ANSELM

Monologion

History of Christian Philosophy
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PREFACE
Certain brothers have frequently and earnestly entreated me to write out for them, in the form of a meditation, certain things which I had discussed in non-technical terms with them regarding meditating on the Divine Being and regarding certain other [themes] related to a meditation of this kind. For the writing of this meditation they prescribed—in accordance more with their own wishes than with the ease of the task or with my ability—the following format: that nothing at all in the meditation would be argued on Scriptural authority, but that in unembellished style and by unsophisticated arguments and with uncomplicated disputation rational necessity would tersely prove to be the case, and truth's clarity would openly manifest to be the case, whatever the conclusion resulting from the distinct inquiries would declare. They also desired that I not disdain to refute simple and almost foolish objections which would occur to me.

For a long time I was reluctant to attempt this; and comparing myself with the task, I tried on many grounds to make excuses for myself. For the more readily they wished that what they were seeking should be of practical use to them, the more difficult they were making it for me to accomplish what they sought. But at last, overcome by the modest insistence of their entreaties as well as by the commendable probity of their earnestness, I began [to undertake] what they were entreating, [even though] I was [still] reluctant because of the difficulty of the task and the weakness of my intellectual power. But because of their love I gladly and to the best of my ability finished [it] in accordance with their prescription. I was induced to this [undertaking] by the expectation that whatever I did would be known only to those who made the request [of me] and that after a while they would overwhelm it with contempt, scorning it as a thing of little value. For in this [undertaking], I know, I was not so much able to satisfy those who were entreating [me] as I was able to put an end to the entreaties that were pursuing me. Nevertheless, contrary to my expectation, it somehow turned out that not only the aforementioned brothers but also several others were engaged in committing this treatise to posterity by each making a copy for himself.

After frequently re-examining this treatise, I have not been able to find that I said in it anything inconsistent with the writings of the Catholic Fathers—especially with Blessed Augustine's writings. Therefore, if it shall seem to anyone that in this work I have set forth some [doctrine] which either is altogether new or else departs from the truth, then I make the following request: let him not immediately declare me to be one who presumes to new
[doctrines] or who teaches falsehood, but let him first look carefully at the books of On the Trinity by the aforementioned teacher, viz., Augustine, and then let him judge my work in the light of these books. For in stating that the Supreme Trinity can be called three substances, I have followed the Greeks, who confess [that God is] three substances in one person, by means of the same faith with which we [confess that He is] three persons in one substance. For with respect to God they signify by “substance” what we [signify] by “person.”

Now, whatever I have stated in this treatise I have stated in the role of one who by reflection alone investigates, and disputes with himself about, points which he had previously not considered—just as I knew was desired by those whose request I was endeavoring to oblige.

Now, I entreat and adjure anyone who wants to copy this work to make sure to append this preface at the very front thereof, before the chapter-titles themselves. For if someone knows at the outset with what intent and in what manner the disputation has been conducted, I believe that he will be greatly aided in understanding what he will read in the work itself. I also think that if someone sees this preface first, he will not be quick to pass judgment should he find presented [in the treatise] something counter to his own view.

CHAPTER ONE
There is something that is the best, the greatest, the highest, of all existing things.

There may be someone who, as a result of not hearing or of not believing, is ignorant of the one Nature, highest of all existing things, alone sufficient unto itself in its eternal beatitude, through its own omnipotent goodness granting and causing all other things to be something and in some respect to fare well. And he may also be ignorant of the many other things which we necessarily believe about God and His creatures. If so, then I think that in great part he can persuade himself of these matters merely by reason alone—if he is of even average intelligence. Although he can do this in many ways, I shall propose one [way] which I regard as the most accessible for him. For since all men seek to enjoy only those things which they consider to be good, at some time or other he can readily turn his mind's eye to investigating that thing from whence are derived these goods which he seeks only because he judges them to be good. Thus, with reason guiding and with him following, he may then rationally advance to the matters of which he is unreasonably ignorant. Nevertheless, if in this [investigation] I say something that a greater authority does not teach, I want it to be accepted in such way that even if it is a necessary consequence of reasons which will seem [good] to me, it is not thereby said to be absolutely necessary, but is said only to be able to appear necessary for the time being.
It is, then, easy for someone to ask himself the following question: although the good things whose very great variety we perceive by the bodily senses and distinguish by the mind's reason are so numerous, are we to believe that there is one thing through which all good things are good, or are some things good through something else? Indeed, the following is thoroughly certain and is evident to all who are willing to give heed: whatever things are said to be something in such way that they are said to be [it] either in greater or lesser or equal degree in relation to one another, are said to be [it] through something which is understood to be identical in the different things (rather than through something different in the different things), whether it is considered to be in them in equal or in unequal degree. For example, whatever things are said to be just in relation to one another—whether [they are said to be] equally [just] or [whether some are said to be] more just and [others] less just—can be understood to be just only through justice, which is not something different in [these] different things. Therefore, since it is certain that if compared with one another all good things are either equally or unequally good, it is necessary that all [good] things are good through something which is understood to be identical in [these] different goods—although at times, ostensibly, some things are said to be good through something else. For, ostensibly, a horse is said to be good through one thing, because it is strong, and is said to be good through another thing because it is swift. For although, ostensibly, it is said to be good through strength and good through swiftness, nevertheless strength and swiftness are seen not to be the same thing. Now, if a horse is good because it is strong or swift, how is it that a strong and swift robber is evil? Rather, then, just as a strong and swift robber is evil because he is harmful, so a strong and swift horse is good because it is useful. Indeed, ordinarily, nothing is thought to be good except because of a certain usefulness (e.g., health and whatever conduces to health are called good) or because of some kind of excellence (e.g., beauty and what conduces to beauty are considered to be good). But since the reasoning already seen can in no way be faulted, it is necessary that even every useful and every excellent thing—if they are truly goods—be good through that very thing (whatever it be) through which it is necessary that all [good] things be good. But who could doubt that that through which all [good] things are good is [itself] a great good? Therefore, it is good through itself, since every [good] thing is good through it. So it follows that all other [good] things are good through something other than what they are and that this other alone [is good] through itself. But no good which is [good] through something other [than itself] is equal to or greater than that good which is good through itself.

