Fides Quaerens Intellectum: St. Anselm's Method in Philosophical Theology

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This paper argues that Anselm’s method in philosophical theology is shaped by five fundamental factors. They are: (1) his appreciation of the ontological incommensuration between God and creatures; (2) his commitment to the infallible authority of Scripture as interpreted through the creeds and conciliar pronouncements; (3) his conviction that humans are made in God’s image; (4) his conception of inquiry as essentially a Divine-human collaboration; and (5) his understanding of human inquiry as holistic and developmental.

I. Orientation:

When we think of the relation between faith and reason, the questions that readily spring to mind focus on the propositional content of religious belief, and ask whether doctrinal propositions can be proved by sound arguments from premisses acceptable to unbelievers, or, failing that, whether adherence to such theses can be rationally justified? Perhaps this is because most of us middle-aged Christian philosophers were trained in highly secular philosophy departments and universities, and in any event live in an increasingly pluralistic society. Accordingly, we have responded to pressure from the outside to defend the rationality of Christian faith. In the waning years of the Roman empire, St. Augustine, too, was preoccupied with defending the faith, first externally, against its pagan competitors (not only but principally the Manichaeans); then against heretics (Donatists and Pelagians) within.

St. Anselm’s eleventh century situation was different from both of these. He spent most of his adult life (from age 26 to 60) in the Benedictine monastery at Bec. Most of his works were penned for and at the behest of his monastic brother-students. Their over-arching common aim was to become persons who could see and enjoy God’s face. Their intellectual pursuits were integrated into that project. De facto Anselm’s written investigations of non-theological subjects were all occasioned by the exigencies of their doctrinal inquiries. These facts about Anselm’s career have left deep imprints on his philosophical theology, not least on his method. If he was eventually drawn into polemical contexts and confronted with real non-Christians, Anselm continued to see the drive to understand Christian faith sola ratione as pre-
dominantly internal, arising not simply from his individual monastic voca-
tion, but from the natural teleology built into human nature itself.

II. Inquiry, the Viator’s Vocation:

2.1. Anselmian Anthropology: Christian Platonist that he was, Anselm held
that human nature, like every created nature, is an imperfect imitation of the
Supreme Nature, and has a telos—a “that-for-which-it-was-made” and for
which all of its powers were given. In the Monologion, Anselm contends that

“every rational being exists for this [purpose]: to love or refuse things to the
extent that, by rational discernment, it judges them to be more or less good
or not good”

and concludes in particular that “a rational creature is made for this [purpose]:
to love the Supreme Being above all [other] goods, inasmuch as It is the
Highest Good.” Likewise, in the Proslogion, Anselm recognizes the human
telos in the Divine invitation to the enjoyment of seeing God’s face, which
will both occupy and fully satisfy all of the soul’s powers. Again, in Cur
Deus Homo, he speaks of rational creatures’ being made, and endowed with
reason and uprightness of will, for a happy enjoyment of God.

Anselm recognizes two significant obstacles to our reaching this goal. (i)
First and sufficient, is the ontological incommensuration between a simple,
immutable, and eternal God and fleeting creatures that “scarcely exist” by
comparison. This metaphysically necessary fact has the consequence that
“God is a being greater than we can conceive of,” that the Divine nature is
permanently partially beyond our cognitive grasp, in some aspects funda-
mentally incomprehensible to us and inexpressible by human language.
(ii) Second and reparable, is the damage suffered by human nature as a result
of Adam’s fall—loss of uprightness of will, blindness, weakness, and lack
of emotional control—which mar its image of God and hinder smooth func-
tioning. Balancing these, are twin reasons for optimism. (iii) For humans and
angels are rational natures made in God’s image, among creatures the best
likenesses of God, veritable mirrors of God’s face. Rational creatures best
express this naturally impressed image, when they strive into God with all of
their powers, straining to remember, to understand, and to love Him above
all and for His own sake. On the one hand, the “organ” through which
humans grasp the object for the knowledge and love of which they/we were
made, is the whole self; and it functions best when all its powers are ener-
getically engaged in this enterprise. On the other hand, the human being thus
occupied becomes a well-focussed image of God, one cognitively accessible
to the self who seeks the seemingly hidden Divine nature. (iv) Further, God
is of consistent purpose and has revealed a mysterious bias towards mercy,
which raises hopes of Divine grace for healing, cleansing, and restoring
human nature from its fallen condition, thereby strengthening it for its work.
2.2. Ecstatic Inquiry: Anselm the Christian thus approaches this difficult human assignment with the hope necessary to persevere, and consistently maintains that the appropriate response to the human predicament is strenuous effort to grasp what is beyond reach. In the Monologion, he twice gives this philosophy succinct expression—in c.xv, in discussing the ineffability of the Supreme Nature’s “natural essence”:

“For although I would be surprised if among the names or words which we apply to things made from nothing, there could be found a [word] that would appropriately be predicated of the Substance which created all [other] things, nevertheless I must try to ascertain what end reason will direct this investigation...”

and in c.xliii, in connection with the plurality and unity of the Supreme Nature:

“Having now discovered so many, and such important, properties of each—[properties] by which a certain remarkable plurality, as ineffable as it is necessary, is proved to exist in supreme oneness—I find it especially delightful to reflect more frequently upon such an impenetrable mystery...”

In other words, since the subject matter is extremely difficult, indeed ineffable and impenetrable, we should reflect upon it, try to understand it, again and again!

Our problem is severe, however, because (fallen) human nature being as it is, we begin ignorant of how to inquire. Thus, in the Proslogion, Anselm no sooner turns aside to seek God’s face, than he is forced to beg, “Come now, therefore, my Lord God, teach my heart where and how to seek you, where and how it may find you.” True, we have been endowed with powers to pursue our telos, but these have been damaged. And in any event, they need to be developed through extensive education. In De Concordia, Anselm makes this point vividly with an agricultural simile:

“...Without any cultivation on man’s part the earth produces countless herbs and trees by which human beings are not nourished or by which they are even killed. But those herbs and trees which are especially necessary to us for nourishing our lives are not produced by the earth apart from seeds and great labor and a farmer. Similarly, without learning and endeavor human hearts freely germinate, so to speak, thoughts and volitions which are not conducive to salvation or which are even harmful there to. But without their own kind of seed and without laborious cultivation human hearts do not at all conceive and germinate those thoughts and volitions without which we do not make progress toward our soul’s salvation...”

God is the primary teacher; Anselm, through the works he has left to us, a “teacher’s aid.”

Many human powers need training. (a) According to Benedictine tradition, the monastery was a school of obedience, training the will up to virtues. (b) Anselm’s Prayers and Meditations comprise exercises to train the emotions,
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according to a dialectical pattern reaching back through Benedict to Cassian to Origen: first the reader is stirred out of inertia into self-knowledge, which produces sorrow for sin, dread of its consequences, and anxiety over distance from God; the latter in turn produce humility and issue in prayers for help, which resolve into a compunction of desire which energizes the soul’s renewed search for God. Again, (c) Anselm’s quartet of dialogues—De Grammatico, De Veritate, De Libertate Arbitrii, and De Casu Diaboli—are, among other things, exercises to train students in the techniques of intellectual inquiry: in logic and modalities; in the art of definition; in constructing counter-examples, analogies, and dilemmas; in drawing distinctions; in detecting instances of improper linguistic usage.

Moreover, these several powers interact and require to be coordinated. Trivially, one cannot will what one does not conceive. More profound is his Christian-Platonist conviction that, where values are concerned, what you love affects what you see. Thus, (1) Anselm assumes that even the unbeliever’s natural human desire for goods could motivate his Monologion search for the source of goods perceptible to the senses or reason, an investigation which—in Anselm’s mind—successfully proves that God is the good that satisfies and that it is reasonable for every human being to commit him/herself to God in living faith. But if he is sure that the reasoning of those eighty chapters can bring unbelievers to intellectual assent to the existence of God, he also insists that they will not be able to get much further unless they join will to intellect and commit themselves to God in living faith.

