordia I, 7)

These paradoxes Anselm himself regards as only apparent. Yet, whatever be one's own final appraisal of Anselm's theory of freedom, one must bear in mind that Anselm is a determinist and a compatibilist: only Satan's initial choice of evil was done simply because Satan willed thus to choose. All other reflective choices are such that they are 'caused' by factors that, in principle, are subject to investigation and description (and that do not deprive the agent of free choice):

Even as every will wills something, so it also wills for the sake of something. And just as we must consider what it wills, so we must also notice why it wills. For a will ought to be upright in willing what it ought and, no less, in willing for the reason it ought. Therefore, every will has both a what and a why. Indeed, whatsoever we will, we will for a reason.

(De veritate 12)

Having in *De veritate* (On Truth) defined 'justice' as 'uprightness of will kept for its own sake', and having indicated that he means 'kept for its own sake only', Anselm in *De casu diaboli* (The Fall of the Devil) interprets the evil of injustice to be the absence of justice from a will in which justice ought to be present. Accordingly, injustice is a privation; and a privation, he thinks, is a kind of not-being. However, if the evil that is injustice is a kind of not-being, how can the word 'evil' be significative, wonders the Student interlocutor. The Teacher, Anselm, gives three replies. First, 'evil', 'injustice' and 'nothing' signify, respectively, a removal of good, justice and something. Since a removal can be signified only by also signifying that which is to be removed, expressions such as 'not good', 'not just' and 'not something' obliquely signify good, just and something, without signifying them by positing them. Second, 'evil' and 'injustice' do not signify anything *secundum rem* (according to fact) but they are significative *secundum formam* (according to linguistic form), for we use these terms to speak of evil and injustice as if these latter were something – as when we say 'evil caused it' or 'injustice caused it'. Third, 'evil' is sometimes used to signify *incommodum* (detriment) rather than to signify injustice or an absence; in this respect it signifies something and not merely as-if-something (*quasi aliquid*).

In *De casu diaboli*, Anselm seeks to remind us that 'we ought not to cling to the verbal impropriety concealing the truth as much as we ought to attend to the true propriety hidden beneath the many types of expression'. In the process of heeding his own injunction, he there appeals to many of the same distinctions that are also found in his *Philosophical Fragments*.

7. Theological works: *De incarnatione Verbi* and *De processione Spiritus Sancti*

De incarnatione Verbi (The Incarnation of the Word) contains Anselm's defence of the doctrine of God's trinity. This defence is mounted against Roscelin of Compiègne, a French cleric who maintained that if the three persons of God were only one thing and not three separate things, then the incarnation of the Son would, untowardly, have necessitated the incarnation of the Father and the Holy Spirit as well. Anselm examines the meaning of 'thing' (*res*) and explains that the three persons are three distinct (but not separate) things with respect to their distinguishing properties, but are one thing with respect to the nature that they have in common. Exhibiting masterly skill as a dialectician, he contends that Roscelin's view leads either to tritheism or to Sabellianism, both of which doctrines are objectionable to Roscelin himself. He further contends that Roscelin's own articulation of his own claim is such that it entails the very same untoward consequence from which Roscelin is attempting to escape: namely, the incarnation of the Father and the Holy Spirit along with that of the Son. After advancing an argument to show that there can be no more than one God, Anselm explains why this one God became incarnate in the person of the Son rather than in the person of the Father or of the Holy Spirit. To complete his dialectical strategy, he provides a symbolic illustration to lend credence to the very notion of trinity: the Nile, while being one body of water, is also a three-ness of spring, river and lake.

The divine trinity and oneness is explored more fully in *De processione Spiritus Sancti* (The Procession of the Holy Spirit), where the Augustinian emphasis upon *relatio* looms larger. The three persons of God are three relations, three ways in which the one Divine Nature relates itself to itself. These relations are irreducible, inasmuch as the Father would not be a father unless he had a son, but the Father himself cannot be his own son; the Son would not be a son unless he had a father, but the Son himself cannot be his own father; and the Holy Spirit would not be a common spirit unless he proceeded from both the Father and the Son, but he himself cannot be either of the two from whom he proceeds. In line with the Nicene-Constantinople creed, Anselm defends the *filioque* doctrine against the Greek Orthodox teaching that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone. No other medieval treatises so concisely, clearly and vigorously display the rationale of orthodox trinitarianism as do these two Anselmian works (see Trinity).