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Hence, only that which alone is good through itself is supremely good; for that is supreme which so excels others that it has neither an equal nor a superior. Now, what is supremely good is also supremely great. Therefore, there is one thing which is supremely good and supremely great—i.e., [which is] the highest of all existing things.

CHAPTER TWO
The same topic continued.

Just as something has been found to be supremely good inasmuch as all good things are good through some one thing which is good through itself, so it follows necessarily that something is supremely great inasmuch as whatever things are great are great through some one thing which is great through itself. I do not mean great in size, as is a material object; but [I mean great in the sense] that the greater [anything is] the better or more excellent it is—as in the case of wisdom. Now, since only what is supremely good can be supremely great, it is necessary that something be the greatest and the best, i.e., the highest, of all existing things.

CHAPTER THREE
There is a Nature which exists through itself, which is the highest of all existing things, and through which exists whatever is.

Indeed, not only are all good things good through the same thing and all great things great through the same thing, but also whatever is is seen to exist through some one thing. For whatever is exists either through something or through nothing. But it is not the case that anything exists through nothing. For it cannot even be conceived that there is anything which exists other than through something. Thus, whatever is exists only through something. Accordingly, either there is one thing or there are many things through which all existing things exist. But if there are many things, then either (1) they are traced back to some one thing through which they exist, or (2) each of the many exists through itself, or (3) they exist mutually through one another. (1’) But if these many exist through one thing, then it is not, after all, the case that everything exists through the many but is rather the case that [everything exists] through that one thing through which the many exist. (2’) But if each of the many exists through itself, then surely there is some one power-(or nature)-of-existing through itself which they have in order to exist through themselves. And there is no doubt that they exist through this one thing through which they have the fact that they exist through themselves. Thus, all things exist through this one thing more truly than through the many things which themselves are not able to exist without this one thing. (3’) But [sound] reasoning does not allow that the many exist mutually through one another, for the thought that a thing exists through that to which it gives existence is irrational. For not even relational things exist in this manner through one another. For example, when a
master and a servant are referred to relatively to each other, the [two] men referred to do not at all exist through each other, nor do the relations by which they are referred to exist at all through each other (for these relations exist through their subjects).

Therefore, since the truth altogether excludes [the possibility of] there being a plurality through which all things exist, it must be the case that that through which all existing things exist is one thing.

Since, then, all existing things exist through one thing, without doubt this one thing exists through itself. Thus, all existing things other [than this one] exist through something other [than themselves]; and this one alone exists through itself. But whatever exists through something other [than itself] exists less than that which alone exists through itself and through which all other things exist. Accordingly, that which exists through itself exists most greatly of all. Therefore, there is some one thing which alone exists most greatly of all and most highly of all. But what exists most greatly of all and [is that] through which exists whatever is good and great and whatever is anything at all—necessarily, this is supremely good, supremely great, the highest of all existing things. Accordingly, there is something which—whether it is called a being, a substance, or a nature—is the best, the greatest, and the highest, of all existing things.

CHAPTER FOUR
The same topic continued.
Moreover, if anyone considers the natures of things, he cannot help perceiving that they are not all of equal excellence but that some of them differ by an inequality of gradation. For if anyone doubts that a horse is by nature better than a tree and that a man is more excellent than a horse, then surely this [person] ought not to be called a man. So although we cannot deny that some natures are better than others, nonetheless reason persuades us that one of them is so pre-eminent that no other nature is superior to it. For if such a division of gradation were so limitless that for each higher grade a still higher grade could be found, then reason would be led to the conclusion that the number of these natures is boundless. But everyone holds this [conclusion] to be absurd, except someone who himself is utterly irrational. Therefore, necessarily, there is a nature which is so superior to some [other] or some [others] that there is no [nature] to which it is ranked as inferior.

But this nature which is thus superior is singular—or else there is more than one nature of this kind, and they are equal. Assume that they are many and equal. Since they cannot be equal through different things but [only] through the same thing, this one thing through which they are equally so great either is the same thing which they are (i.e., is their essence) or else is something other than what they are. Now, if it is nothing other than their essence,
then just as their essences are one rather than many, so too the natures are one rather than many. For here I am taking the nature to be identical with the essence. On the other hand, if that through which these many natures are equally great is something other than what they are, surely they are less than that through which they are great. For whatever is great through something other [than itself] is less than that [other] through which it is great. Therefore, they would not be so great that nothing else is greater than they. Now, if neither through what they are nor through something other [than what they are] it is possible for there to be many equal natures than which nothing else is more excellent, then there cannot at all be a plurality of such natures. Therefore, [the alternative which] remains is: there is only one Nature which is so superior to [all] others that it is inferior to none. Now, that which is such is the greatest, and the best, of all existing things. Thus, there is a Nature which is the highest of all existing things.

But it can be the highest only if through itself it is what it is and only if through it all [other] existing things are what they are. For since a few moments ago reason taught that that which exists through itself and through which all other things exist is the highest of all existing things: either, conversely, that which is the highest [of all] exists through itself and all other things exist through it, or else there are many supreme beings. But it is evident that there are not many supreme beings. Hence, there is a Nature, or Substance, or Being (essentia) which through itself is good and great and which through itself is what it is; and through this Nature exists whatever truly is good or great or something. And this Nature is the Supreme Good, the Supreme Greatness (summum magnum), the Supreme Being (ens), or Subsistence (subsistens)—i.e., the highest of all existing things.

CHAPTER NINE
Before their creation those things which have been made from nothing were not nothing with respect to their Maker's reason.

But I seem to see a certain [point] which requires [me] to distinguish carefully the respect in which those things which have been made can be said to have been nothing before they were made. For by no means can anything reasonably be made by anyone unless beforehand there is in the maker's reason a certain pattern, as it were, of the thing to be made—or more fittingly put, a form or likeness or rule. Thus, it is evident that before all things were made there was in the Supreme Nature's reason what they were going to be or what kind they were going to be or how they were going to be. Therefore, although it is clear that before they were made, those things which have been made were nothing—with respect to the fact that they were not then what they are now and that there was not anything from which they were made—nevertheless they were not nothing with respect to their Maker's reason, through which and according to which they were made.
CHAPTER TEN
This reason is an expression of things, just as a craftsman first tells himself what he is going to make.

