

**NICHOLAS OF CUSA'S DIDACTIC SERMONS:
A Case Study of Sermon CCIV**

Translated and Interpreted

by

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Nicholas of Cusa's Didactic Sermons:
A Case Study

Many, perhaps most, of Nicholas of Cusa's sermons are meant to *instruct* theologically rather than to *inspire* spiritually.¹ In this regard they often reflect themes that he had developed, or would go on to develop, more fully in his treatises and dialogues. However, on occasion, the sermons bring a theme into focus more sharply than it is presented in the treatises and dialogues. Precisely in such instances the sermons are seen to be theologically didactic or didactically theological. No better instance of Nicholas's sermonizing instructively (and doing so in a way that focuses his theme more acutely than ever occurs in his works other than the sermons) is found in his treatment of the glory of God—a topic presented centrally in Sermon CCIV.² Indeed, this Sermon from 1455 constitutes a brief tractate, much of which repeats points made in 1440 in *De Docta Ignorantia*.

We do not know whether Nicholas's Sermon CCIV *as preached* contained all the points that the Sermon *as written* contains. The difference between the oral form and the written form would result not just from the fact that the Sermon was written in Latin but, no doubt, was preached in the language of the people, namely, German. For also relevant is the consideration that Nicholas's written sermons served as notes and sketches from which he adaptively extemporized in preaching. He collected these sketches and had them copied for his own library and for monastic libraries. The monastic libraries made their materials available not only to their own monks but also to visiting pastors and scholars who might have an interest in reading them. Were the sermons as preached to have remained unadapted to the congregation, some of their declarations would have been too unengaging, too inaccessible, to the common parishioners. Let us look at a few of the philosophical and theological themes that coalesce in Sermon CCIV.

Nicholas begins by pointing out, in Anselmian fashion, that God cannot be conceived not to exist—except in the sense that He can be conceived *not to exist* in the way that finite things exist. And so, He is conceived, negatively, as 'inconceivable by human minds,' since human minds can conceive positively only of finite things. As Nicholas states in the Sermon, again borrowing from Anselm: "God is better than can be conceived" (n. 4).³ And here he repeats an idea from *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 4 (11) and I, 16 (43). In short, Nicholas's point

is that we can and must conceive of God as existing; but we cannot conceive positively of the manner in which He exists. God is Being itself (not *a* being), says Nicholas in the Sermon. This statement corresponds to *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 2 (6), where God is called Absolute Being. And just as God is Absolute Being, so too he is Necessary Being and Truth itself. These points from *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 6 and I, 4 (11) are repeated in the Sermon (n. 3).

Nicholas proceeds in the Sermon to introduce the idea that a given creature *cannot* will to be another creature. This statement is stronger than the claim made in *De Docta Ignorantia* II, 2 (104) and II, 12 (169), where we are told that one creature *does not desire* to be some other created being [of a different species] and are told, in particular, that “man does not desire a different nature but [desires] only to be perfected in his own nature.” In the Sermon Nicholas gives an *argument* that he regards as supporting the use of the modal operator “cannot”. For he asserts that no creature—in particular, no human being—can desire its own non-existence. Therefore, no man can desire to be any other creature (of another species). For in willing to be that other, he would (knowingly) be willing his own non-existence, since (as he knows) he would have to *cease to be* in order for that other to come to be. Nicholas simply takes it as self-evident that no creature can desire, or aim at, its own non-existence. Similarly, each creature, he believes, desires to (or aims to) exist in the best way in which it can exist (*De Docta Ignorantia* I, 1 (2)). Here again, this claim is taken as axiomatic.

Nicholas continues with his philosophical and theological themes by indicating that God is the Highest Good, or in other words is the Best. Following Augustine this time, he notes that all human beings desire only the good—or, as he puts it, “Only the good is choosable.” That is, no one chooses deliberately to harm himself. So whatever he chooses, he chooses *as a good*—whether or not, all things considered, it is a good, i.e., is a good for him. Augustine reasons that in desiring the good, each man’s desire is directed—whether wittingly or unwittingly—toward God, who is the Good, of which all goods partake.⁴ Similarly, Nicholas in *De Visione Dei* 16 (72-73) speaks of God as the End, or Goal, of every act of desiring, so that in every desiring God is desired. And in *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 25 (89) Nicholas speaks of God as *being of infinite goodness*. God’s goodness shines forth in His creation, so that the wondrous universe reflects God’s glory.