Likewise, (b) the Proslogion alternates prayer exercises, designed to stir the emotions and will (in cc. i, xiv-xviii, and xxiv-xxvi) so that the soul may seek by desiring and desire by seeking, with the hope of finding by loving and loving by finding, with sections of intellectual inquiry into the being of God (cc.ii-xiii and xviii-xxiii), thereby focussing and re-focussing the whole self as its investigation spirals upward towards increasingly inaccessible matters. Again, (c) the Cur Deus Homo is skillfully structured to rouse the soul, not only at the cognitive, but also at the affective and conative levels. First, Anselm provokes Boso (and the reader) into an intellectually active posture, by presenting inadequate patristic replies to current infidel objections (in Book I, cc.ii-x). When Anselm seizes the initiative to present his own case, Boso’s emotional reactions trace the traditional prayer parabola—from mild fear through growing anxiety to despair about the possibility of salvation (in Book I, cc.xi-xxiv), and then up through expectant pleasure to exultant joy in grasping how human redemption is possible through the Incarnation and passion of Christ (in Book II, cc.vi-xix).

Anselm envisions the human search for God as throughout, in all its dimensions and phases, a matter of Divine-human collaboration, involving initiative on both sides. (a) God makes the first move: by creating and em-
powering rational creatures for beatific intimacy with Him. God gave uprightness of will and the ability to preserve it for its own sake; God implanted the soul with a double inclination (affectio) for the good; and God offered the gift of perseverance to everyone, stood ready to preserve creatures in such salutary orientation of will and desires. But in order that rational creatures might to some degree imitate God with respect to the aseity of righteousness, the acceptance of this gift was left to their own free choice of will. Likewise, Divine consistency of purpose takes redemptive initiative in the Incarnation and passion of Christ. Yet, humans must ask for such benefits to be applied to their own cases. Similarly, Divine graces to repair the soul's motivational structure are meted out bit by bit, because the very exercise of repeated seeking is therapy that focuses the soul aright. Anselm's written prayers and meditations are aids to this effort, patterns for asking God, whose themes are well summed in the first:

"Almighty God, merciful Father, and my good Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner. Grant me forgiveness of my sins. Make me guard against and overcome all snares, temptations, and harmful pleasures. May I shun utterly in word and deed, whatever you forbid, and do and keep whatever you command. Let me believe and hope, love and live, according to your purpose and your will. Give me heart-piercing goodness and humility; discerning abstinence and mortification of flesh. Help me to love you and pray to you, praise you and meditate upon you. May I act and think in all things according to your will, purely, soberly, devoutly, and with a true and effective mind. Let me know your commandments, and love them, carry them out readily, and bring them into effect. Always, Lord, let me go on with humility to better things and never grow slack.

"Lord, do not give me over either to my human ignorance and weakness or to my own deserts, or to anything, other than your loving dealing with me. Do you yourself in kindness dispose of me, my thoughts and actions, according to your good pleasure, so that your will may always be done by me and in me and concerning me. Deliver me from all evil, and lead me to eternal life through the Lord."

(b) In the intellectual sphere, too, God takes the initiative: first, by creating rational beings with intimate knowledge of Himself; then, by disclosing Himself to select human beings, and by providing Holy Scripture and ecumenical Church councils. God sends the Holy Spirit to His people in every age, stands ready to help them understand the mysteries a little bit (aliquatenus) more. Yet, as with Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3:2-4), the creature must turn aside to pay attention, give him/herself over to sustained inquiry; the Christian ought accept by asking Divine aid, energetically seek to understand what s/he has believed.

Anselm makes this collaborative nature of intellectual inquiry fully explicit in his most famous work, the Proslogion. As to genre, it is principally a prayer-exercise for believers—neither a meditation in which the reader
speaks silently with himself, nor a dialogue in which we are explicitly confronted with two speakers, but a pros logion or ad loquium in which the soul speaks directly to God. The soul begins by asking questions of, putting puzzles to, and/or begging help from God. Then, God "illumines" the soul so that it may "see," "teaches" that it may understand. Anselm appeals, "Tell your servant within, in his heart" that he may know. It then belongs to the soul to articulate what God has revealed, usually expressing the reason and the statement of results in second-person address to God, and punctuating it with exclamation of thanks and praise. Yet, one who prays the Proslogion merely acknowledges the Divine-human interchange implicit in all human intellectual inquiry, recognized or not. Just as the Christian reader may meditate the Monologion and rehearse some of Anselm's dialogues without thereby explicitly invoking Divine aid, so the unbeliever may remain an unwitting partner, never tumbling to the presence or identity of that other Spirit who guides his/her inquiry and furnishes "his/her" "aha"-insights.

If, for Anselm, intellectual inquiry is but one of several avenues along which human beings seek goods/the GOOD/God, it does not follow that for him practical reason expels theoretical, or that the latter is merely instrumentally related to the former. Anselm neither notes nor observes this Aristotelian distinction. Rather as one among other human powers, reason's exercise is partially constitutive of the search of the whole self; the enjoyment of its present and future results, integral constituents of the satisfaction for which it was made. Thus, in his Commendatio of the Cur Deus Homo to Pope Urban II, Anselm declares the ante-mortem understanding which faith seeks and gains, to be a "mean" "between faith and sight," and esteems it a great source of ante-mortem consolation, joy, and delight. Moreover, Anselm's Christian Platonism allows him to extend these conclusions to the investigation and appreciation of other subjects—logic, natural philosophy, metaphysics, psychology and philosophy of mind. For all creatures are imperfect likenesses of God, so that His glory can be (whether explicitly or implicitly) esteemed in all His works. Likewise, all creatures are God's handiwork; a studied appreciation of them, a (witting or unwitting) swelling of their Maker's praise.

III. Authority as Tutor and Guide:

3.1. The Place of Authority in Human Inquiry Generally: Authority has a role to play in human inquiry, because often the subject-matter exceeds—for whatever reason, whether permanently or temporarily—the investigator's powers. Because we (fallen) merely human beings are born ignorant and develop our intellectual capacities only through long education, "right order" nearly always requires that we "believe" many things not only before we are able, but in order to grow into a position to "understand." Of course, Anselm's repetition of the Augustinian appeal to Isaiah 7:9 is famous. In several works,
Anselm vows on behalf of himself and his Christian readers, that where examination of the existence, nature, triunity, and redemptive activity of God is concerned,

"...I do not seek to understand in order that I may believe, but I believe in order that I may understand. Moreover, I believe this: that 'unless I believe, I will not understand.'"\textsuperscript{55}

Less noted are verbal echoes in dialogues about less mysterious subjects (viz., the motivational psychology and just deserts of rational creatures)\textsuperscript{56} where the student uses such words simply to acknowledge that he is a beginner, who is only now undertaking a systematic study of beliefs already acquired. Likewise, in \textit{Cur Deus Homo}, Boso remarks the general human condition: "We are very often certain about something without knowing how to prove it."\textsuperscript{57}

Yet, \textit{Anselmian education does not aim merely at handing down packages of correct doctrine, but rather at developing the student’s skills for inquiry.} Anselm’s works, mostly written at the request of his students and reflective of his pedagogical practices, consistently thrust the reader into an active role. We are rarely treated to a straight exposition of Anselm’s own views. Typically, he begins with assertions that seem obvious, then subjects them to questions, objections, and aporetic arguments, which challenge the mind to dig deeper. One favorite technique is to present arguments for apparently contradictory conclusions, or proofs that none of the obvious answers to a question can be correct. The reader is meant, not merely to pass his/her eyes over the text, but actively to meditate the \textit{Monologion}, to pray the \textit{Proslogion}, to identify in the dialogues with first one speaker and then the other. Thus, whatever genre he chooses, Anselm continually seeks to limber up his readers into intellectual flexibility, by first winning their sympathies for one position and then jolting them with the attractiveness of its contradictory opposite. All of Anselm’s major treatises train the reader in argumentation, tricky modal notions, the drawing of distinctions, the deployment of analogies, and the detection of improper linguistic usage.