But what is this form of things, which in the Maker's reason preceded the things to be created, other than an expression-of-things in the Maker's reason?—just as when a craftsman who is about to make a work from his craft first speaks of it within himself by a mental conception? Now, by “mental expression” or “rational expression” I do not mean here thinking the words which are significative of things; I mean, rather, viewing mentally, with the acute gaze of thought, the things themselves which already exist or are going to exist. For in ordinary usage we recognize that we can speak of a single object in three ways. For we speak of objects either (i) by perceptibly employing perceptible signs (i.e., [signs] which can be perceived by the bodily senses) or (2) by imperceptibly thinking to ourselves these same signs, which are perceptible outside us, or (3) neither by perceptibly nor by imperceptibly employing these signs, but by inwardly and mentally speaking of the objects themselves—in accordance with their variety—either through the imagination of material things or through rational discernment. For example, in one way I speak of a man when I signify him by the name “man.” In another way [I speak of him] when I think this name silently. In a third way [I speak of a man] when my mind beholds him either by means of an image of a material thing or by means of reason—by means of an image of a material thing, for instance, when [my mind] imagines his perceptible shape; but by means of reason, for instance, when [my mind] thinks of his universal being, viz., rational, mortal animal.

Each of these three kinds of speaking has its corresponding kind of words. Yet, words of that [kind of] speaking which I mentioned third, and last, are natural and are the same for all races, if they are not words for unknown things. And since all other words have been formulated because of these [natural words], wherever these are no other word is needed for recognizing an object; and where they cannot be, no other [word] is useful for manifesting the object. Moreover, [these natural words] can without absurdity be called truer the more they resemble, and the more expressly they signify, the objects for which they are words. Except for those things which we use as names for themselves in order to signify themselves (e.g., certain sounds such as the vowel a)—except for these, I say, no other word seems so similar to the object for which it is a word, and [no other word] so expresses that object, as does that likeness which is expressed in the acute gaze of the mind as it conceives the object itself. Therefore, the natural word is rightly to be called the principal and most proper word for an object. No expression of anything whatsoever approximates an object as closely as does that expression which consists of words of this kind; and in no one's reason can there be anything else which is so similar to an object, whether already existing or going to exist. Consequently, in the case of the Supreme Substance such an Expression of objects can
justifiably be seen (1) to have existed before these objects, in order that they might be made through it, and (2) to exist now that they have been made, in order that they may be known through it.

CHAPTER ELEVEN
Nevertheless, in this comparison there is much dissimilarity.

It is evident that within itself the Supreme Substance “spoke,” as it were, of all creatures before it created them through and according to its own inmost Expression—just as a craftsman first conceives mentally what he subsequently produces in accordance with his mental conception. Nevertheless, I detect in this comparison much dissimilarity [between the Supreme Substance and an ordinary craftsman]. For the Supreme Substance did not from anywhere borrow anything at all whereby to fashion within itself the form of the creatures which it was going to make, or whereby to make these creatures what they are. By contrast, a craftsman cannot at all conceive in his mind, imaginatively, any material object except one which he has already in some way experienced (either in its entirety all at once or through parts from various objects); moreover, a craftsman cannot produce the work conceived in his mind if he lacks either the materials or any thing without which the preconceived work cannot be accomplished. For example, although a man can form the concept or the image of some kind of animal which nowhere exists, he can do so only by therein putting together parts which he has drawn into his memory from objects previously experienced. Hence, these two inner expressions of their respective works to be made—viz., [the Expression] in the Creative Substance and [the expression] in a craftsman—differ from each other in the following respect: The former was neither borrowed from anywhere nor aided from anywhere; as first and only cause it was able to suffice its Craftsman for accomplishing His work. By contrast, the latter is neither the first cause, the sole cause, nor the sufficient cause for [the craftsman's] commencing his [work]. Therefore, those things which have been created through the Expression [in the Creative Substance] are wholly through this Expression whatever they are, whereas the things made through [the craftsman's] expression would not at all exist unless they were something more than what they are through his expression.

CHAPTER TWELVE
The Expression of the Supreme Being is the Supreme Being.

But it is equally certain, as reason teaches, that (1) whatever the Supreme Substance made, it made through no other than through itself and that (2) whatever it made, it made through its own inmost Expression (whether by uttering different things with different words or else by uttering all things at once with a single word). Accordingly, what [view] can be seen to be more necessary than that the Expression of the Supreme Being is not other than the
Supreme Being? Therefore, I think that examination of this Expression must not be passed
over lightly. But before this topic can be developed critically, several properties of the
Supreme Substance must be carefully examined, it seems to me.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN
The Supreme Being exists in all things and through all things; and all things
exist from it, through it, and in it.

But if [the foregoing consideration] is true—or, rather, because it must be true—it follows
that where the Supreme Being does not exist, nothing exists. Therefore, [the Supreme
Being] exists everywhere and through all things and in all things. Now, it is absurd [to think]
that just as a created thing cannot at all exceed the greatness of the Creating and Sustaining
[Being], so the Creating and Sustaining [Being] cannot at all in any way exceed the totality
of created things. Consequently, it is clear that this [Being] is what sustains, excels,
embraces, and pervades all other things. Therefore, if these [conclusions] are conjoined
with the ones discovered earlier, then [one and] the same [Being] exists in and through all
[other] things and is that from which, through which, and in which all [other] things [exist].

CHAPTER FIFTEEN
What can and what cannot be predicated of the Supreme Being substantively.