8. Theological works: *Cur deus homo* and *De conceptu virginali*

Desirous to explain the reasons for the Incarnation, Anselm undertakes in the *Cur deus homo* an elaborate demonstration of his view that only by means of incarnation could God have made provision for human salvation. Adam's sinful fall, as well as the ensuing sins of all his natural descendants, could not simply be overlooked by God, since doing so would do violence to God's justice. Hence, every sinner is under obligation to make payment for his sins, sins which rob God of honour by detracting from the splendour of creatures and therefore from God's own accomplishment as Creator. Payment must involve both restitution of what has been stolen and compensation for the injury done. Now, every rational creature, even if sinless, owes to the Creator perfect and voluntary obedience – indeed, owes itself and all that it is. A sinner, who has stolen honour from God by stealing from God the obedience due to him, is obliged to resume rendering the requisite obedience and, in addition to make compensation, or satisfaction, for the perpetrated wrong. In this twofold way the sinner would fully restore God's honour.

However, once having sinned, the sinner's will is deprived of uprightness, which by its own efforts it cannot recover; and hence no sinner can attain perfect obedience. Moreover, the sinner has nothing with which to compensate God. Compensation must be equal to the gravity of the wrong that was done; but any disobedience to God's command is so grave, teaches Anselm, that it ought not to be done even if one could thereby save an infinite number of worlds from perishing. Since the sinner is obliged to offer as satisfaction, or compensation, something greater than is that for whose sake he is obliged not to dishonour God, and given that he is not to dishonour God even in order to save an infinite number of worlds from perishing, he must render to God something of greater value than are an infinite number of worlds. But only God can make such a payment, whereas only a human being of Adam's race ought to. Hence, if payment is to be made, it must be made by a God-man.

Yet, queries Anselm, what payment could a God-man make in addition to perfect and voluntary obedience? What is it that he would not already owe to God and that would count as satisfaction? The God-man, reasons Anselm, would make satisfaction by choosing righteousness in preference to life. Being sinless, and in this respect unlike all other human beings, he alone would not be under the penalty-of-death, which resulted from the Fall. He would yield up his life to the honour of God by allowing himself to be put to death for righteousness' sake – that is, to be put to death for refusing, when accused of blasphemy, to profess the untruth that he was not God. Since the evil of sinning against the person of God is the greatest conceivable evil, the goodness of the God-man's life must be the greatest conceivable goodness. Thus in choosing righteousness even in the face of death, the God-man restored honour to God by rendering a service more valuable than the value of the totality of things that are not God. Such a service deserves to be rewarded. And because the God-man needs nothing, he may admissibly transfer this reward to cancel the debt incurred by Adam and his natural descendants (see Atonement; Salvation; Sin).

In the course of his argument, Anselm explains once again why it was most fitting for the Son of God and not for either of the other two members of the Trinity to become incarnate. He hastens to point out that those who actually put to death the Jesus of history were guilty of only a venial sin, having acted in ignorance of his Messianic identity. In *De conceptu virginali et originali peccato* (The Virgin Conception and Original Sin), he distinguishes between Adam's person and his nature. When Adam sinned personally, his sinful person contaminated his nature. As a result, his descendants are born with an individuated Adamic nature whose will lacks justice. This unjust nature contaminates their persons, predisposing them to sin personally when they reach the age of accountability. Anselm offers an explanation of how Jesus, who was of Adam's nature, was nonetheless able to remain free of original sin – that is, remain free of contracting the necessity-of-sinning upon attaining the age of reason. He insists that Adam's descendants are not condemned for Adam's sin but only for their own, even though Adam's sin is a cause of their own fallen nature. Anselm does not teach the doctrine of Mary's own immaculate conception (see Incarnation and Christology).

9. Theological works: *De concordia*

Oriented around the topics of grace, foreknowledge and predestination, *De concordia praescientiae et praedestinationis et gratiae dei cum libero arbitrio* (The Harmony of the

Foreknowledge, the Predestination and the Grace of God with Free Choice) not only extends the views previously advanced in *De libertate arbitrii* and *De casu diabolis* but also places them squarely within a theological context. Predestination is a theological doctrine that relates primarily to the attendant doctrine of salvation. The New Testament seems to teach that some individuals are foreordained to salvation, whereas others are not. Anselm follows Augustine both in accepting this doctrine and in acknowledging that he has no explanation for why God singles out some and not others. As early as *Proslogion* 11 he prayed: 'But if we can somehow grasp why You can will to save those who are evil, surely we cannot at all comprehend why from among those who are similarly evil You save some and not others because of Your supreme goodness, and condemn some and not others because of Your supreme justice.' Yet predestination and enabling grace do not violate human freedom, believes Anselm, because inducing someone's assent and trust is not identical with compelling assent and trust.