Anselm’s “learn by doing” pedagogy is most clearly displayed in his quartet of teaching dialogues—\textit{De Grammatico}, \textit{De Veritate}, \textit{De Libertate Arbitrii}, and \textit{De Casu Diaboli}—where student/teacher relations model those of the human investigator to God. These works give special emphasis to the development of student technique. Thus, the student is not allowed to raise the initial question, only to sit back and play “yes-man” to teacher’s answers. He is required to retail the consideration and formulate the arguments that give rise to his puzzlement.\textsuperscript{58} Where the teacher’s responses are concerned, his role is to be a “tough customer,” intolerant of ellipsis, vigorous in pressing objections and requesting further explanations.\textsuperscript{59} As the teacher tests the student’s proposals and arguments, so the student the teacher’s: by offering apparent counter-examples\textsuperscript{60}, constructing parallel arguments for absurd or
opposing conclusions, drawing distinctions, diagnosing improper or suggesting technical linguistic usage. Moreover, Anselm’s student shoulders some of the responsibility for “putting two and two together,” by pointing out apparent incongruities between the teacher’s position, on the one hand, and Scriptural passages, patristic comments, and philosophical and/or theological theses that pull in the reverse direction. In the Cur Deus Homo, Anselm’s best pupil Boso puts in a stellar performance. Still representing his colleagues’ worries by raising “silly” questions involving modal confusions, he also probes into issues that lie beyond our solid soteriological information. In addition, he volunteers as mouth-piece for the infidels’ philosophical objections, and in that role presses the negative case against patristic explanations, even to the point of formulating (Anselm’s) classic refutation of the Ransom Theory of the atonement. At the same time, the dialogues reflect student inexperience both as regards subject matter and technique. His are the flawed arguments, the failed definition, the bogus counter-examples, not to mention the lapsed attention and memory. If the student questions occasion the discussion, its over-all direction, which recontextualizes issues and burrows under surface objections to expose theoretical deep-structure and work a positive solution, belongs to the teacher!

Anselm’s procedures reflect several further general facts about human capacity for inquiry. (i) The first is that, given a new technique, our eagerness to use it tends to outrun our judgment about how and where to apply it. Thus, in De Libertate Arbitrii, the student’s selection of a definition in c.i is decisively rejected by counter-examples in c.ii. The student’s own counter-examples are exposed as merely apparent, while his proposed addendum to the teacher’s definition is rejected as unnecessary, his objection from an attempted parallel definition dismissed as a silly mistake. Such failures arise from a lack of a sufficiently broad perspective, from not making important connections or keeping all of the relevant factors in mind. (ii) Again, our negative critical facility generally exceeds our positive constructive ability. For example, in De Libertate Arbitrii, when the student’s positive definition of freedom of choice is quickly refuted, he retreats to the role of questioning and evaluating the teacher’s constructive attempts. Likewise, in Cur Deus Homo, however impressive Boso’s presentation of the infidel critique, it is left to Anselm to mount the arguments for the necessity and soteriological efficacy of the Incarnation. Characteristically, the student generates destructive dilemmas, apparent contradictions, arguments for the opposite conclusion, but it is the teacher who unravels these puzzles. (iii) Further, human understanding is a process. Especially where matters are deep and difficult, we typically cannot see through all of the issues at once. Consequently, it often happens that however plausible an argument or explanation seems today, we (or someone else) may think of a refutation or discover a still better
theory tomorrow. It is unsurprising to find Anselm, in the Cur Deus Homo, declaring the mystery of human redemption inexhaustible, so that no matter what humans may understand about it, there is still more to be learned and explored. Often ignored is his similarly cautionary remark about semantic theory at the end of De Grammatico: since the theory of signification was a "hot topic" among logicians of that time, they could well be on the verge of rendering Anselm's theory of signification obsolete!72

Overall, then, Anselm's pedagogical practice makes it clear that for him, the point of believing authority is not to silence questions, but to enable the student to ask sensible rather than silly ones, to point inquiry in a fruitful direction, lest it come to a dead end!

3.2. Authority in Philosophical Theology: If reliance on authority is necessary for orienting us humans to the created world, a fortiori it is a "must" for the philosophical theologian who probes into things Divine. Anselm himself recognizes many authorities. (a) Obviously pre-eminent among them is God, the Truth Itself,73 who never deceives anyone,74 and hence Christ, whom Anselm deemed omniscient even in His human nature.75 Together with the Holy Spirit,76 they are the soul's final authority and true teacher. (b) Likewise, he insists, Holy Scripture is undeniably true, and anything that contradicts it false.77 (c) Again, in his polemical works against Roscelin and the Greeks, Anselm insists on his fidelity to the creeds78 and deploys conciliar findings as premisses in his arguments.79 (d) Anselm also recognizes the authority of the pope to administer doctrinal correction.80 (e) Similarly, he pays his respects to the Church fathers.81

Moreover, in his Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi, a polemical work written against Roscelin's deviant views about Trinity and Incarnation, Anselm becomes strident in his insistence that

"...no Christian ought to debate whether something which the Catholic Church believes with its heart and confesses with its mouth is false. On the contrary, by clinging constantly and unhesitatingly to this same faith, by loving it and living humbly according to it, the Christian ought to search for the reason which shows why this faith is true. If he is able to understand, then let him give thanks to God. But if he cannot, then instead of tossing it about with his horns, let him bow his head in veneration before it. For when self-confident human wisdom pits its horns against this stone, it can uproot them more quickly than it can roll the stone..."82

Does Anselm hereby cross the border from a pedagogical to an authoritarian conception of proper respect for authorities (a)-(e)? In my judgment, the answer is "no." Even in this passage, Anselm commends faith-seeking-understanding as the Christian's vocation. His methodological prohibition against doubting the truth of the Catholic faith rather reflects his deep appreciation of the difficulty of the subject matter; his testy tone, impatience with an influential churchman not considering how his example might lead ele-
mentary students astray. Where the deepest mysteries of the faith are con-
cerned (and surely Trinity, Incarnation, and Human Redemption are num-
bered among these), even Anselm’s epistemic position is less advantageous
than that of the average high school geometry student: just as the latter will
get nowhere is his “proofs” transgress the theorem that the interior angles of
a triangle equal 180 degrees, even though a mathematical genius might invent
a new branch of geometry thereby; so, Anselm believes, we humans will
never make theological progress by denying Scripture, creeds, or conciliar
pronouncements, or by rejecting the institutional correction of the Church.
Just as the best of Anselm’s student interlocutors, for all of their intellectual
skill, insight, and initiative, have not outgrown their need for his guidance,
so not even theological stars such as Anselm will ever graduate from the
tutelage of authority.

Indeed, Anselm repeats in this polemical context, the doctrine outlined in
the Monologion and taken for granted in the Proslogion: viz., that where such
advanced topics are concerned, intellectual expertise does not suffice for
progress. Rather the focus of the whole self is important, the coordination of
intellectual effort with disciplined exercise of the soul’s other powers, is
necessary. Thus, in Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi, Anselm describes the
requisite holistic preparation as involving (i) faith, (ii) humble obedience to
Divine precepts, and (iii) discipline to resist carnal passions. The soul who
trains will and emotions as well as reason will be capable of a closer ap-
proach, a clearer view; the knowledge thus gained, contrast with that acquired
through a merely intellectual route, as first hand “experience” to hearsay.

By contrast, those who refuse to begin with faith, and who controvert or doubt
the deliverance of the Fathers are like “bats and owls, who see the sky only
at night” and yet “dispute about the midday rays of the sun with eagles”; they
will descend into all sorts of errors. Likewise, those who persistently refuse
the discipline of will and emotions may even lose what little understanding
they possessed. At the close of the chapter, Anselm re-emphasizes the ped-
agogical concern behind such dire warnings:

“I have said these things in order that no one should presume to discuss the
highest questions of faith before he is ready; or, if he should presume to do
so, in order that no difficulty or impossibility of understanding should be able
to shake him from the truth to which he has held by faith…”

Nevertheless, Anselm’s working posture towards (a)-(e) is more complex
than these *ex professo* endorsements would suggest. 3.2.1. Scripture: Anselm’s view of Scripture is bivalent. First and foremost, it is a tutor,
meditation on which and obedience to which “forms” the soul, expresses the
image of God impressed upon it. Without such education, the soul is, as just
noted, in no position to tackle deep mysteries or to second-guess patristic
explanations of them.
“...It is vain for someone to try to reply: ‘I have understood more than all my teachers’ (Ps. 119:99), when he does not dare to add: ‘for Thy testimonies are my meditations’ (Ps. 119:99). And he speaks untruthfully if he says, ‘I understand more than the ancients,’ when he is unaware that this text goes on: ‘for I have sought Thy commandments’ (Ps. 119:100)....”

