Omnia sunt in te: A Note on Chapters Twelve to Twenty-six of Anselm's *Proslogion*

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Michael Fournier's essay in this volume adds importantly to our understanding of the structure and argument of Anselm's *Proslogion*. He acutely discerns a ring composition beginning with Chapter Six and, within its members, a turning from a difference of degree to a difference of kind between attributions common to God and to humans. His identification of this "*chiasmus* as a cross, representing the humanity and divinity of Christ" is crucially important. Certainly this turning from the *secundum nos* to the *secundum se* of God leads to Anselm's terrible realization in Chapter Fourteen that knowing God more and more accurately by the only light with which he can be known actually makes Him more and more different from us so that he is not perceived—critically, as Fournier has so well shown, *non sentit* (*Cur non te sentit, domine deus, si invenit te?*). The logic of a quest which pushes his knowledge further away from God by the same steps with which God's sight of him is understood to be close and present comes nearer to intolerability in Sixteen. The upward leg of the turn described in Michael Fournier's circle reaches its breaking climax in Eighteen with the reiteration of the despair of the Prologue and *Excitatio mentis* accompanied by the breast beating *luctus* of the latter. There, once again, Anselm recognises that, when seeking God, he fell on himself as obstacle (cap. 1: *Tendebam in deum et offendi in me ipsum*). In consequence, the only solution is the prayer by which God relieves him of himself, or lifts him up from himself: *Releva me de me ad te* (cap. 18). God reveals himself when the human lifts itself and is lifted in prayer, but such prayer issues from despair.

The new turning in the midst of Eighteen, a conversion, has fundamentally the same form and place as that of a work perfectly known to Anselm, the *Consolatio* of Boethius. At its very centre, Philosophia's invocation of the Father of all (*O qui perpetua mundum ratione gubernas*) overcomes the *error* and *pravitas* of human reason which separates and disperses the simple and undivided (*Cons.* III.viii–ix). In the *Proslogion*, the new circle formed here bends round to gather in what was previously separated out, operating by

Dionysius, Vol. XXVII, Dec. 2009, 145–54.

means of essentially physical arguments about the nature of space and time in Chapters Nineteen to Twenty-two. The sensuality and the inclusion of corporality Michael Fournier explains in Chapter Six are absolutely of the essence; these remain at the heart of Anselm's quest. However, it is just this connection between the ring composition Dr Fournier rightly identifies and the structure of the argument of the *Proslogion* as a whole which inspires this note.[1] There is a problem with placing Chapter Twelve in Fournier's ring. It does not neatly and obviously correspond to Seven. But its misplacement, from this point of view, gives a clue to how it does function in the upward thrust which forms this new circle. By way of Chapter Thirteen, which does correspond to Chapter Six and is essential to the physical solution inaugurated in Eighteen, Anselm both travels further up a despairing path and begins to find the way to the *patria*. This, however, will require that the new circle be constructed by an inclusive embrace.

Dynamic Powers: Despair, Prayer, Comparison, Quest

Before saying something about how the way home begins to appear as the *Proslogion*'s seeker again approaches despair—into which he mounts as much as he falls—I need to note some elements of the dynamic of the work. I have already identified three of them: quest, prayer, and despair. Beginning with the last, let me say something briefly about the other two, and let me identify other essential movers of the argument.

I can be very brief about despair because we have already encountered it at its most intense in Chapter Eighteen together with its characteristic consequence, self-surrender: *Releva me de me ad te.* By then we were already well used to its critical function: the *unum argumentum* emerged out of despair in the Prooemium. Exhausted from a conflict in which he tried to escape from seeking what he was convinced he could not find, only to be importuned by what was beyond his grasp, he despaired and it gave itself (*se obtulit*). In the *Excitatio* which constitutes Chapter One, the grounds for despair begin in the frustrated paradox of needing to know already what you are looking for in order to find it. The philosophical paradox is raised to self-contradictory theological absurdity when the sought is the omnipresent creator lord—significantly, this problem about making a beginning haunts the first chapters of Augustine's *Confessions* and leads there also to a reflection on the origins of sin. The despair of the *Excitatio* is reiterated in Eighteen, producing much the same diagnosis as in Chapter One—my self got in the way—and a solution is found in the same direction—the self as trinitarian image is transcendent

1. A "note" enables observations less well established than an article would require. My aim is not to settle anything with respect to this inexhaustible work but rather to advance a common reflection on it with Michael which might result in something more complete.

towards God. The self can remember what it lost and who it once was because it remains an image of the Creator even if a darkened one: "[Y]ou have created in me this image of you so that I may remember you, think of you, and love you" (cap. 1). The trinitarian soul is itself the basis for union with its trinitarian source and contains the means of recognizing what it seeks and willing what it has lost, and we shall not get out of the *Proslogion* without finding ourselves in the Trinity. The *Excitatio* closes with the confidence that the unknown cause can remake what it has made, and that the remaking and renovation are in and through the one who suffered the loss.