Now, I am especially and not unjustifiably moved to inquire, as earnestly as I can, into what
(from among whatever is predicable of something) can substantively besuit such a marvelous
Nature as this. 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 to what end reason will direct this investigation. Now, about relational [words]—
no one doubts that none of them apply to the substance of the thing of which they are
predicated relationally. Therefore, if some [word] is predicated of the Supreme Nature
relationally, [this word] does not signify its substance. Thus, although [the Supreme Nature]
can be spoken of relationally as supreme over, or as greater than, all the things that it made
(or can be spoken of relationally in some other similar way), [these utterances] do not, it is
obvious, designate its natural being. For if there never existed any of the things in relation to
which it is called supreme and greater, then it would not be understood to be either supreme
or greater. Nevertheless, it would not for that reason be less good or would not at all
undergo detriment with respect to its essential greatness. We recognize this plainly from the
fact that through no other than through itself is this Being as good as it is or as great as it is.
So if the Supreme Nature can so be understood to be not-supreme that it is still [understood
to be] no greater or lesser than when it is understood to be supreme over all things, clearly
“supreme” does not signify unqualifiedly that Being which in every way is greater and better
than whatever is not what it is. Now, that which reason teaches regarding "supreme" holds equally true for similar relational [words].

And so, leaving aside those [words] which are predicated relationally (since none of them unqualifiedly exhibit the essence of anything), let me turn my attention to the discussion of other [words]. Surely, if someone carefully examines them one at a time, [he will see that] whatever non-relational [words] there are, [each one] either is such that [what] it [signifies] is in every respect better than [what] its negation [signifies] or else is such that its negation is in some respect better than it. (By “it” and “its negation” I mean here only true and not-true, material object and not-materialobject, and the like). Indeed, [in some cases] something is in every respect better than its negation—as, for example, wise than notwise; i.e., wise is better than not-wise. (For although someone who is just without being wise seems better than someone who is wise without being just, nevertheless not-wise is not unqualifiedly better than wise. Indeed, whatever is not-wise is, insofar as it is not wise, unqualifiedly inferior to what is wise; for whatever is not wise would be better if it were wise. Similarly, true is in every respect better than not-itself, i.e., than not-true; and just [is in every respect better] than not-just; and lives [is in every respect better] than not-lives. But [in some cases] the negation is in some respect the better; for example, not-gold [is in some respect better] than gold. For it is better for a man to be not-gold than to be gold, even though for something [else] it might be better to be gold than notgold (e.g., for lead). For although neither a man nor a piece of lead is gold, still, the more inferior in nature [a man] would become if he were gold, the better thing a man is than gold; and the more valuable a piece of lead would become if it were gold, the more inferior lead is [to gold].

From the fact that the Supreme Nature can be understood to be not-supreme in such way that (1) [for it to be] supreme is in no respect better than [for it to be] not-supreme and (2) [for it to be] not-supreme is not in some respect better than [for it to be] supreme, clearly there are many relational [words] which are not at all encompassed by the above classification. I forego inquiring about whether some [relational words] are [so] encompassed, because for my purposes what has [already] been learned about them suffices, viz., that none of these [words] designate the simple substance of the Supreme Nature. Since, then, if we look separately at whatever else there is [i.e., at whatever is signified by non-relational words, each is something which] either it is better to be than not to be or else in some respect it is better not to be than to be: just as it is blasphemous to suppose that the substance of the Supreme Nature is something which in some respect it would be better not to be, so this substance must be whatever in every respect it is better to be than not to be. For this substance alone is that than which nothing at all is better; and it alone is better than all things which are not what it is. Hence, it is not a material object or one of the things which the bodily senses detect. (Indeed, there is something better than all these [material
objects]—something which is not what they are. For [consider] a rational mind, whose nature, quality, or quantity is perceived by no bodily sense: the more inferior a rational mind would become if it were one of those things which are subject to the bodily senses, the greater it is than any of those things.) For the Supreme Being must in no respect be said to be one of those things to which something that is not what they are is superior. And the Supreme Being (as reason teaches) must unqualifiedly be said to be each of those things to which whatever is not what they are is inferior. Therefore, necessarily, the Supreme Being is living, wise, powerful and all-powerful, true, just, blessed, eternal, and whatever similarly is in every respect better than its negation. Why, then, should I continue to ask what this Supreme Nature is, if whatever it is or is not is evident?

CHAPTER SIXTEEN
For the Supreme Being to be just is the same as for it to be justice.
The case is the same regarding that which can be predicated of it in a way similar [to the way in which “just” is predicated]. None of these [predicates] indicate what kind of thing it is or of what magnitude it is; instead, [they indicate] what it is. But when we call [the Supreme Being] just or great (or any such thing), perhaps we are indicating not what it is but rather what kind of thing it is or of what magnitude it is. Indeed, each of these [predicates, viz., “just” and “great”] seems to be predicated with respect to quality or to quantity; for whatever is just is just through justice (and likewise for other [predicates] of this kind). Therefore, the Supreme Nature is just only through justice. Hence, it seems that the supremely good Substance is called just by participation in a quality, viz., justice. But if so, [i.e., if the Supreme Substance were just in this way], then [the Supreme Substance] would be just not through itself but through something other [than itself]. But this [view] is contrary to the truth which we have already seen: viz., that—whether good or great or existing—what [the Supreme Nature] is, it is completely through itself and not through something other [than itself]. So if it is just only through justice, and if it can be just only through itself, what is more clear and more necessary than that this Nature is justice? And when it is said to be just through justice, is not this the same as [being just] through itself? And when it is said to be just through itself, what else is meant other than [that it is just] through justice? Therefore, if someone asks “What is this Supreme Nature which is being investigated?” is there a truer answer than “justice”? So I must look into how we are to understand the statement that this Nature (which is justice) is just.