On the other hand, Anselm the mature monk and theologian consistently treats Scripture verses as “phenomena to be saved” by his theological theories. Queries about the meaning of verses are the point of departure in De Veritate and De Casu Diaboli. In the Monologion and Proslogion, as well as the dialogues, the evolving theory is repeatedly checked for congruence with Scripture. Yet, fit is often achieved by treating the literal wording of the Biblical text as a case of improper linguistic usage—a strategy offered as a methodological tip to the student in De Casu Diaboli:

“T. Be careful not at all to think—when we read in Scripture, or when in accordance with Scripture we say, that God causes evil or causes not-being—that I am denying the basis for what is said or am finding fault with its being said. But 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.”

Not that Anselm engages in cynical, or even fanciful (in the manner of some patristic allegory), explaining away of apparently recalcitrant passages. Rather, he takes for granted a harmonization of Scripture regulated by creeds and conciliar pronouncements, and within those parameters offers the sensible renderings of one whose steeping in Scripture has left him with a devout appreciation of it.

Writing about the controversy between Latin and Greek churches over the Filioque clause, Anselm eschews another sort of clinging to the words of Scripture at the expense of intended meaning: to the Greek objection that Scripture nowhere explicitly states that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Son, with its accompanying theological rule that we ought not “to assert on our own opinion, or authority, that which is nowhere stated in Scripture,” Anselm responds with counter-examples that overturn the rule:

“...where in the Prophets, in the Gospels, or in the Apostles do we read in just so many words that the one God exists in three persons, or that the one God is a Trinity, or that God is from God? Nor do we encounter the words ‘person’ and ‘trinity’ in that Creed in which the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son is also not set forth. Nevertheless, since these things clearly follow from those things which we do read, we steadfastly believe them in our hearts and confess them with our mouths. Therefore, we ought to receive with certainty not only whatever we read in Holy Scriptures but also whatever follows from Scripture by rational necessity—as long as there is no reason against it.”

Scriptural statements, like the sometimes cryptic initial formulations of the teacher in Anselm’s dialogues, require explanations, which unfold their deep-
structure meanings. Theological theory is in no small part intended to do this job. To be sure, Anselm would grant, the genuine logical consequences of correctly interpreted Scriptural claims must be true. Yet, just as caution is always necessary in moving from the direct to the implicit meanings of a speaker, so Anselm is cautious here about inferences from Scripture. Just as the student is able to generate independent, apparently sound arguments for opposing conclusions, without being able to penetrate to the resolution of the apparent contradiction; so the most spiritually mature and intellectually advanced of human beings might go astray in extrapolating the implications of Holy Writ. Thus, Anselm stipulates, as a safe-guard, that not only must the further assertions seem to follow, but also that no other (equally good) reasons can be cited against them.

3.2.2. Authority and the “Threat” of Novelty: Anselm’s theological community took the limitations of human reason in relation to God, so seriously that it adopted a vigorous “hermeneutics of suspicion” towards novelty, whether of content or theological method, and esteemed patristic and Bible the lecture-commentary as the approved genre. Anselm shows himself sensitive to such worries but unwilling to be bound by them. (i) On the one hand, Anselm submitted his first treatise, the Monologion, to Lanfranc, his former ecclesiastical superior, for criticism. But the latter’s objection to Anselm’s method—of bracketing the authority of Scripture and the Fathers, and attempting to establish Christian beliefs about the being, nature, and triunity of God sola ratione (see section IV below)—brought neither alteration nor withdrawal from publication, but only the addition of an explanatory prologue, in which Anselm defends the utility of his method, while assuring the reader that his content is not new (being prefigured in Augustine’s De Trinitate).92 (ii) Likewise, if Anselm concedes, in the opening chapter of Cur Deus Homo, that what ought to be said about human redemption can be sufficiently gleaned from the Fathers,93 he spends roughly half of the first book (Iii-x) allowing the dialogue unfold how patristic solutions are inadequate to (past and current) infidel objections, hereby reinforcing his justification for a new investigation.94 (iii) Again, in De Processione Spiritus Sancti, Anselm ventures to justify the sixth-century addition of the Filioque clause to the Nicene creed by the Latin Church. He argues, on the one hand, that it is implicit in Scripture and not contradicted by other considerations, and on the other, that its insertion was a necessary response to a new context of misunderstandings. New historical contexts raise different puzzles, which call in turn for further explicit development of doctrine.95

In sum, where the dichotomy of tradition and novelty is concerned, Anselm finds that human limitations cut both ways. On the one hand, fruitful inquiry into the mysteries of Trinity, Incarnation, and Redemption requires the spiritual formation of all human dimensions under the tutelage of Scripture. No
one should expect to discover any new insights about these topics, apart from prior careful preparation of mind, will, and emotions. At the same time, these subjects are so profound, that human inquiry will never exhaust them. Since it is a human duty that faith should seek understanding, and since the Holy Spirit is promised to Christians in every age, the well-prepared and persistent can hope for fresh discoveries. For him, it is criterial that the latter will never contradict Scripture or the creeds, but at most elaborate their meanings and implications. For the most part, new investigations will not oppose, but rather expose the theoretical underpinnings of patristic claims.

Yet, the mature Anselm was willing to venture novelties of content as well as method. Not only does he supplant the Ransom Theory of the ancients with his classic formulation of the satisfaction-theory; he also ventures, with heavy warnings that his conclusions are tentative and without prejudice to a better opinion—into speculative areas (e.g., whether or not God's first choice included humans or only angels in the created population of heaven, and how God took a sinless human nature from Adam’s race). Thus, for all his genuine humility, Anselm did not engage in false modesty, and was willing, by implication, to present himself as wiser than some of his teachers! In the words of Benedicta Ward, “Anselm...writes as being himself one of the Fathers.”

None of this means that Anselm was insincere or equivocal in identifying Scripture, Church dogma, or the Fathers as auctoritates. Rather Anselm is a pioneer-representative of a methodological transition that came to full flower in the thirteenth and fourteenth century universities: viz., that from the lectio-method which focussed on the assimilation and exegesis of texts, to the quaestio- and disputatio-methods which used apparently conflicting auctoritates to focus theological questions which were pursued by the methods of dialectic and “determined” by the auctoritas of the teacher.

3.3.3. Ecclesiastical Personages: Certainly, Anselm recognized, submitted to, and defended the authority of the bishop of Rome, in both the political and intellectual spheres. As noted above, he submits Cur Deus Homo to the pope, and uses the Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi and De Processione Spiritus Sancti to lay his arguments against Roscelin and the Greeks before the pope. Likewise, before “publishing” the Monologion, he sent it to Lanfranc, his former teacher and religious superior at Bec. In theory, Anselm’s general estimate of human capacities makes him adopt a posture of openness to correction from all and sundry. Nevertheless, it seems doubtful to what degree he really expected legitimate philosophico-theological correction from his contemporaries. As already noted, he did not alter or withhold the Monologion from “publication,” despite Lanfranc’s objections. Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi and De Processione Spiritus Sancti seem written to instruct the reader as much as to inform him of the orthodoxy of Anselm’s actual
views. The closing paragraph of *Cur Deus Homo* affirms Anselm’s receptiveness to *reasonable* correction, but at the beginning he claims to have achieved an “elegant” solution, even at controversial points his arguments impose a burden of rebuttal on those who disagree.