Indeed, the goal of God's creating is the manifesting of His glory. In particular, says Nicholas in the Sermon, the goal of God's having created man is that man should behold God's glory and beauty. In this present world this glorious beauty is beheld in a mirror and in a symbolism by means of visible objects (n. 6), whereas in the forthcoming Kingdom of God it will be beheld Face-to-face by believers (cf. *De Docta Ignorantia* III, 10 (241)). In the Sermon God is named the King of Glory (n. 9) and is referred to as Infinite Glory itself (n. 10). And we are reminded that the Apostle Paul exhorted believers to do all things unto the glory of God (I Corinthians 10:31). Likewise, John the Apostle instructs us that Jesus did not seek His own glory but sought the glory of the Father (n. 7). Moreover, Nicholas in his Sermon likens the Heavenly glory of God to the earthly glory of a great king (n. 5) who gathers together certain of his subjects for a great feast (n. 9). Similarly, in *De Docta Ignorantia* III, 12 (259) Nicholas uses the example of a great king who stills the hunger of his guests with a plentiful meal.

In *De Docta Ignorantia* Nicholas often alludes to God's glory. Yet, he never develops the theme in the systematic way that he does in Sermon CCIV. For example, in *De Docta Ignorantia* III, 5 (211) he alludes to the richness of God's glory; and in III, 6 (217) he mentions the possibility of the intellect's being drawn unto glory by God the Father. Likewise, in III, 6 (219) he notes that in Christ believers are united to God and are glorified. He acknowledges that the heavens declare God's glory (III, 8 (232)) and that believers will be filled with God when Christ's future glory shall appear (III, 12 (258)). But these disparate passages are not brought together under the rubric of *gloria Dei* as they are in Sermon CCIV, where Nicholas, we have seen, calls God Infinite Glory itself (n. 10), even as Scripture calls Him the King of Glory,⁵ a verse expressly alluded to by Nicholas (n. 9).

So the sermons—not only Sermon CCIV but also, for example, Sermon CCVI (where seeing God's glory is equated with securing happiness) and the early Sermon XVI (which deals with “the threefold birth of Christ”)—pick up themes not only from the Scriptures but also from Nicholas's treatises and dialogues. And they refocus these themes by embellishing their contexts and by extracting from them imperatives that govern daily human actions. One of the first scholars to emphasize the importance of Nicholas's Sermon CCIV is Klaus Reinhardt, who together with Walter Euler edited the critical edition of

the Latin text of the Sermon.⁶ Reinhardt went on to interpret the sermon in his insightful article “Herrlichkeit als Grundwort cusanischer Theologie. Eine Analyse des Sermo CCIV.”⁷ Others, too, such as William Hoye, have signaled the importance of Sermon CCIV. Hoye does so by calling attention to the fact that Kurt Flasch, in his endeavor to view Cusanus more as a philosopher than as a theologian, neglects his eschatology and likewise neglects any mention of the emphasis that Nicholas places on the theological theme of God’s glory.⁸ And, to be sure, the topic of *gloria Dei*, as addressed by Nicholas, has been under-emphasized by a wide audience of scholars. As a corrective to this situation, a translation of this noteworthy didactic Latin text is hereto appended.

NOTES

1. See my *Nicholas of Cusa’s Early Sermons: 1430-1441* and my *Nicholas of Cusa’s Didactic Sermons: A Selection* and my *Nicholas of Cusa’s Last Sermons: 1457-1463*.

2. *Nicolai de Cusa Opera Omnia*, Vol. XIX: *Sermones IV (1455-1463)*. Fascicle 1: *Sermones CCIV-CCXVI*. Hamburg: Meiner Verlag, 1996. Edited by Klaus Reinhardt and Walter Euler.