The *Proslogion*, like the *Monologion*, out of which it arises, belongs to the Benedictine monastery and its *opus dei*. The two booklets have their origin in common considerations within the community at Bec on how one ought to meditate on the divine essence, and in the demands of Anselm's brethren that he should provide them with patterns for these meditations they could use by themselves. The aim is to move from signs to experienced union with the realities. The pattern is the Augustinian turn *ab exterioribus ad interiora, ab inferioribus ad superiora* exhorted in the address at the beginning of the *Excitatio mentis*, and most critically present as the solution to the problem of Chapter Three—how the unthinkable non-existence of God can be thought—in Chapter Four. It is possible to say the words signifying a reality without understanding it—the distinction in Four is made by contrasting *cogitatur* with *intelligitur*. The famous demonstration in Two is a movement from the superficial words of the fool to the reality of the Plotinian and Augustinian identity of being and knowing in *Nous,* or the immutable light *supra mentem meam* of the turning point at the centre of the *Confessions* (7.10.16), on which speaking and knowing depend. This light is both that by which we think and is also what is beyond the grasp of human *ratio*. Its character, both as creating us to be knowers and as beyond us, sets up the agonising logic of the Chapters from Ten to Eighteen revealed in the title of Fourteen: *Quomodo et cur videtur et non videtur deus a quaerentibus eum*. This is the paradoxical dilemma of human reason described in the Prooemium, where, in searching to conform his thinking about God to the divine nature, he finds what he seeks seemingly already able to be captured (*iam posse capi*) and also entirely fleeing the very aspect of mind which is made for such touching of God (*mentis aciem omnino fugeret*).

The *reductio ad absurdum* upon which the demonstration in Chapter Two depends is based in another crucial and originative mover of the *Proslogion*, out of which it in fact comes, comparison. The *Proslogion* originates in an unsatisfactory comparison by Anselm of the *Monologion*, composed by weaving together a concatenation of many arguments, with its subject, the self-sufficient God who *nullo alio indigens*. As a result of the discovered

inadequacy, he seeks to overcome the distance between thinking and its object by *unum argumentum quod nullo alio ad se probandum quam se solo indigeret*. Much of the Prooemium of the *Proslogion* is taken up by contrasts with the *Monologion*. Thus, to give other examples, the *unum argumentum*, rather than the brethren, nag him in the *Proslogion* and, whereas, in the first, he must be compelled by others to write, in the second work, he wishes to share the joy his discovery brings by writing out the argument. Again, in parallel paradoxes, the *Monologion* is a *soliloquium* which is largely devoted to deducing the divine self-othering, the Trinity, whereas the *Proslogion* is an *alloquium* motivated by the desire to be conformed to God who needs nothing other.

This "address" begins in the *Excitatio* where diminished humanity (*homuncio*), stretched out of itself into labours, cares and tumultuous thoughts, is urged to enter into its interior closet and seek the face of God. Otherness in the *Proslogion* is primarily experienced through the dynamic element named in its first title, *Fides quaerens intellectum*, quest. The knowing being, which must engage in an impossible search for what is always present everywhere and is its happiness, is in *exsilium, incurvatus* at the bottom of the cave (cap. 1). He cannot, no matter how much effort he puts into his search, find his way out of his self-contradiction. Indeed, as Dr Fournier has shown, and as Anselm never tires of bemoaning, his successes make him worse off. The only solution is that the self-othering which constitutes quest should be included in what is sought. Thus, in the *alloquium*, Anselm's aim is not the *Monologion*'s task of deriving the trinitarian otherness from the divine essence—this is instead assumed in Chapters Twenty-three to Twenty-six which bring the Trinity into the *unum argumentum* and the questing self into the Trinity—but rather to embrace the human quest within God's substance and activity. In the *Excitatio*, Anselm asks the one he seeks to "teach me to seek you and show yourself to the one who is seeking" (*doce me quaerere te et ostende te quaerenti*). The *Proslogion* is a success because he is able to affirm in the concluding Chapter that following the divine command to ask so as to receive does, both now and finally, not lead to endless vanity but to the fullness of joy.