For since a man cannot be justice but can have justice, a just man is not understood to be a man who is justice but to be a man who has justice. So since the Supreme Nature is not properly said to have justice but rather to be justice, then when [this Nature] is said to be just, it is properly understood to be [a Nature] which is justice rather than to be [a Nature]
which has justice. Hence, if we say that it is [a Nature] which is justice we are saying not what kind of thing it is but rather what it is, then (by logical inference) when we say that it is just, we are saying not what kind of thing it is but what it is. Or again, with regard to the Supreme Being: since to say that it is just is the same as saying that it is what is justice, and since to say that it is what is justice is not other than saying that it is justice, it makes no difference, with regard to this Nature, whether we say “It is just” or “It is justice.” Therefore, when someone asks regarding this Nature “What is it?” the answer “just” is no less appropriate than the answer “justice.” The intellect is bound to discern rationally that what is seen to have been established in the case of justice also holds true for all the things predicated similarly of the Supreme Nature. Hence, whichever of these is predicated of this Nature, they tell neither what kind of thing this Nature is nor of what magnitude it is but rather what it is. But obviously the Supreme Nature is supremely whatever good thing it is. Therefore, the Supreme Nature is Supreme Being (summa essentia), Supreme Life (summa vita), Supreme Reason, Supreme Refuge, Supreme Justice, Supreme Wisdom, Supreme Truth, Supreme Goodness, Supreme Greatness, Supreme Beauty, Supreme Immortality, Supreme Incorruptibility, Supreme Immutability, Supreme Beatitude, Supreme Eternity, Supreme Power, Supreme Oneness. And [all] these [descriptions] are the same as [the descriptions] Supremely Being (summe ens), Supremely Living (summe vivens), and so forth.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

[The Supreme Being] is so simple that whatever things can be predicated of its essence are one and the same thing in it. And something can be predicated substantively of the Supreme Being only with respect to what [this Being] is. What, then? If the Supreme Nature is so many goods, will it be composed of so many goods, or are they, rather than being many goods, [only] one good signified by so many names? For everything composite needs for its existence the parts of which it is composed; and what it is it owes to its parts. For through them it is whatever it is, whereas what they are they are not through it; and so, it is not at all supreme. Hence, if the Supreme Nature were composed of many goods, then what holds true of everything composite would also have to hold true of it. But the whole necessity of previously established truth destroys and overthrows, by means of clear reasoning, this blasphemous falsity. Therefore, since this Nature is in no respect composite and yet is in every respect those very many goods [listed above], all those goods must be one rather than many. Hence, each one of them is the same as all [the others]—whether they be considered distinctly or all together. For example, when [this Nature] is said to be justice or being, [these predicates] signify the same thing as do the other [predicates], whether considered distinctly or all together. Thus, even as whatever is predicated essentially of the Supreme Substance is one, so whatever the Supreme Substance is essentially it is in one way, in one respect. For when a man is said to be a body and rational
and a man, he is not said to be these three things in a single way, in a single respect. For in one respect he is a body, in another rational; and neither of these constitutes the whole of what a man is. By contrast, it is not at all the case that the Supreme Being is something in such way that in some manner or respect it is not this thing; for whatever the Supreme Being] in some respect essentially is is the whole of what it is. Therefore, whatever is predicated truly of its essence applies to what it is, not to what kind of thing it is or to of what magnitude it is. For whatever is [subject to] a quality or a quantity is something else with respect to what it is [i.e., with respect to its essence] and, thus, is not simple but is composite.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE
This Spirit’s Expression is the very same thing as this Spirit. Nevertheless, there are not two spirits but [only] one.

But having examined these [topics] which have presently occurred to me (as I am following the guidance of reason) concerning the properties of the Supreme Nature, I [now] think it useful to consider, as best I can, the Supreme Nature’s Expression, through which all things were made. For although all the [points] which I was able to notice earlier concerning this Expression possess the inflexible strength of reason, the fact that this Expression is proved to be the same thing that the Supreme Spirit is imposes a special requirement upon me to discuss this Expression the more carefully. For if the Supreme Spirit made all other things only through itself, and if whatever was made by it was made through its Expression, how is this Expression anything other than what the Supreme Spirit itself is? Moreover, assuredly those truths which have already been discovered declare uncontestably that nothing at all was ever able or is ever able to exist besides the Creating Spirit and its creatures. Now, it is impossible that the Expression of this Spirit would be in the class of created things. For whatever is created is made through this Expression; but this Expression could not have been made through itself. Indeed, nothing can be made through itself, because whatever is made exists later than that through which it is made, and nothing exists later than itself. Thus, [the other alternative] holds, viz., that the Expression of the Supreme Spirit—since it cannot be a creature—is none other than the Supreme Spirit.

Indeed, this Expression can be understood to be nothing other than the understanding of the Supreme Spirit by which [the Supreme Spirit] understands all things. For what else is it for this Spirit to speak of a thing (in this way of speaking) than for it to understand it? For unlike a man, the Supreme Spirit never fails to express what it understands. Therefore, if the supremely simple Nature is none other than what its understanding is—just as it is the same thing that its wisdom is—then, necessarily, it is also none other than what its Expression is. But since it is already evident that the Supreme Spirit is only singular and is in every respect
an individual, necessarily its Expression is so consubstantial with it that there is one Spirit rather than two.

CHAPTER THIRTY
This Expression is not many words but is one Word.

Why, then, should I continue to doubt what I earlier left in doubt, viz., whether this Expression is one word or many words? For if the Expression of the Supreme Nature is so consubstantial with it that there is one Spirit rather than two, then surely just as the Supreme Nature is supremely simple, so too is this Expression. Therefore, it is not many words but is one Word, through which all things have been made.

CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR
How the one is the essence of the other.