Three considerations reassure Anselm that divine foreknowledge, like predestination, is not incompatible with human free will. First of all, God foreknows not only what a given individual will do but knows also *how* the individual will do it, whether freely or by necessity. Assume that the individual will act freely: then, if it is necessary that what-God-foreknows come to pass, it is necessary that the individual do freely what will be done. This necessity which guarantees one's freedom cannot at the same time be a necessity that deprives one of freedom. Anselm believes that the expression 'it is necessary that...' is misleading because it tends to suggest that the event in question happens by necessity, whereas in the present context it means only 'it is certain that...'. Second, something may be certain to occur either because God efficaciously wills that it occur, or because he foreknowingly wills to permit its occurrence. In the latter case, his foreknowledge does not efficiently cause the action or the event to happen. In fact, Anselm reminds us as early as *De casu diaboli* 21, God is improperly said to foreknow the future, since his eternal knowledge is knowledge of things as present. The present knowledge of something's happening does not necessarily make it happen. Third, God's will must be (conceived of as) free, because otherwise God could be thought to be more perfect – something which is impossible. By the same token, he must be regarded as knowing his own will. If his knowledge of his own will does not deprive it of freedom, then *prima facie* there is no reason to infer that his knowledge of the human will deprives it of freedom (see Eternity; Free will; Grace; Omniscience; Predestination; Salvation).

10. Conclusion

Anselm's paramount publications, though only eleven in number, have had a significant (though never major) impact upon the history of Western philosophy. Peter Abelard, Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, Nicholas of Cusa and others found it helpful to quote from them, sometimes approvingly, sometimes disapprovingly. Anselm's learned command of Aristotle's *logica vetus*, his insightful appeal to the Latin community's *usus loquendi* and his bold utilization of the method of *sola ratione* bear ample witness to his gifted philosophical mind. Yet, like any good philosopher, he knew when to be tentative, as evidenced by his conclusion to *De conceptu virginali*:

In accordance with the capacity of my understanding I have briefly made these statements about original sin – not so much by way of asserting them as by way of provisionally inferring them – until God shall somehow reveal to me something better. But if someone has a different view, I do not reject anyone's opinion provided it can be proved to be true.

(De conceptu virginali 29)

In spite of his emphasis upon *rationes necessariae*, he sensed a danger in trusting bloated, over-confident and self-confident reason. Consequently, he was not averse to declaring with respect to deep theological mysteries: 'if someone thinks he knows something, he does not yet know it as he ought to know it' (*De incarnatione Verbi* 1). Because he regarded such knowledge and understanding as a grace, he was willing to continue to believe – in the hope of one day better comprehending.

List of works

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(Southern and Schmitt include the philosophical fragments as well as the compilations *Dicta Anselmi* and *De morum qualitate per exemplorum coaptationem*.)

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(Anselm's letters date from the time he was at Bec and continue on into his archbishopric.)

Anselm of Canterbury (1072–1103) *Orationes sive meditationes* (Prayers and Meditations), trans. B. Ward, *The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm*, Baltimore, MD: Penguin, 1973.

(The prayers and meditations show Anselm's spirituality.)

Anselm of Canterbury (1076) *Monologion*, trans. J. Hopkins, *A New Interpretive Translation of St. Anselm's Monologion and Proslogion*, Minneapolis: Banning, 1986.

(Anselm's first major philosophical work, showing the influence of Neoplatonism.)

Anselm of Canterbury (1077–8) *Proslogion*, trans. J. Hopkins, *A New Interpretive Translation of St. Anselm's Monologion and Proslogion*, Minneapolis: Banning, 1986.

(Anselm's best-known philosophical work, which seems to demonstrate the existence of God.)

Anselm of Canterbury (c. 1080–5?) *De grammatico*, trans. J. Hopkins and H. Richardson, *Complete Philosophical and Theological Treatises of Anselm of Canterbury*, Minneapolis, MN: Banning, 2000.

(Displays Anselm's notions about paronymy.)

Anselm of Canterbury (c. 1080–5) *De veritate* (On Truth), trans. J. Hopkins and H. Richardson, *Complete Philosophical and Theological Treatises of Anselm of Canterbury*, Minneapolis, MN: Banning, 2000.

(Contains Anselm's definition of 'truth', identifying Eternal Truth with God.)

Anselm of Canterbury (c. 1080–5) *De libertate arbitrii* (Freedom of Choice), trans. J. Hopkins and H. Richardson, *Complete Philosophical and Theological Treatises of Anselm of Canterbury*, Minneapolis, MN: Banning, 2000.

(Searches for a definition of 'free choice'.)

Anselm of Canterbury (c. 1085–90) *De casu diaboli* (The Fall of the Devil), trans. J. Hopkins and H. Richardson, *Complete Philosophical and Theological Treatises of Anselm of Canterbury*, Minneapolis, MN: Banning, 2000.

(Anselm's work on the relationship between sin and free will.)

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