3. The numerals in parentheses indicate the margin number in the printed Latin text, a number supplied by the editors of the Latin text. In the present article the expression “the Sermon” always indicates Sermon CCIV.

4. Augustine, *De Trinitate* VIII, 3, 4-5 (*Patrologia Latina* 42:949-950).

5. Psalms 23:10 (24:10). References to the Psalms are given in terms of the Douay version and, in parentheses, in terms of the King James Version.

6. See n. 2 above.

7. *Trierer Theologische Zeitschrift*, 110 (2001), 308-318.

8. See William J. Hoye’s comprehensive review of Flasch’s *Nikolaus von Kues. Geschichte einer Entwicklung* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1998). The review is found in *Theologische Revue*, 98 (2002), columns 149-154. The specific judgment about Flasch is found in column 151.

Cum Omni Militia Caelestis Exercitus*
 (“With the Entire Host of the Heavenly Army”)
 [September 29, 1455; preached in Brixen]¹

[1] “With the entire host of the heavenly army we sing a hymn to Your glory, saying without end: ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. The heavens and the earth are full of Your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.’”²

Let this sermon of ours serve as a fundamental and first sermon of all—[one] from which many [others] can be formed.³ For with much meditation [and] with God thus inspiring, I have come to the point of grasping, by means of a ready condensing-down, an understanding of all [these] things. And it is not permitted that I hide this light under a bushel;⁴ rather, [I must place] it on a candle-holder in order that it may shine on those who are entering the house [of the Lord]—i.e., the Church—which is a pillar, or foundation, of truth. And I am especially obligated to divulge to you this treasure; for you are my children, whom I as father am bound to nourish with the word of life.

Now, it is my intent to expound a bit on the glory of God—which glory is alluded to in the words of our theme-text.

[2] Accordingly, I say first of all that among all nations it is most certain that God exists and that He is Eternal Truth. And it cannot be conceived that He does not exist, unless this statement is made with respect to His excellence. For if He is said not to exist, it is true that He does not exist in the way in which we conceive other things to exist. For He is beyond all that existence which is captured by our concepts.⁵ By way of illustration, what is eternal is not measurable; and for this reason it is not called duration in the sense in which we conceive of all duration in no other way than as measurable. And so, we say of eternity that it is not duration but is beyond all duration.

[3] Now, each person sees that God is Necessity itself, which cannot not-exist. For if it is true that He exists, I know that there is truth. But if it is true that He does not exist, I once again know that there is truth. Thus, if you say it to be true that there is truth, and, likewise, if you say it to be true that there is no truth, then always—however contradictorily you speak—you affirm that there is truth. Hence, the truth is that there is Absolute Necessity-of-being, which is

Truth itself, through which exists all that which is.⁶

Existence [itself] is much more real than that which exists, even as is whiteness, through which everything white is white, and as is the one humanity of all human beings. I say *more real* because Absolute Necessity, since it cannot be dependent on anything else, subsists in and of itself and is not at all restricted-being—[restricted] by any other thing or things. Such is not the case with the abstract being of humanity. For [humanity] would not exist in the absence of human beings; and it is restricted being—[restricted] within its own limits. For it does not encompass the entire being of animality—not to mention the fact that it does not encompass all contingent being. However, suppose that there were in the universe only human beings. Inasmuch as they would exist from *one* intellective beginning (since human beings are of an intellectual nature), such an intellectual beginning could be said to be humanity not as depending on human beings by way of abstraction but because from that beginning the human beings would have their being human. In a similar way we ascribe to God the name *Being*. For He is the Beginning from which all things have their existing—not in the manner in which *being* is abstracted by the intellect from these things that exist but in the manner in which the Divine Being so exists in and of itself that it coincides with being and is such a Beginning of the being of things that it enfolds in its power, actually, everything that can be.⁷

[4] No creature can think otherwise than that his own Creator is better than can be conceived.⁸ For how could a creature say anything else about the Creator who gave to it *being*, which no creature doubts to be a good in so excellent a way that no better good can be conceived. Hence, there can be no conception of not-being. And because only the good is choosable:⁹ being is a good, and not-being is an evil. Therefore, not-being cannot be desired. Now, one creature cannot will to become another creature without [willing that] it itself first cease to be. Therefore, since not-being cannot be conceived, no creature can consent to being another creature.¹⁰ Therefore, every creature is content with its own being as such, without which it would not exist; and it does not desire to be anything else. However, within the species wherein its own being is present, it might will to exist in the best manner in which this would be possible within the ambit of the species.¹¹ Plato wills to be Plato, although he might will to be more knowledgeable or more healthy. And so on.