So also, if the one were said to be the essence of the other, there would be no departure from truth; rather, the supreme oneness and supreme simplicity of a common nature would be commended. For it is not the case that just as we understand a man's wisdom, through which a man is wise, who cannot be wise through himself, so we can understand (if the Father is said to be the essence of the Son, and the Son to be the essence of the Father) that, similarly, the Son is existent through the Father, and the Father through the Son—as if the one could not be existent except through the other, even as a man cannot be wise except through wisdom. For just as Supreme Wisdom is always wise through itself, so the Supreme Being always exists through itself. But the Father is completely the Supreme Being, and the Son is completely the Supreme Being. Therefore, the complete Father exists through Himself, and likewise the complete Son exists through Himself—even as each is wise through Himself. For it is not the case that the Son is less perfect existence (essentia) or wisdom because He is existence begotten from the existence of the Father and wisdom [begotten] from the wisdom [of the Father]. (But [the Son] would be less perfect existence or wisdom if He did not exist through Himself or were not wise through Himself.) For there is no inconsistency at all involved in the Son's existing through Himself and His having existence (esse) from the Father. For the Father has existence, wisdom, and life in Himself, so that He exists through His own being, is wise through His own wisdom, and lives through His own life (rather than through another's being, wisdom, or life). Similarly, by begetting [the Son] he bestows on Him the having of existence, wisdom, and life in Himself [i.e., in the Son Himself], so that the Son exists through His own being, is wise through His own wisdom, and lives through His own life (rather than through someone else's being, wisdom, or life). Otherwise, the existence (esse) of the Father and of the Son would not be identical, nor would the Son be equal to the Father. But we have already seen most clearly how false [this consequence] is.
So, then, the fact that the Son exists from the Father is not inconsistent with the fact that
the Son exists through Himself. For it is necessary that He have from the Father the very
ability to exist through Himself. If some wise man were to teach me his wisdom which
previously I lacked, surely his wisdom would not inappropriately be said to do this [i.e., to
cause my wisdom]. But although my wisdom would owe its existence and its being-wise to
his wisdom, nevertheless once my wisdom existed it would exist only by its own being and
would be wise only by itself. Therefore, it is all the more true that the eternal Father's
co-eternal Son—who has existence from the Father in such way that they are not two
beings—exists, is wise, and lives through Himself. Therefore, “the Father is the essence of
the Son” or “the Son is the essence of the Father” cannot be understood as if the one were
[able to exist] through the other but not able to exist through Himself. Rather, in order to
signify their commonness of supremely simple and supremely singular essence, it can be
appropriately said and understood that the one so is the very same thing as the other that
the one has the essence of the other. And so, on the basis of the fact that, for either of
them, to have an essence is not other than to be an essence: just as the one has the essence
of the other, so the one is the essence of the other—i.e., the one has the same being (esse) as
the other.

CHAPTER FORTY-FIVE
The Son can more fittingly be called the essence of the Father than the Father
[can be called the essence] of the Son. Similarly the Son is the strength of the
Father, the wisdom of the Father, and the like.

Although according to the aforesaid reasoning this [last conclusion] is true, nevertheless for
the Son to be called the essence of the Father is much more appropriate than for the Father
[to be called] the essence of the Son. For since the Father has His essence from no one
except Himself, He is not very fittingly said to have anyone's essence except His own. But
because the Son has His essence from the Father and because He has the same [essence] as
the Father has, the Son can very fittingly be said to have the Father's essence. Therefore,
since neither [the Father nor the Son] has an essence otherwise than by being an essence:
just as the Son is much more fittingly understood to have the Father's essence than the
Father [to have] the Son's [essence], so the Son can more suitably be said to be the essence
of the Father than the Father [can be said to be the essence] of the Son. For when this one
utterance is made, it indicates sufficiently, by its terseness, that the Son not only has the
same essence as the Father but also that He has this [essence] from the Father. Thus, to say
that the Son is the essence of the Father is to say that the Son is not a different essence from
the essence of the Father—or better, [is not different] from the Father-essence. Similarly,
therefore, the Son is the Father's strength, wisdom, truth, justice, and whatever else besuits
the essence of the Supreme Spirit.

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CHAPTER FORTY-SIX
How various of the [statements] which are expressed in the foregoing way can also be understood in another way.

Nevertheless, various of the [statements] which can be expressed and understood in the foregoing way are seen to admit also of another meaning which is not inconsistent with the present construal. For, clearly, the Son is the true Word—i.e., the perfect Understanding, Cognition, Knowledge, and Wisdom—of the whole paternal substance. That is, the Son understands, cognizes, knows, and comprehends the essence of the Father. Therefore, if the Son is called the Understanding, Wisdom, Knowledge, and Cognition, or Conception, of the Father in the sense that He understands, comprehends, knows, and cognizes the Father, there is no departure at all from the truth. Moreover, the Son can very fittingly be called the truth of the Father—not only in the sense that the truth of the Son is identical with [the truth] of the Father (as we have already seen), but also in the sense that in the Son there is understood to be (not an imperfect image of the paternal substance but) the whole truth of the paternal substance, for the Son is the same as what the Father is [i.e., the same essence].

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN
The Son is Understanding of Understanding, Truth of Truth, etc.
But if the substance of the Father is understanding, knowledge, wisdom, and truth, it follows that as the Son is the Understanding, Knowledge, Wisdom, and Truth of the paternal substance, so He is Understanding of Understanding, Knowledge of Knowledge, Wisdom of Wisdom, Truth of Truth.

CHAPTER FORTY-EIGHT
The Father is referred to as Memory, just as the Son is referred to as Understanding. How the Son is the Understanding (or Wisdom) of Memory, the Memory of the Father, and the Memory of Memory.
But what are we to believe about memory? Ought the Son to be thought to be the Understanding of Memory, or the Memory of the Father, or the Memory of Memory? Indeed, since we cannot deny that Supreme Wisdom remembers itself, nothing is more fitting than that just as the Son is referred to as the Word, so the Father is referred to as Memory—for the word seems to be born from memory, as we observe more clearly in regard to our own minds. For since the human mind does not always think of itself (as it does always remember itself), it is clear that when it thinks of itself the word [or image] of itself is begotten from memory. Apparently, then, if [the mind] were always to think of itself, the word [or image] of itself would always be born from memory. For to think of a thing which we remember is to speak of this thing mentally; but this thought formed from
memory and formed in the thing's likeness is the word [or image] of the thing. Herefrom, then, we can see clearly—regarding the Supreme Wisdom, which always speaks of itself as well as always remembering itself—that the co-eternal Word is begotten from the Eternal Memory. Therefore, as the Word is appropriately understood to be an offspring, so Memory is very fittingly called a parent. Hence, if an offspring begotten completely from the Supreme Spirit alone is an offspring of this Spirit's memory, nothing [follows] more consistently than that the Supreme Spirit is its own memory. Indeed, with respect to [the Supreme Spirit's] remembering itself, the Supreme Spirit is not in its own memory as one thing is in another—as is the case with those [remembrances] which exist in the human mind's memory in such way that they are not our memory itself. Rather, this Spirit remembers itself in such way that it is its memory of itself. Hence, it follows that as the Son is the Understanding and Wisdom of the Father, so He is [the Understanding and Wisdom] of the paternal memory. Now, whatever the Son comprehends or understands, He likewise remembers. Therefore, the Son is the Memory of the Father and the Memory of Memory (i.e., Memory remembering the Father, who is Memory), even as He is the Wisdom of the Father and the Wisdom of Wisdom (i.e., Wisdom comprehending the Father, who is Wisdom). And, indeed, the Son [is] Memory begotten from Memory—just as [He is] Wisdom begotten from Wisdom. But the Father [is] Memory and Wisdom begotten from no [other].