IV. The Power to Convince:

Anselm’s strategy in addressing his various audiences is straightforward: begin with common premisses and proceed by valid arguments to his desired conclusions. 4.1 Varying the Data-Base: What counts as a “common” assumption is a function both of intended audience and announced purpose. (1) In the *Monologion*, Anselm addresses a two-fold audience: his monastic student brothers, who requested that he proceed by rational necessity without appeal to Scriptural authority; and *ignorantes* who for one reason or another do not believe and whom he hopes to persuade *sola ratione*, on the basis of premisses they already accept, (a) that God exists and (b) is the source of all goods and Himself the Good that satisfies, and (c) that the rational thing to do is commit oneself to God in living faith. (2) Although the *Proslogion* is a prayer-exercise for believers, one of Anselm’s aims in the sections devoted to intellectual striving (cc.ii-xiii, xvii-xxiii) is to achieve a theoretical advance over the *Monologion*, by finding simpler proofs for a sub-set of its results: *viz.*, [i] that God truly exists, [ii] that all things need Him for their being and well-being, and [iii] other Christian beliefs about the Divine substance (as opposed to trinity). Comments in his Reply to Gaunilo make evident Anselm’s assumption that such *Proslogion* arguments inherit the *Monologion*’s accessibility to unbelievers as well. (3) *Cur Deus Homo* appears, in the beginning, to aim at a general audience, but to narrow its focus at I.x to those (perhaps certain Jews and Moslems, as well as Christians) who accept certain Biblical claims about God and some theses about angelology. Clearly bracketed are “all beliefs about Christ,” because it is the necessity and soteriological efficacy of the Incarnation and Passion that are to be proved by necessary (i.e., cogent) reasons. (4) In *De Processione Spiritus Sancti*, Anselm’s aim is to inform and instruct Latin, while persuading Greek Christians that the *Filioque* clause belongs in the Nicene Creed. Accordingly, he takes for granted the many points of agreement between the two churches, and brackets Latin adherence to the *Filioque*, in order to prove the latter from the former. (5) *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi* looks to a Latin Christian audience, and addresses itself to the confusions of those puzzled by the same questions (about Trinity and incarnation) that led Roscelin (at least temporarily) astray. (6) Anselm’s quartet of teaching dialogues are student-exercizes for an entirely Christian school, whose purpose is as much (or more) technique development as content mastery. *De Grammatico* focuses entirely on issues of semantics, and involves no doctrinal premisses. Anselm introduces the
other three—De Veritate, De Libertate Arbitrii, and De Casu Diaboli— as concerned with “the study of Holy Scripture.” And to some extent, their topics do involve the clarification of Scripture, or how one Christian belief fits together with another. Consequently, little or no attention is paid to whether unbelievers would accept the premisses of Anselm’s explanations. All the same, their results—definitions of truth, justice, freedom of choice, and a theory of created motivational psychology—are clearly among those Anselm would commend to ignorantes of whatever kind, and could equally find support among the beliefs Christians and non-Christians share.

4.2. Confidence in the Conclusions: On Anselm’s understanding of human capacity for inquiry, it follows that our readiness to be convinced by an argument should depend not only on our willingness to accept the premisses and apparent validity of the inference, but also on the difficulty of the subject matter. (i) Thus, he claims to have established conclusions about the existence and independence of God and the dependence of creatures, with such firmness that even if he did not wish to believe them, he would be forced to do so.118 (ii) As to the Divine nature, because of its simplicity and eternity, the surface level expressive power of our language is not geared to it, so that technical usage has to be devised.119 Where God’s triunity is concerned, our linguistic and conceptual apparatus are even less well suited to their task; and while analogies can rationalize a scheme of usage, sufficient for us to be confident that God is three-in-one, our intellectual powers cannot penetrate to how God is three-in-one, or what three God is.120 (iii) Again, because the goodness of God is an inexhaustible mystery, our apparently sound arguments about what perfect goodness would do are especially liable to being overthrown. For example, reason seems to dictate “good for good, evil for evil” and thus to rule out sparing the wicked.121 But Scriptural and doctrinal claims of Divine mercy, provoke faith seeking understanding to dig deeper, to the realization that propriety of retribution can be considered both from the side of the agent’s desert and from the side of the nature of the one who responds: the propriety of sparing the wicked could stem from the latter.122 Similarly, Anselm remarks, ante-lapsum angels couldn’t be sure that God would punish sin, because they couldn’t see far enough into His goodness to rule out the possibility that Divine mercy would simply forgive it without satisfaction.123 Once again, retrospective authority steers Anselm away from that thesis, but the notion that it would be unfitting for perfect justice not to demand satisfaction for maximally indecent acts, is commended as reasonable in its own right.124 If further reflection is apt to show some of our calculations as wrong, it is bound to expose even our deepest reflections as superficial and for that reason distorting.

4.3. The Priority of Faith? We have seen how Anselm does not think a human being can come to a vision of God through intellectual inquiry alone,
apart from discipline of will and emotions. Moreover, Anselm firmly contends that the human telos gives rise to a human duty to follow “right order”: viz., to believe in order to understand, not to try to understand in order to believe.\footnote{25} In the Proslogion, he appears to go further, asserting of the effort to “understand” God “a little bit,” “unless I believe, I will not understand.”\footnote{126} Does Anselm, after all or at least sometimes, assert the absolute priority of faith over understanding, such that an unbeliever cannot come to know any tenets of the Christian faith through rational arguments?\footnote{127}

Not necessarily. Perhaps this comment is to be understood in terms of Anselm’s customary division of roles, between the teacher—whose job it is to take the broader view, to direct the inquiry, distinguishing good questions from bad ones, and to articulate the insights that resolve the difficulties—and the student—whose task it is to raise questions and objections, to follow along, remember, digest and query what the teacher says. Anselm, the teacher, writes the Monologion, pioneering the territory with his own seeking; he is the explorer-discoverer par excellence. He widens his class room to include the (hypothetical?) ignorantes besides monastic believers. The book is written with pedagogical consideration, so that both halves of his audience can track and (with repetition) digest the reasoning; but neither is in a position at the outset to assume the teacher’s role. Again, however active his dialogue-students, none of them is sufficiently well-developed to take over and guide the inquiry to a successful conclusion. Likewise, no matter how brilliant the senior human collaborator, s/he remains a “teacher’s aid,” metaphysically incapable of taking the class all by her/himself. “Unless I believe, I will not understand” is a Biblical quote, which comes as part of a prayer-exercise to put the soul in a posture of humility before the Divine partner. Thus, Anselm’s point may be that prior faith, which makes this collaboration explicit, is required for this senior human role.

If so, is not his claim falsified by the existence of non-Christian intellectual leaders? Moreover, should not Anselm have known better? Even if Anselm had few or no personal encounters with any among his contemporaries, he surely knew of and read a little Aristotle (probably the Categories and De interpretatione), had arguably played the student to Priscian’s teacher and profited from the latter’s works.\footnote{128}

Maybe, but maybe not entirely. Remember, Anselm’s own goals are extremely high—pre-eminently, to see God’s face; in the meantime, to understand “a little bit” about God’s being and well-being, His nature, triunity, and goodness. Further, given his Christian-Platonism, the latter goals are the crown and completion of any intellectual inquiry, because any study into creatures or mathematics is implicitly a study of Divine being and goodness. Wherever one begins, faith will eventually be required to see the investigation through to the end.

Moreover, Anselm’s understanding of human insight as progressive, its
clarity eventually demanding the focus of all human powers, is compatible with a highly flexible position. If human beings are multi-dimensional, almost everyone suffers from "lop-sided" development. Anselm worries, on the one hand, lest the monastic curriculum exercise will and emotions without developing the intellect; on the other, lest ignorantes think a merely intellectual approach to God will suffice. Implicitly, his appropriation of pagan insights recognizes the possibility of disciplining all three human faculties up to a point of considerable skill outside the context of faith. Just as in the former cases the lagging dimensions will have, sooner or later, to "catch up" and coordinate with gains along the others; so pagan expertise will have to be transplanted in the soil of faith. As with some church fathers, including the philosopher Clement of Alexandria and St. Augustine himself, many former understandings will survive, but with new coloration; others will prove wrongheaded and wither away. Naturally, how much the new context affects the truth-values of propositions depends on the field in question (e.g., less for mathematics than for value claims, as Anselm’s discussion of justice and mercy makes clear), but even where these remain unaltered the significance of such claims will be transformed.