[5] Therefore, since it is true that God, who created all things

unto the best end, is Best, then He made [all things] for Himself, as Solomon says.¹² But as David says with respect to God: “You have no need of my goods.”¹³ Therefore, the Creator, the Best, has no needs. Therefore, He created all things for Himself only in order to make, unto His glory, participant[s] in His abundance. For we see that all those who use reason are wonderfully disposed toward honor and that they undertake [even] all the most dreadful things for an increase in honor and that for a defense of honor they expose to risk their sensory life. And the more noble someone considers himself to be, the greater concern he has to keep his honor unblemished. Hence, it is of very great concern to earthly kings to be glorious and to be honored. For what is a king without glory? An unknown king who spends his life privately is no more a king than not a king.

Now, the fact that God is the King over all things is even¹⁴ acknowledged by all people—not only by Christians, Jews, and Muslims (who worship one and the same God as being King of kings and Lord of lords) but also by the pagans. For example, Plato calls God a King;¹⁵ Aristotle calls Him a Ruler.¹⁶ And Malachias the Prophet indicated that God said: “I am a Great King.”¹⁷ And on this point all agree. About the Kingdom of this King, Christ the King preached. And He calls it the Kingdom of Heaven, because He says that Heaven is the Throne of the King of the universe.¹⁸ Hence, since all the kings of this world aim, with supreme attentiveness, at manifesting their own glory through their magnificent works: the King of kings, from whom they have this [characteristic], made all things especially to the end that He would make known His glory. Thus speaks the Prophet in Isaias 43, [speaking] in God’s name: “Everyone who calls upon my name: him I have created for my glory; I have formed him and made him.”¹⁹ And farther down [he adds]: “I am the Lord, your Holy One, your King.”²⁰ And farther: “I have formed this people for myself. They shall show forth my praise.”²¹ And the same Prophet [says] elsewhere, [in Isaias] 48: “I have called unto you from the womb for my name’s sake.”²² And later: “I will not give my glory to another.”²³ For God is zealously concerned about His glory. Hence, if the Scriptures are carefully examined, nothing else is found except that God will build up Sion, where He will be seen in His glory.²⁴

[6] Hence, given that God can manifest His glory only to creatures which have a spirit of discernment [and] which can discern His riches, excellence, wisdom, and power (as David the Prophet says²⁵

that for His name's sake He saved the Jews in the Red Sea in order to make known His power): all things were created because of rational spirits; and these spirits [were created] in order to behold God's glory.²⁶ This, then, is the goal of creation: namely, the manifestation of the Creator's glory. Therefore, to come to a vision of God's glory is to attain unto the goal [of our creation]; and this [vision] is the reward of the righteous—as described by Isaias, who in Chapter 33 speaks as follows about a righteous man: “His eyes shall behold the King in His beauty.”²⁷ And in Chapter 35 he states: “They shall see the glory of the Lord and the beauty of our God.”²⁸ And elsewhere, in Chapter 66, [he writes]: “You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice.”²⁹ And in [that] last chapter he notes: “And you are filled with riches from His glory.”³⁰ And David says of himself: “I believe [that I shall] see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.”³¹ And elsewhere he states: “The upright shall see and shall rejoice.”³² And in Matthew 13 Christ says: “Then will the righteous shine as the sun in the Kingdom of the Father.”³³ God created heaven and earth and all the things that are within them for a manifestation of His glory. Thus it is said in [Chapter] 43 of Ecclesiasticus: “Full of the glory of the Lord is the Lord's work.”³⁴ And the same [book] enumerates—in the same chapter and in the preceding chapter—many wondrous works of God. Likewise, it is said in our theme-text: “The heavens and the earth are full of Your glory.” Hence, as the Apostle says: in the kingdom of this world we behold by means of these visible objects the glory of God in a mirror and in a symbolism; but in the Kingdom of Heaven [we shall behold], as is said in Isaias 52, face to face and eye to eye.³⁵ And although no one can be filled by seeing the glory of the Creator in creatures (as is said in Ecclesiasticus 42, at the end),³⁶ nevertheless (as the Psalmist says),³⁷ everyone who shall appear before His sight in justice will be satisfied when His glory will appear.