CHAPTER FIFTY-NINE
The Father and the Son and their Spirit exist equally in one another.

It is pleasing to contemplate with regard to the Father, the Son, and their Spirit how they exist in one another with such great equality that no one of them excels the other. For aside from the fact that each of them is so perfectly the Supreme Being that all three together are only one Supreme Being which cannot be separate from itself or beyond itself or greater-or-lesser than itself, this very same [fact] can equally well be proved with respect to each, considered distinctly. For the Father as a whole exists in the Son and in the Spirit common [to Him and the Son]; and the Son as a whole exists in the Father and in this same Spirit; and this same Spirit as a whole exists in the Father and in the Son. For the Supreme Being's Memory as a whole exists in its Understanding and in its Love; and its Understanding [as a whole exists] in its Memory and in its Love; and its Love [as a whole exists] in its Memory and in its Understanding. Indeed, the Supreme Spirit understands and loves the whole of its Memory; and it remembers and loves the whole of its Understanding; and it remembers and understands the whole of its Love. But the Father is referred to as Memory, the Son as Understanding, and their Spirit as Love. Therefore, the Father, the Son, and their Spirit so
equally encompass one another and so equally exist in one another that no one of them can excel the other or exist without Him.

CHAPTER SIXTY
No one of them needs the other for remembering, understanding, or loving—because each, distinctly, is Memory, Understanding, Love, and whatever [else] must be present in the Supreme Being.

But in regard to these [three] I think that what occurs to me as I investigate must be carefully kept in mind. The Father must be understood as Memory, the Son as Understanding, and the Spirit as Love in such way that the Father does not need either the Son or the Spirit common [to them], the Son [does] not [need] the Father or this same Spirit, and this Spirit [does] not [need] the Father or the Son. We must not suppose that (1) the Father can only remember through Himself, while being able to understand only through the Son and to love only through His and the Son's Spirit, or (2) that the Son can only understand through Himself, while remembering through the Father and loving through His own Spirit, or (3) that this same Spirit can only love through Himself, while the Father remembers for Him and the Son understands for Him. For with regard to these three each, distinctly, is the Supreme Being and Supreme Wisdom so perfectly that this Being and Wisdom remembers, understands, and loves through itself. Consequently, none of these three could possibly need one of the others in order to remember or understand or love. For each, distinctly, is essentially memory, understanding, love, and whatever [else] must be present in the Supreme Being.

CHAPTER SIXTY-ONE
Nevertheless, there are not three [fathers or three sons or three spirits] but one father, one son, and one spirit common to them.

I notice that at this point a question arises. For if the Father is understanding and love as well as Memory, and if the Son is memory and love as well as Understanding, and if their Spirit is memory and understanding as well as Love (indeed, such was the manner in which we understood that the Father is Memory, the Son Understanding, and their Spirit Love), then how does the Father avoid being a son and someone's spirit? And why is the Son not a father and someone's spirit? And why is their Spirit not someone's father and someone's son? Now, these questions are not difficult to answer provided we reflect upon the [conclusions] already discovered by reason. Although the Father is understanding and love, He is not a son or anyone's spirit, because He is not understanding as begotten from someone [else] or love as proceeding from someone [else]. Whatever He is He is only as one who begets and as one from whom someone else proceeds. Moreover, although the Son by Himself remembers and loves, He is not a father or anyone's spirit, because He is not
memory which begets or love which proceeds from someone else in the way that His Spirit does. Whatever He is is only begotten and is that from which a spirit proceeds. Moreover, the fact that the Spirit is comprised of memory or understanding does not require that He be also a father or a son, because [the Spirit] is not memory which begets or understanding which is begotten. Rather, whatever He is only proceeds. Therefore, what prevents us from concluding that there is only one Father, one Son, and one Spirit in the Supreme Being—not three fathers or three sons or three spirits?

CHAPTER SIXTY-SEVEN
The mind is the mirror and image of the Supreme Being.
The mind, then, can very fittingly be called its own mirror, as it were, in which it beholds, so to speak, the image of this Being which it cannot see face to face. For if of all created things the mind alone can remember itself, understand, and love, then I do not see why we should deny that there is in it the true image of this Being, which exists as an ineffable trinity of self-remembrance, understanding, and love. Indeed, by the fact that [the mind] can remember, understand, and love the Supreme Being it proves the more truly that it is the image of the Supreme Being. For the greater [the mind] is and the more similar it is to the Supreme Being, the truer image of the Supreme Being it is known to be. Yet, there cannot at all be thought to be naturally bestowed upon the rational creature anything as excellent and as similar to the Supreme Wisdom as is the ability to remember, to understand, and to love that which is the greatest and best of all. Therefore, on no creature is there bestowed anything else which so displays the image of the Creator.

CHAPTER SIXTY-EIGHT
The rational creature was made for loving the Supreme Being.
And so, it seems to follow that the rational creature ought earnestly to desire nothing as much as to express, as a voluntary effect, this image impressed on it as a natural ability. For aside from the rational creature’s owing what he is to his Creator: from the fact that he is known to be able [to do] nothing as excellent as remembering, understanding, and loving the Supreme Good, he is proved without doubt to be under obligation to will nothing as principally [as the Supreme Good]. For who would deny that the better things over which we have power ought more to be willed?