In Chapter One, we have begun, then, on the human side in the relation between two selves, or more correctly between two aspects of the self, which reason compares and thus between which it moves. Comparison is as much essential to the interior movement of the *Proslogion* as it is to its origin, and as quest is. Indeed the success of its quest derives from the fact that the comparing motion which constitutes discursive reason leads mind to its unmoving foundation. Experienced union with God's being and truth comes by comparing what reason grasps to the unknown it cannot comprehend.

A productively moving comparison is absolutely necessary for the success of the quest because it begins with the problem of the *Meno*, well-known to Augustine from Cicero, and communicated to Anselm by the one authority to whom he makes reference in the two works.[2] Both the *Excitatio* and Chapters Fourteen to Eighteen make clear that the dilemma of the *Meno*—that we must already know what we seek in order to find it—is infinitely intensified when what is sought is God. He is everywhere and always, and the knowledge of the one who is our creator and lord is both our purpose and the fulfillment of the needs and desires of every aspect of our being.

The solutions to the intensified dilemma are various. Above all there is what gave itself in the exhaustion and despair of the conflict described in the Prooemium. This reappears as a name of God, essentially a comparison, seemingly dropped from heaven in Chapter Two: *aliquid quo maius cogitari possit*. In his seeking to know "what you are" (*quid es*), Anselm undertakes another comparing: *es…quo nil maius valet cogitari* (cap. 5). Comparison reappears when God's knowability is considered: *es quidquid quam cogitari possit* (cap. 15). In the foundational consideration, *Quod vere sit deus*, being in intellect alone is compared with *in intellectu et in re*. The comparisons and the quest are made possible by the traces, inferiors, and externalities from which the seeking begins. There are the obscured but never lost trinitarian image of God in the human mind of Augustine's *De Trinitate*, and the faith referred to in Chapter One. There is the speech "without any or with some external signification" ascribed to the fool in Chapter Four. There are the continuities between God and man described by Dr Fournier in Chapters Six to Nine.

Sensibilis deus

One more element which pushes the argument must be mentioned before we can look at the structure of the chapters following those Dr Fournier has analysed, the sensuality of the *Proslogion*. The *sensibilis deus* does not make his first or last appearance in Chapter Six. The God who originally satisfied the entire person made him *ructabat saturitate* (cap. 1) and is properly experienced as *harmonia, odor, sapor, lenitas, et pulchritudo* (cap. 17) by the spiritual senses which Plotinus, Augustine and Bonaventure know we once

2. *Monologium*, Prologus, refers the reader to the *De Trinitate* of Augustine. On the Meno, see P. Cary, *Augustine's Invention of the Inner Self. The Legacy of a Christian Platonist* (New York: Oxford U Press, 2000) and my "'Knowing as We Are Known' in *Confessions* 10 and Other Philosophical, Augustinian and Christian Obedience to the Delphic *Gnothi Seauton* from Socrates to Modernity," *Augustinian Studies* 34.1 (2003): 23–48 at 30.

possessed and which must be restored.[3] Anselm is not seeking an abstract idea. The Trinity of good at which he arrives is the "*unum necessarium* in which is all good, or rather is itself the whole and one and total and only good" (cap. 23). That *omne unum totum bonum* is "delectable", containing and satisfying the desires of body and soul; the list of the delectations begins with speed and liberty of the body (24 and 25). The terrified and desperate energy with which Anselm pursues his quest for the face of God is rooted in the fact that the entirety of thought and desire is at stake.

That than which nothing greater can be thought requires comparing thoughts with one another. However, ultimately, and necessarily so far as the argument and the *itinerarium mentis* are concerned, these are thoughts about that in which thought and existence cannot be separated. Further, being is hierarchically graded. Objects of knowledge are more or less true in virtue of their degree of being, are more or less knowable or beyond knowledge because of those same gradations, and are equally ranked as more or less good by the same criteria. Finally, and crucially, the sensate knower ought to know the divine and would know the *sensibilis* God if he had not forsaken his true self. On this account, and because knowledge is equivalent to enjoyment, and because the knower acquires its being and its well being from the divine object of knowledge, there is a direct correlation between the state of the knower and the degree to which the divine is grasped or lost. The knower's relation to what is known or not known is always present and is always being considered along with the object. The subjective and objective are inseparably joined, as they are in Augustine and Plotinus.