[7] Therefore, God works all things for the manifesting of His great glory. And so, the reason why all things are such as they are is this: in order that the glory of God be manifested. And to this end we ought also to do all things. As the Apostle said to the Corinthians: “Do all things unto the glory of God.”³⁸ So too Christ teaches us, by His example, to seek not our own glory but the glory of God. Christ came only to glorify the name of God the Father and to manifest Him to the world, so that He might be glorified. Christ did not at all seek His own glory.³⁹ But He showed that the following is the most excellent glori[fy]ing of God: to obey God even unto death. One who knows that

God alone is to be obeyed and to be served with fear and trembling⁴⁰ gives great glory to God. He does the foregoing who believes that [God] has the power not only of slaying but also of plunging the soul into Hell (as is said in Wisdom 16: “You are the one, O Lord who has the power of life and death”⁴¹). And taking account of this fact, he says (as is contained in Job 25): “Power and terror are with Him.”⁴² And Daniel the Prophet said: “His power is an everlasting power.”⁴³

[8] Therefore, our most noble King wills to have in His court those who are noble and willing—and [to have] many [of them]. For in the multitude of the people is the dignity of the king, as Solomon says⁴⁴ in Proverbs 14. To this end, therefore, [God] has countless angels in His ministry and service. And He has sent His Son, Heir of His Kingdom, into this world, which is under the power of the King, who is King over all the children of pride (as says Job)⁴⁵ [and over all] who are subject to vanity.⁴⁶ [God sent His Son] in order that [God] might obtain for Himself many whom He would choose from the world and would rescue from the power of the Prince of darkness and would send, as freed and as adapted, to the Kingdom of Light, in order that⁴⁷ they would enter into the joy of the Lord while beholding His glory. This beholding is, for those who behold, life and everlasting gladness. Hence, in our theme-text about the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, there is added: “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.” For He it is whom the Father sent for the Father’s own glory, just as the Apostle says to the Philippians: “... filled with the fruit of righteousness through Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God.”⁴⁸ And in Ephesians 3 the Apostle touches more deeply upon this same point.⁴⁹

[9] Hence, having considered all things most attentively, [we see that] all things were done, or were permitted, by God in order that He might manifest His glory in the best way in which [the manifestation] could be done. And nothing happened by chance—[nothing] of all the things that happened in whatsoever way. Rather, there is one reason [for what occurred]: that the glory of God would be manifested. For example, if someone were to think that the story of King Assuerus and [Queen] Esther—which we are reading about right now in church—was received by chance among the sacred books of the Bible, he would certainly be mistaken. For we are taught that this [narrating] was done for our learning,⁵⁰ so that we might be instructed that Assuerus, who was a type of the King of kings, was concerned to manifest the

grandeur of his glory. And he placed his glory herein: [namely,] that he would make to be partakers of his delight many whom he summoned to his most solemn banquet and whom he refected from his wealth.⁵¹ In this way, indeed, Christ taught us that His Father, for the sake of manifesting His glory, had called many to [His] feast.