Indeed, for a rational nature to be rational is nothing other than for it to be able to discriminate what is just from what is not just, what is true from what is not true, what is good from what is not good, what is more good from what is less good. But the ability [to make these discriminations] is thoroughly useless and superfluous to rational nature unless
what it distinguishes it [also] loves or disapproves in accordance with the dictates of correct discrimination. Herefrom, then, we see quite clearly that every rational [being] exists for the following purpose: viz., that even as by rational discrimination he judges a thing to be more or less good, or else to be no good at all, so he might love that thing in proportionately greater or lesser degree, or else reject it. Therefore, nothing is clearer than that the rational creature was made for this end: viz., to love above all [other] goods the Supreme Being, inasmuch as it is the Supreme Good. Or better, [he was made] so that he might love nothing except the Supreme Being or on account of the Supreme Being—since the Supreme Being is good through itself and nothing else is good except through it. Yet, [the rational creature] cannot love the Supreme Being without striving to remember it and to understand it. Clearly, then, the rational creature ought to devote his entire ability and his entire will to [the end of] remembering, understanding, and loving the Supreme Good—to which end he knows that he has his existence.

CHAPTER SIXTY-NINE
The soul that always loves the Supreme Being lives at some time in true happiness.

But without doubt the human soul is a rational creature. Hence, it must have been made for the purpose of loving the Supreme Being. Necessarily, then, it was made either so that it might love [this Being] endlessly or else so that it might at some time lose this love either freely or by force. But it is blaspemous to think that Supreme Wisdom created the soul so that the soul might sometime despise such a great good or else might lose it by force, while willing to keep it. Thus, [the alternative] remains that the soul was created for loving the Supreme Being endlessly. However, the soul cannot do this [viz., love endlessly] unless it always lives. So, then, it was created so that it might always live—provided it would always will to do that for which it was made. Moreover, it would be altogether unbesuiting to the omnipotent, supremely good, and supremely wise Creator to cause not to exist, while it was truly loving [Him], a thing which He made to exist for the purpose of loving Him. And [it would be altogether unbesuiting to Him] to remove or to permit to be removed from a being which loved [Him] the gift which He freely gave to this being when it did not love [Him] so that it might always love [Him]—a removal which would necessitate this being's not loving [Him. This possibility seems] all the more [unsuitable] since we ought in no way to doubt that the Creator loves every nature which truly loves Him. Therefore, it is evident that the human soul's life will never be removed from it—provided it always earnestly desire to love the Supreme Life.

What kind of life, then, will the soul have? For of what value is a long life unless it is truly free from distressful intrusions? For whoever during his lifetime is subject to distress either
because of fear or of suffering, or whoever is deceived because of a false security—how does he live except unhappily? By contrast, if someone lives free of these [conditions], he lives happily. But it is thoroughly absurd that a nature would, while always loving Him who is both omnipotent and supremely good, always live unhappily. Clearly, then, the human soul is such that if it keeps that end for which it exists, it will at some time live happily—truly free from death itself and every other form of distress.

CHAPTER SEVENTY-NINE

What three the Supreme Being can in some respect be said to be.

Lo, it is clearly advantageous for every man to believe in an ineffable Oneness which is trine and Trinity which is one. Indeed, [this Being is] one and a oneness by virtue of one essence; but I do not know by virtue of what three it is trine and a trinity. For although I can speak of a trinity because of the Father, the Son, and their Spirit, who are three, nevertheless I cannot in a single word name that by virtue of which they are three (as if I were to say “[a trinity] by virtue of three persons,” as I might say “a oneness by virtue of one substance”). For they must not be thought to be three persons, because in cases where there are more persons than one, they all exist so independently of one another that there must be as many substances as there are persons—something which we recognize in the case of a plurality of men, who are as many individual substances as they are persons. Therefore, just as there are not many substances in the Supreme Being, so there are not many persons.

Thus, if someone wanted to speak to someone [else] about the Trinity, what three would he say that the Father, the Son, and their Spirit are?—unless perhaps, compelled by the lack of a properly suitable word, he were to choose a word from among those which cannot be predicated plurally of the Supreme Being [and were to use this word] for signifying what cannot be said by an appropriate word. For instance, he might say that this wonderful Trinity is one being or nature and three persons or substances. For these last two words are quite fittingly selected for signifying a plurality in the Supreme Being, since “person” is predicated only of an individual rational nature and “substance” is predicated mainly of individual things, which, especially, are a plurality. For individuals, especially, support accidents—i.e., are subject to accidents; and so, individuals are quite properly called substances. (Accordingly, we have already seen that the Supreme Being, which is subject to no accidents, cannot properly be called a substance—except where “substance” is a substitute for “being.”) Therefore, on the basis of this necessity, the Supreme Trinity which is one, or Supreme Oneness which is trine, can irreproachably be called one being and three persons or three substances.
CHAPTER EIGHTY
The Supreme Being exercises dominion over all things and rules all things and is the only God.

Therefore, it seems—or rather, it is unhesitatingly affirmed—that this [Being] which we call God is not nothing and that the name “God” is properly assigned to this Supreme Being alone. Indeed, everyone who affirms that a God exists (whether one God or more than one) understands [thereby] nothing other than a Substance which he believes to be above every nature that is not God—a Substance which] men are to worship because of its excellent worthiness and which they are to entreat against lurking misfortune. What, though, is so to be worshiped because of its worthiness and implored in regard to any matter whatsoever as is the supremely good and supremely powerful Spirit, which exercises dominion over all things and rules all things? For just as it is evident that all things were made through, and are sustained by, this Spirit's supremely good and supremely wise omnipotence, so it would be altogether unsuitable to think that (1) this Spirit does not have dominion over the things made by it or that (2) the things made by it are governed by some other less powerful, less good, or less wise being—or (3) governed by no rational principle at all but only by a random changing, due to chance occurrences. For this Spirit alone is the one through whom anything fares well and without whom not anything fares well—and from whom, through whom, and in whom all things exist. Therefore, since this Spirit alone is not only the good Creator but also both the most powerful Lord and the wisest Ruler of all, it alone (we see most clearly) is the one whom every other nature to its full ability ought to worship lovingly and love worshipfully. [And, most clearly, this Spirit is the one] from whom alone good fortune is to be hoped for, to whom alone flight from adversity is to be taken, and of whom alone supplication is to be made for anything whatsoever. Truly, then, this Spirit not only is God but is the only God—ineffably three and one.