V. Anselm’s Stance, Contrasting Postures:

We have seen that Anselm’s method in philosophical theology is shaped by five fundamental factors:

1. his appreciation of the ontological incommensuration between God and creatures;
2. his commitment to the infallible authority of Scripture as interpreted through the creeds and conciliar pronouncements;
3. his conviction that humans are made in God’s image;
4. his conception of inquiry as essentially a Divine-human collaboration;
5. his understanding of human inquiry as holistic and developmental.

Interestingly, (1) is emphasized more by contemporary theology (from existentialists to feminists to John Hick’s most recent book, *An Interpretation of Religion*) than by analytic philosophy of religion, and used to support a kind of theological scepticism, about human capacity to discover any truth about the way God is in Godself. Such scepticism is not usually taken as reason to abolish non-negative "God-talk," but rather seen as grounds for reductive construals (e.g., for treating it as metaphor, myth, blik, or ideology) and/or a licence for reconstruction. By contrast, some conservative evangelicals or traditionalist Catholics, who join Anselm in (2), use (1) to rationalize a passive acceptance of authority of the Bible and/or the Church.

Like the second group, Anselm is no theological sceptic, because (2) he finds in authority compass and astralabe, tutor and guide. If he agrees with
the first that human language must be stretched to talk about God—so that terms are used analogically of the Divine essence, in some sense metaphorically of God’s triunity—Anselm continues to insist that such statements express non-mythological, literal truth, that they are true by correspondence with the very being of God. Yet, at the center of Anselm’s Christian pedagogy, is his insistence on the human duty to interact with authority, by seeking understanding; his confidence that we can always make some progress in discovering the truth about God is grounded in (3)-(5).

Many conservative evangelicals and traditionalist catholics have found congenial Anselm’s notion of theological development—that while one begins with the infallible authority of Scripture, new conflicts and confusions warrant new explanations, which make explicit what was implicit in the already given. Such was also the methodology of the Oxford Movement (of the 1830’s-40’s) within the Church of England, where it still commands the allegiance of many Anglo-Catholics today. This position involves the patristic idea that God has somehow insulated the texts of Scripture and conciliar pronouncements from the errors to which all human inquiry about God is otherwise so prone (a la (1)).

For many (myself included), the results of the historico-critical study of the Bible have rendered this last assumption (and hence (2)) untenable, exposing as they appear to do how deeply the human collaborators have shaped the text (cf. (4)). Such studies underscore the validity of (1), while construing (5) not only individually but collectively: the ontological and epistemical gap between God and humans is so great, that it took generations for the human race to work up to a plausible approximation of the right idea! On this re-working of Anselmian themes, Scripture and creeds remain authoritative, not as infallible dictates, but as tutors to which one submits for spiritual formation and from whom the philosophical theologian or Christian philosopher should never depart lightly or in haste. Yet, just as the interactive study of authority has led many to “find” theological development within the Bible itself; so we might expect with Anselm that—since (3) God made us in His image and (4) gives the Holy Spirit in every age-further progress towards the truth about God might be made in our day as well. If some understandings seem to be “outgrown” in the Bible (e.g., that God might be jealous of human achievements in building sky scrapers in Genesis 11:1-9), so—with all due caution—we are not entitled to dismiss a priori all contradictions of Scripture as ipso facto mistaken.131 If this estimate of the Bible erodes security about our sense of intellectual direction, it spawns greater optimism, about the Divine collaborator’s willingness to be patient with dull-witted and silly students, as about His pedagogical resourcefulness in redeeming our errors.132

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1. *Monologion*, c.xxxi; S I.49-50; c.lxviii-lxix; S I.78-84; *De Veritate*, c.ii; S. I.178-79; c.iv; S I.180-8; c.vii; S I.185, 6-186, 4.

2. *Monologion*, c.lxviii; S I.78, 25-79.1: “omne rationale ad hoc existere, ut sicut ratione discretionis aliquid magis vel minus bonum sive non bonum iudicat, ita magis vel minus id amet aut respuat.”


4. *Proslogion*, c.i; S I.98, 14-15: “Denique ad te videndum factus sum…” Likewise, Anselm speaks of Adam’s losing the “beatitudinem ad quam factus est” (S I.98, 18).


6. *Cur Deus Homo*, i.ii; S I.97, 4-98, 5: “Rationalem naturam a deo factam esse iustam, ut illo fruendo beata esset, dubitari non debet. Ideo namque rationalis est, ut discernat inter iustum et iniustum, et inter bonum et malum, et inter magis bonum et minus bonum. Alioquin frustra facta esset rationalis. Sed deus non fecit eam rationalem frustra. Quare ad hoc eam factam esse rationalem dubium non est. Simili ratione probatur quia ad hoc accepit potestatem discernendi, ut odisset et vitaret malum, ac amaret et eligeret bonum, atque magis bonum magis amaret et eligeret. Alter namque frustra illi deus dedisset potestatem istam discernendi, quia in vanum discerneret, si secundum discretionem non amaret et vitaret. Sed non convenit ut deus tantam potestatem frustra dederit. Ad hoc itaque factam esse rationalem natuman certum est, ut summum bonum super omnia amaret et eligeret, non propter aliud, sed propter ipsum. Si enim propter aliud, non ipsum sed aliud amat. At hoc nisi iusta facere nequit. Ut igitur frustra non sit rationalis, simul ad hoc rationalis et iusta facta est. Quod siad summum bonum eligendum et amandum iusta facta est, aut talis ad hoc facta est, ut aliquando assequeretur quod amaret et eligeret, aut non. Sed si ad hoc iusta non est facta, ut quod sic amat et eligat assequatur, frustra facta est talis, ut sic illud amet et eligat, nec ulla erit ratio cur illud assequi debat aliquando. Quamdiu ergo amando et eligendo summum bonum iusta faciet, ad quod faccta est, misera erit, quia indigens erit contra voluntatem, non habendo quod desiderat; quod nimis absurdum est. Quapropter rationalem naturam iusta facta est, ut summum bono, id est deo, fruendo beata esset. Homo ergo qui rationalis natura est, factus est iustus ad hoc, ut deo fruendo beatus esset.”

7. *Monologion*, c.xxviii; S I.46, 8-16, 29: “alia omnia mutabiliter...inlabili brevissimoque et vix existente praesenti sunt vix est...non immerito...asseruntur breve non esse et vix esse...aliquo modo recte non esse...”


9. *Proslogion*, c.i; S I.98, 3-5; c.ix; S I.107, 4-27; c.xiv; S I.111, 22-112, 11; c.xvi; S I.112, 19-113, 4; *Cur Deus Homo*, i.ii; S II.50, 3-13.

10. *Monologion*, c.xxxvi; S I.54, 15-18; c.xiv; S I.74, 30-1.75, 16.


12. *De Libertate Arbitrii*, c.iii; S I.212, 19-c.iv; S I.214, 12; cf. *De Casu Diaboli*, cc. xii-xvii; S I.251, 22-262, 19; *De Conceptu Virginali et de Originali Peccato*, cc. i-ii; S
13. Prologion, c.i; S I.98, 16-99, 14; c.xvii; S I.113, 18-114, 13.


17. Anselm consistently sounds this theme in the prayers, and it is a key premiss in his *Cur Deus Homo* argument for the necessity of the Incarnation. His works are riddled with prayers for Divine aid in his theological inquiries as well as thanksgiving for help received.


22. Prologion, c.i; S I.98, 1-3: "Eia nunc ergo tu, domine deus meus, doce cor meus, doce cor meum ubi et quomodo te quaerat, ubi et quomodo te inventat..."

23. *De Concordia Praescientiae et Praedestinationis et Gratiae Dei cum Libero Arbitrio*, III.6; S I.270, 14-21: "...Scierendum quia, sicut terra innumerabiles herbas et arbores, sine quibus humana natura alitur aut etiam quibus perimitur, sine omni hominis cura profert, illas vero, quae nobis ad vitam nutriendam maxime sunt necessariae, non sine magno labore atque cultore nec absque seminibus: ita corda humana sine doctrina, sine studio quasi gerninant cogitationes et voluntates nihil utiles saluti aut etiam noxias, illas vero, sine quibus ad salutem animae non proficimus, nequaquam sine sui generis semine et laboriosa cultura concipiunt aut germinant..." Translation from *Anselm of Canterbury: Volume Two*, edited and translated by Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson (Toronto and New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1976), 206.