Did not Solomon make for himself a very ornate palace, a very costly throne, a very decorative and well-ordered household, a very powerful army—in order to be seen by the daughters of Zion in his glory and so that his glory would be spread abroad unto the ends of the earth? The Queen of Sheba came [in order to witness] his glory. And she found [that it was] greater than she had heard of.⁵² What else is this than that we are taught that God our King (1) showed forth His glory in and through Solomon and (2) has taught us, so that in a symbolism and a mirror we are elevated by means of these [events] unto a marveling at the glory of God, who is the King of glory and the Creator of Solomon and of all the things by means of which Solomon showed himself to be glorious. But what the comparison is of the glory of God to the glory of Solomon, Christ showed, who said: “Consider the lilies of the field; for Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as one of these.”⁵³ Therefore, if from the beauty of clothes and the loveliness of a house and its furnishings a king has glory, what kind [of glory] will the Creator have, who in and through the hay that tomorrow is placed into the oven exceeds all the glory of all powers? If Solomon, the wisest of all kings who were before him and who were going to come after him, directed all his power unto a manifestation of his glory, then we infer that the omnipotence of our King is directed unto His glory.

[10] Hence, our King, whose might and power is not greater than His glory, is the King of powers and the King of glory. Our King does not *have* glory; rather, He *is* Infinite Glory itself. Therefore, to see Him is to see His glory. And He is seen Face-to-face only on His Throne of glory (namely, in the Heaven of immutability) by those who are worthy [of this vision]. But the Judge who has [the prerogative of] judging [those] who are worthy is Jesus. He is the Son of the King of kings and is the Teacher who is set in authority over all. He has personally made known the laws which He has observed and by means of whose observance He entered into the Kingdom of the Father and in accordance with which laws He will judge all [persons], admitting worthy ones [and] excluding unworthy ones. And He is the one into whose Hand the Father has placed all things⁵⁴ [and] who opens and closes.⁵⁵

Therefore, it is He who rules over the court; through Him all those who approach the Father are moved forward, for He is the Mediator of them all.⁵⁶ And unless He reveals⁵⁷ the Father, [the Father] cannot be seen.⁵⁸ And each [person] can give glory and honor to the Father only through Him. Indeed, thus we sing in the Preface [of the mass]: “It is truly fitting and just, right and beneficial, that to You—O Holy Lord, Father Omnipotent, eternally God—we always and everywhere give thanks through Christ our Lord, through whom angels praise—[and] dominions adore—Your majesty.” Etc.

[11] And because the goal of creation is the vision of God’s glory, unto His glory: every spirit is obligated to love the glory of God even to the point of contempt for itself. But the spirit that loves its own glory even to the point of contempt for God is opposed to God. For [that spirit] endeavors to diminish the glory of God and to ascribe to itself that which is God’s. And this [ascription] is contrary to God’s glory. For the glory of a king is increased—[a king] who has power over an adversary whom he fights against and conquers. Our King, the Triumphant Victor over the king of pride⁵⁹—who endeavors to usurp for himself God’s honor—has a very well-ordered and very powerful army of heavenly hosts, about which is said in our theme-text: “with the entire host of the heavenly army....” In this army Michael is a Prince, whose feast is celebrated today by name. He rightly is written to have conquered the Dragon, Lucifer, and to have cast out [this] king of pride from Heaven.⁶⁰ For [the name] “Michael” means “who is like unto God.” Lucifer willed to be like the Most High; and he usurped unto himself the glory of God by setting the throne of his own glory in the North against the Throne of God. The Archangel [Michael] attacked him and asked “Who is like unto God?”—as if to answer: “No one.” And so, this [Dragon], being presumptuous, will fall unto his ruin.

Let these points now have been stated in the foregoing way.

NOTES TO *Cum Omni Militia Caelestis Exercitus*

* Sermon CCIV. The following six minor modifications should be made to the printed Latin text that is cited in note 2 (on p. 4) of the present Case Study:

- a. note to 1:8: *acque = atque habet D.*
- b. 5:21: *fatentur*: change to read: *fatentur etiam [habent V₂, D, p].*
- c. note to 5:29: *rex: om. D.*
- d. note to 8:13: *ut: et V₂ ut D.*
- e. note to 9:15: *claudit: cludit D.*
- f. 10:20-21: *ostendat*: correct to read: *ostendit [habent V₂ D].*

1. This was the feast-day of St. Michael.
2. Nicholas takes this passage from the Preface of the Mass. Cf. p. xi of *Epitome Kyrialis Romani*, found at the end of the *Roman Missal and Breviary* (1962). London: Baronius Press, 2004.