Es Per Teipsum

In the contexts established by Dr Fournier's essay and by this sketch of the dynamic of the *Proslogion*, let us return to Chapter Eleven. So far as Anselm gives us an indication of the structure of his argument in the chapters following Five, he indicates that what he began there is concluded at least in part with Eleven. He had attributed justice, truth and blessedness to God because they were things which *melius est esse quam non esse* (cap. 5) and, repeating the comparing formula, he now affirms *sensibilis, omnipotens, misericors, impassibilis, vivens, sapiens, bonus, beatus, aeternus* (cap. 11). There is no direct correspondence between Twelve and Six, but there is a continuation and intensification of the logic which Dr Fournier associates with the turn he finds within his ring structure. The simplicity of God is a commonplace for philosophic theologians who, like the Neoplatonists gen-

3. See Martin Sastri, "The Influence of Plotinian Metaphysics in St. Augustine's Conception of the Spiritual Senses," *Dionysius* 24 (2006): 99–124 and Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, cap. 4.

erally, among whom we can number Augustine on this matter, deny a substance and accident structure for the divine being. Here, in Chapter Twelve, God is identified with his attributes; this identity belongs to God *secundum se*—our thinking divides what is one in Him. He is through his very self *non per aliud* (cap. 12). Thus, when, as Dr Fournier rightly claims, Anselm moves back to a consideration of the relation of spirit and body in Chapter Thirteen, and characterises God in such a way that he is differentiated from all other spirits, this singularity adds to the accumulated transcendence of God. Chapter Thirteen shows God to be uniquely *simul ubique totum*, but, critically, the positive implications of such a way of being are not taken up here; they will only be reasserted after the *Releva me de me* of Eighteen has done its converting work. Now the unique everywhere wholly at the same time brings Anselm all the way back to the frustrated astonishment of the *Excitatio* that what is everywhere present is not sensed (*Si autem ubique es, cur non video praesentem*? cap. 1). This time, even if hypothetically in some way found, God is certainly not perceived (*non sentis*, cap 14). Looked at in the only light by which he can be seen, God's own, Anselm's eye is both darkened by its weakness and shocked by God's brightness. The language in Chapter Fourteen, combining *infirmitate* and *reverberatur* is that of *Confessions* 7.10.16, where, after the vehement radiance of God flashed on his eyes, Augustine fell back into the region of dissimilarity.

The seeing which does not see of Fourteen (*videtur et non videtur*) leads to the argument of Chapter Fifteen that the Lord is greater than is what is able to be known. Crucially for understanding the character of the unknowing, this is another comparison: God is greater than what is able to be known in this mode by such eyes. The intolerability of such learned ignorance is intensified in Sixteen when the *ubique tota praesens* of Thirteen is combined with the *non video* and *non sentio*. That the sensual language here (in both significations of "sensual') is altogether intentional comes out in Seventeen on the disappointed expectation of the spiritual senses "stiffened, stupefied and obstructed" (*obriguerunt, obstupuerunt, obstructi*, words just as onomatopoeic, although with the opposite feeling, as the list of what they block: *harmonia, odor, sapor*). This reiteration that every aspect of human knowing is denied pushes Anselm over the top into the *turbatio*, *maeror* and *luctus* (cap. 18), and the repetition of the human self-contradiction, we heard, and heard about, in Chapter One.

Omnia Sunt In Te

In this crisis it becomes clear that God cannot be the object of a quest by a subject separated from that for which it searches. He must both be relieved of that selfhood and God must cease to be exclusive. The Chapter of the

Releva me de me ad te (cap. 18) passes by way of reassertion of the divine simplicity, so that he cannot be known in part, to conclude with *ubique totus es et aeternitas tua tota est semper* (cap. 19) which must embrace all. In the physical arguments of Chapter Nineteen and its immediate successors, we return for the last time to Thirteen (and thus in a way to Six) in order that God may include the seeker and his quest: *omnia sunt in te*. "For nothing contains you, but you contain all things" (cap. 19). The non-temporal eternity of the Platonists, conveyed by Augustine and Boethius—the eternal present—is combined with total ubiquity in Chapters Nineteen to Twenty-two (e.g., all things are filled with God and are in him, cap 21) so that Anselm can conclude the last of these Chapters as if he has finished the second of the tasks to which he set himself in the Prooemium. There he proposed that, after showing that God is, he would go on to demonstrate that he is *summum bonum nullo alio indigens et quo omnia indigent ut sint et ut bene sit*. These words are repeated as the conclusion to Twenty-two entitled "That he alone is what he is and who he is." This accomplished, what can remain?