26. *De Concordia*, III.6; S I.270, 28: "Nullus namque velle potest, quod prius corde non concipit..."
27. Monologion, c.lxxviii; S I.84, 16-85, 9.
28. Proslogion, c.i; S I.100, 10-11: "...Quaeram te desiderando, desiderem quaerendo. Inveniam amando, amem inveniendo."
29. Monologion, c.xviii; S I.78, 25-79, 5; Proslogion, c.i; S I.98, 14-15, 18; Cur Deus Homo, II.i; S I.97, 4-98, 5.
30. De Libertate Arbitrii, c.iii-iv; S I.210, 28-214, 12; De Concordia, I.6; S II.256, 14-257, 18; III.xiii; S II.285, 7-287, 21.
31. De Casu Diaboli, cc.xii-xiv; S I.251, 22-259, 4; De Concordia, III.11-13; S I.278, 27-287, 21.
32. De Casu Diaboli, cc.i-iii; S I.233, 6-240, 13.
33. De Casu Diaboli, cc.xii-xiv; S I.251, 22-259, 4; c.xvii; S I.263, 5-32; De Concordia, III.12-13; S I.284, 22-287, 21.
34. Cur Deus Homo, passim.
35. Cur Deus Homo, II.xvi; S II.118, 5-20.
36. De Concordia, III.6; S I.272, 28-273, 6; III.8-9; S I.274, 19-278, 10.

"Ne committas me, domine, meae nec humanae ignorantiae aut infirmitati, neque meis meritis, nec ali quan tuae piæ dispositioni; sed to ipse Clementer dispone me et omnes cogitatus et actus meos in beneplacito tuo, ut fiat a me et in me et de me tua semper solum voluntas. Libera me ab omni malo, et perdue me ad vitam aeternam, per dominum."

38. Commendatio; S II.40, 5-7.
39. Cf. Proslogion, c.i; S I.97, 4-10.
40. As Anselm repeatedly does in his works: cf. Proslogion, c.i; S I.97, 4-100, 19; cc.xiv-xviii; S I.111, 8-115, 4; and passim. Cur Deus Homo, I.i; S II.49, 3-6; II.ii; S II.50, 3-6; I.xxiv; S II.95, 1-96, 20; II.xvii; S II.126, 5-19. De Concordia; S I.245, 3-5; III.14; S I.288, 11-19. Cf. De Conceptu Virginale et de Originali Peccato, c.xxix; S II.173, 4-7; and De Processione Spiritus Sancti, c.xvi; S II.219, 27-28.
41. Cur Deus Homo, I.i; S II.48, 16-18; Commendatio; S I.40, 10-12.
42. Proslogion, c.ii; S I.101, 4-7; c.vi; S I.104, 20-25; c.vii; S I.105, 9-11; c.viii; S I.106, 5-8; c.ix; S I.106, 18-107, 3; c.x; S I.108, 23-25; c.xi; S I.109, 10-24; c.xviii; S I.114, 14-18; c.xix; S I.115, 7-9; c.xx; S I.115, 18-20.
43. Proslogion, c.xiii; S I.110, 12-19.
44. *Proslogion*, c.ii; S I.101, 1-2; x.ix; S I.108, 8-10; c.xiv; S I.111, 23-112, 11; c.xviii; S I.114, 8-13.

45. *Proslogion*, c.iv; S I.104, 5-7; c.xiv; S I.111, 22-23; 112, 5-6, 9-11; 112, 27-113, 1.


47. *Proslogion*, c.xiv; S I.111, 22-23; 112, 5-6, 9-11; 112, 27-113, 1.

48. Conclusions addressed to God: c.iii; S I.102, 3-9; c.vi; S I.105, 4-6; c.vii; S I.105, 27-106, 2; c.viii; S I.106, 9-14; c.xi; S I.110, 1-3; c.xii; S I.110, 6-8; c.xvii; S I.113, 8-15; c.xvii; S I.116, 15-117, 2; c.xviii; S I.117, 6-16.

49. *Proslogion*, c.ii; S I.101, 7-102, 3; c.iii; S I.102, 8-103, 2; c.xiv; S I.116, 9-10; c.xvi; S I.110, 6-12; c.xvii; S I.117, 16-22.

50. Commendatio; S II.40, 10-12: “inter fidem et speciem intellectum quem in hac vita capimus esse medium intelligo: quanto aliquis ad illum proficit, tanto eum propinquare speciei, ad quam omnes anhelamus, existimo.”

51. *Cur Deus Homo*, I.i; S II.47, 8-9: “quod petunt, non ut per rationem ad fidem accedant, sed ut eorum quae credunt intellectu et contemplatione delectentur…” Cf. Commendatio; S II.39, 4-6. Also *Proslogion*, c.xxvi; S I.120, 23-122, 2.


53. Anselm exempts Christ’s human nature from the necessity for such education; he contends that it was omniscient, because no purpose would be served by the Divine Word’s assuming our ignorance, because no purpose would be served by the Divine Word’s assuming our ignorance, in addition to our ability to die. Cf. *Cur Deus Homo*, II.xiii; S II.112, 16-113, 18.

54. Here I make allowances for prodigies such as Mozart, who seem to require much less education.

55. *Proslogion*, c.i; S I.100, 18-19: “...Neque enim quaero intelligere ut credam, sed credo ut intelligam. Nam et hoc credo: quia ’nisi credidero, non intelligam.’” Cf. *Cur Deus Homo*, I.i; S II.47, 8-9; 48, 16-18; *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi*, sec. I; S II.

56. E.g., in response to the teacher’s contention that sin does not take away freedom of choice but only the occasion to use it, the student replies, “Credo, sed intelligere desidero” (*De Libertate Arbitrii*, c.iii; S I.121, 1). Again, regarding the claim that fallen angels would not be condemned if they were not guilty, the student declares, “Certos sum enim, etiamsi non videam” (*De Casu Diaboli*, c.ii; S I.235, 27; cf. c.iv; S I.240, 22-23). Likewise, to the contention that the good angels were able to sin before the evil ones fell, the student responds, “Puto, sed ratione comprehendere vellem” (*De Casu Diaboli*, c.v; S I.242, 28).

57. *Cur Deus Homo*, II.xiii; S II.113, 17-18: “...Saepe namque aliquid esse certi sumus, et tamen hoc ratione probare nescimus.”

58. *De Grammatico*, cc.i-ii; S I.145, 4-146, 26; c.iii; S I.147, 21-48, 6; *De Veritate*, c.i; S I.176; S I.14-20; *De Libertate Arbitrii*, c.i; S I.207, 4-10; c.ii; S I.209, 13-26; *De Casu Diaboli*, c.ii; S I.235, 20-236, 9; c.vii; S I.244, 11-245, 18; c.x; S I.247, 6-28; c.xxi; S I.266, 15-267, 19.

59. Cf. *De Libertate Arbitrii*, c.i; S I.208, 1-13; c.ii; S I.209, 27-210, 21; c.iii; S I.210,
60. The student offers linguistic (De Libertate Arbitrii, c.v; S I.214, 24-26) and experiential (c.vi; S I.217, 20-25) counter-evidence to the teacher’s claim that the will cannot be overcome by temptation. Likewise, he wonders whether God is a counter-example to the teacher’s claim that no alien force can coerce an upright will to sin (c.viii; S I.220, 12-16).

61. Cur Deus Homo, I.xxv; S II.95, 15-22.

62. E.g., he asks whether humans were part of God’s original creative plan, or whether we were made only to fill up the number of fallen angels (Cur Deus Homo, I.xvi; S II.74, 14; I.xviii; S II.84, 3); how God was able to take a sinless human nature from Adam’s race (Cur Deus Homo, II.xvi; S II.116, 16-24; 117, 18-22); and whether Christ’s death wasn’t necessary, on the assumption that Mary was cleansed by it in advance (Cur Deus Homo, II.xvi; S II.120, 2-11).