3. Nicholas does not mean that this sermon is the most fundamental (*fundamentalissimus*) of all his sermons and that all the others are in some sense derivative from it. Rather, he means that this sermon is fundamental (*fundamentalis*) with respect to treatment of the theme *gloria Dei* and that other treatments of this topic (such as in Sermons CCI (4), CCII (5), CCIII (3), CCVI (1), and XVI (1-2)) are ancillary to this more emphatic and sustained treatment in Sermon CCIV.

4. Matthew 5:15.

5. Cf. *De Docta Ignorantia* I, 6 (17).

6. Cf., *ibid.*, I, 6 (16). Note also Anselm's *Monologion* 18.

7. The theme of God as the Actuality of all that *can be* (and of all the He can be) is developed in Nicholas's dialogue *De Possess.*

8. Here Nicholas has in mind Anselm's formula that God is Something than which nothing greater—i.e., better, more perfect—can be thought of.

9. Here Nicholas has in mind Plato's discussion in his dialogue the *Protagoras*, where the question arises as to whether a man ever knowingly desires and chooses that which is an evil, that which is harmful to himself.

10. No creature can desire its own not-being and cannot even conceive of its own not-being, reasons Nicholas.

11. Cf. *De Docta Ignorantia* II, 2 (104).

12. Proverbs 16:4.

13. Psalms 15:2 (16:2).

14. Here at 5:21 I follow mss. *V₂* and *D* and also the Paris edition, all of which have "etiam" (after "fatentur").

15. Cf. Plato, *Epistle* 2 (312e1-3).

16. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* XII, 10 (1076^a3-4). Aristotle uses the word *κόινά- vos*.

17. Malachias (Malachi) 1:14.

18. E.g., Matthew 5:34. Cf. Isaias (Isaiah) 66:1.

19. Isaias (Isaiah) 43:7.

20. Isaias (Isaiah) 43:15.

21. Isaias (Isaiah) 43:21. Note also Proverbs 16:4: "The Lord hath made all

things for himself”

22. Cf. Isaias (Isaiah) 48:8-9.
23. Isaias (Isaiah) 48:11.
24. Cf. Psalms 101:17 (102:16).
25. Psalms 105:7-8 (106:7-8).
26. Note *De Beryllo* 4.
27. Isaias (Isaiah) 33:17.
28. Isaias (Isaiah) 35:2.
29. Isaias (Isaiah) 66:14.
30. No verse in Isaias 66 corresponds closely with this quotation. But cf. 66:11.
31. Psalms 26:13 (27:13).
32. Psalms 106:42 (107:42).
33. Matthew 13:43.
34. Ecclesiasticus 42:16 (not Ecclesiasticus 43, as both mss. say).
35. Isaias (Isaiah) 52:8.
36. Ecclesiasticus 42:26.
37. Psalms 16:15 (17:15).
38. I Corinthians 10:31.
39. John 8:50.
40. Cf. Psalms 2:11.
41. Wisdom 16:13.
42. Job 25:2.
43. Daniel 4:31.
44. Proverbs 14:28.
45. Job 41:25.
46. Romans 8:20.
47. Here at 8:13 I am following ms. *D*, which has “ut”, whereas *V*₂ has “et”.
48. Philippians 1:11.
49. Cf. Ephesians 3:9 ff.
50. Cf. Romans 15:4.
51. Esther 1:1-8.
52. III Kings 10:6-7 (I Kings 10:6-7).
53. Matthew 6:28-29.
54. Cf. John 3:35.
55. Cf. Apocalypse (Revelation) 3:7.
56. I Timothy 2:5.
57. Here at 10:20-21, I am reading “ostendit” with both *V*₂ and *D*.
58. John 1:18 & 14:6-9.
59. Satan is the king of pride.
60. Apocalypse (Revelation) 12:7-9.