UNUM NECESSARIUM

In a word, what remains is the Trinity, making its first appearance since the *Excitatio* concluded with its image in the remembering, knowing, and loving of the *homuncio* (cap. 1). The self-sufficient good at which we have arrived is equally the Father, speaking a word of truth which is his Son, and the Spirit who proceeds as their common love.[4] The coming forth of these equal goods is repeatedly denied to be a going into otherness; it is *summe simplex unitas et summe una simplicitas*. As bringing us to this whole and total and only good, the *unum argumentum* has resulted in the *unum necessarium* which the contemplative Mary, in contrast to her distractedly busy sister, was praised by Jesus for choosing.[5] The Trinity is the ultimate inclusion, because, not thereby multiplied, God includes otherness in his very simplicity, every good in his simple goodness, and thus, as the concluding Chapter makes explicit, quest. Contemplation of this inclusive simplicity is union, conferring on the knower a mode of knowledge like that of the object known. In consequence, the last Chapters return to the quest for the enjoyment of God, but this time with confidence because God is now known as simple but inclusive goodness. There is another *Excitatio* (literally *Excita*, cap. 24), another address. This one is not to the externalised little man (*homuncio*, cap. 1 and cap. 25)

4. From the divine goodness, using the demonstrative formula of Chapter Two, Bonaventure will deduce the Trinity; see *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, cap. 6 and my "Dionysius becomes an Augustinian. Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* vi," *Studia Patristica,* vol. XXIX, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 252–59.

5. Luke 10.42.

who is either distended by occupations, tumultuous ideas or onerous cares (cap. 1), or still in the state prior to the central prayer of both *Proslogion* and *Consolatio*, "wandering through many things seeking goods" *per multa vagaris quaerendo bona* (cap. 25. He now excites his own soul (*anima mea*) to awaken and arouse itself to conceive the greatness of this simple all inclusive goodness (cap. 24). Two aspects of the new *alloquium* stand out as linking it to the moving elements of the *Proslogion* and especially to the circle rounding on itself which is constructed from Chapter Eleven onwards.

First, in accord with these, Anselm makes explicit for desire that every kind of good is in this single all inclusive simplicity, goods for the soul and the body: speed, beauty, long and healthy life, drunkenness, wisdom, concord, *et cetera*. Sense and body from which we started in the first *Excitatio* and in Chapter Six are far from being discarded. Second, otherness is in the fruition: our love for ourselves and our neighbour will be included in our love of God. "They will love God and themselves and one another through God, and God will love himself and them through himself" (cap. 25). In virtue of having the divine will, humans shall have the omnipotence which formerly divided the human and the divine. Indeed, as the concluding Chapter makes explicit, time itself and its process are included in our possession of that truly infinite good. Though we cannot possess it now, in virtue of being directed toward that good, we can make progress from day to day until we come to the fullness.

Fruitless quest has become growth. Desire, quest, reason's activity have become activities toward the divine. Anselm now has confidence in the divine counsel to ask so as to receive the fullness of joy which the seeker is promised. This is the subject of the concluding Chapter. What is positive in faith with its always unsatisfying incompleteness has emerged. The quest for God in despair of our own efforts is known as the activity of the divine in us. We are in God, because otherness and what is through another are in God. All this is contained in "that than which nothing greater can be thought," because, in this formula, what is known and grasped has essential relation to what is not thought and cannot be thought. Reason and intellect are held together in a comparing thought which must be both.

The role of Chapters Twenty-three to Twenty-Six, after what would seem to be the concluding formula reiterating the Prooemium of Chapter Twenty-two becomes clearer. In them we add two fundamental Christian doctrines, Trinity and resurrection. Thus, besides the doctrines of the existence of God and the attributes of the divine essence, we have in the *Proslogion* the two natures of Christ discerned in Fournier's chiasmus, the Trinity (cap. 23), and, in effect, the resurrection of the body (cap. 25). It seems as if the possibility, necessity, and resolution of Anselm's quest is the infinite inclusiveness of the

divine goodness and the impossible desire of man to enter into a perpetually satisfied quest of an endlessly expanding and total seeking. Ultimately, *totum cor, tota mens, tota anima non sufficiat plenitudini gaudii* (cap. 25).