63. Cur Deus Homo, I.iii; S II.50, 16-22.

64. Cur Deus Homo, I.vii; S II.55, 13-59, 5.

65. For example, in De Veritate, when the student appeals to Aristotelian-Boethian correspondence as an account of truth of statement, the teacher denies it is definitional, but then allows it to stand as a statement of truth-conditions within the teacher’s teleological account of what truth is. Again, in De Libertate Arbitrii, the teacher rejects the student’s proposal—‘power to sin and power not to sin’—as definitional of free choice, but allows it to stand as a de facto necessary condition of imputability.

66. The teacher offers the final definitions in De Veritate (cc.xi-xii; S I.191, 3-196, 25) and De Libertate Arbitrii (c.iii; S I.211, 5-212, 23; c.xiv; S I.226, 3-21). Likewise, in De Grammatico, it is the teacher who supplies the key distinction between signification and appellation, which renders consistent the conclusion that grammaticus is both substance and quality. A fortiori, in Cur Deus Homo, Anselm is the one who advances both the negative case—that human redemption is impossible without an Incarnation (in I.xi-xxii; S II.68, 3-96, 4)—and the positive account of how a God-man saves us (in II.i-xxv; S II.97, 4-133, 11).

67. De Libertate Arbitrii, c.i; S I.207, 4-10.

68. De Libertate Arbitrii, c.iii; S I.211, 5-212, 23.

69. De Libertate Arbitrii, c.xiii; S I.225, 4-28.

70. De Libertate Arbitrii, c.xiii, S I.223, 26-224, 30.

71. Cf. De Libertate Arbitrii, c.xii; S I.224, 26-30.

72. De Grammatico, c.xxi; S I.168, 7-12: “...nec aliquid iis quae in hac disputatricne asseruisti, obici recte posse existimo. M. Nec mihi nunc videtur. Tamen quoniam seis quantum nostris temporibus dialectici certent de quaestione a te proposita, nolo te sic iis quae diximus inhaerere, ut ea pertinaciter teneas, si quis validioribus argumentis haec destruere et diversa valuerit astruere. Quod si contigerit; saltem ad exercitationem disputandi nobis haec profecisse non negabis.”

73. Monologion, c.xviii; S I.33, 11-22, cf. De Veritate, c.i; S I.176, 4-19; c.xiii; S I.196, 28-199, 29.

74. Meditatio, 3; S III.85, 32-34; cf Epistola, 56; S III.171, 15-16.
76. *De Processione Spiritus Sancti*, c.xvi; S II.219, 23-29.
77. *Cur Deus Homo*, lxviii; S II.82, 8-10; cf. *De Concordia*, III.6; S II.272, 4-7.
79. *Epistola de incarnatione verbi*; S II.5, 1-14; 11, 15-17; 13, 4-21; 15, 19-20; 16, 3-5; 20, 16-19, 22, 14-16; 24, 9-10; 28, 71-5; 29, 29-30. *De processione Spiritus Sancti*; S II.177, 5-19; 178, 13-15; 181, 13-14; 185, 16-25; 188, 1-4; 190, 30-32; 194, 12-20; 200, 3-5; 205, 18-21; 206, 8-11; 207, 26-29; 210, 21-34; 211, 1-3; 212, 25-27; 218, 22-23.
80. Cf. *Commendatio operis ad Urbanum Papam II*; S II.41, 1-5: “Quapropter, mi pater et domine, Christianis omnibus cum reverentia amande et cum amore reverende papa Urbane, quem dei providentia in sua ecclesia summum constituit pontificem: quoniam nulli rectius possum, vestrae sanctitati praesent conspectui subditum opusculum, ut eius auctoritate quae ibi suscipienda sunt approbentur, et quae corrigenda sunt emendentur.”
81. Cf. his apology in *Monologion*, Prologus; S I.8, 8-20. Likewise, his concession that the fathers had already adequately covered the subject matter of *Cur Deus Homo* (Ii; S II.48, 9-10).
83. *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi*, c.i; S II.8, 7-19.
84. *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi*, c.i; S II.9, 5-8; “…Nimimum hic ipsum quod dico: qui non crediderit, non intelligit. Nam qui non crediderit, non experietur; et qui expertert non fuerit, non cognoscet. Quantum enim rei audita superat experientia, tantum vicit audientis cognitionem experimentis scientia.”
85. *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi*, c.i; S I.7, 6-8, 6.
86. *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi*, c.i; S II.9, 9-19.
87. *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi*, c.i; S II.10, 14-17: “Haec dixi ne quis, antequam sit idoneus, alissimas de fide quaesiones praeumat discutere; aut si praeumperit, nulla difficultas aut impossibilitas intelligendi valeat illum a vertiate cui per fidem adhaesit excutere…”

89. *De Casu Diaboli*, c.i; S I.233, 6-7.


92. Cf. *Epistola ad Lannfrancllm archepiscopulum*; S I.5, 2-6, 14; and Prologus; S I.7, 2-8, 26.

93. *Cur Deus Homo*, I.i; S II.48, 9-10: “quamvis a sanctis patribus inde quod sufficere debeat dictum sit...”

94. Thus, Martin Grabmann over-estimates Anselm’s adherence to patristic authority in his monumental study, *Die Geschichte der Scholastischen Method*, Erster Band (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1956) (first published 1909), Funfter Abschnitt, 258-339; esp. 267-69, 289.

95. *De Processione Spiritus Sancti*, c.xiii-xiv; S II.211, 6-215, 26.

96. Commendatio; S II.40, 4-5.


98. Commendatio; S II.40, 5-7.


100. *Cur Deus Homo*, I.xviii; S II.82, 5-16.

101. Anselm offers one explanation in *Cur Deus Homo*, II.xvi; S II.116, 16-122, 21, and devotes the whole of *De Conceptu Virginali et Originali Peccato* to the formulation of another.


103. For helpful discussions of this methodological evolution which, however, curi-


106. *Cur Deus Homo*, lxviii; S II.83, 28-29: “Quod tamen si dicitur, inveniendum erit quomodo ratae non sint supra positae rationes...”

107. Anselm gives crisp acknowledgement to this procedure in *De Processione Spiritus Sancti*, c.i; S II.177, 15-17.


110. *Proslogion*, Prooemium; S I.93, 4-10.


113. *Cur Deus Homo*, Praefatio; S II.42, 8-43, 3; cf. c.i; S I.48, 2-5.

114. *De Processione Spiritus Sancti*, c.i; S II.177, 3-17.

115. *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi*, c.i; S II.5, 22-6, 4.

116. Anselm makes this explicit at the end of *De Grammatico*, c.xxi; S I.168, 8-12.

117. Praefatio; S I.173, 2-3: “Tres tractatus pertinentes ad studium sacrae scripturae quondam feci diversis temporibus...”


119. *Monologion*, c.xv; S I.3-7; cf. cc.xvi-xxv, passim.

120. *Monologion*, c.lxiv; S I.74, 30-75, 16.


123. *De Casu Diaboli*, c.xxiii; S I.270, 4-18.


125. Cf. *Cur Deus Homo*, I.i; S II.47, 8-9; 48, 16-17. Cf. *Epistola de Incarnatione Verbi*, c.i; S II.6, 10-7, 6; S II.8, 7-19; S II.9, 5-8.

126. *Proslogion*, c.i; S I.100, 18-19: “Neque enim quaeo intelligere ut credam, sed credo ut intelligam. Nam et hoc credo: quia 'nisi credidero, non intelligam.”


131. The great Anglican theologian Charles Gore outlined such a position in his influential essay “The Holy Spirit and Inspiration,” *Lux Mundi* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1890), 313-62. Gore’s focus in this essay was on the impact of higher criticism on the Old Testament, and was reluctant to follow his logic through to the New Testament, especially where the events mentioned in the creeds were concerned. Cf. Arthur Michael Ramsey, *An Era in Anglican Theology: From Gore to Temple* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1960).

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