

**COMPLETE PHILOSOPHICAL AND  
THEOLOGICAL TREATISES  
of  
ANSELM of CANTERBURY**

Translated  
by  
**JASPER HOPKINS**  
and  
**HERBERT RICHARDSON**

**The Arthur J. Banning Press  
Minneapolis**

In the notes to the translations the numbering of the Psalms accords with the Douay version and, in parentheses, with the King James (Authorized) version. A reference such as "S II, 264:18" indicates "F. S. Schmitt's edition of the Latin texts, Vol. II, p. 264, line 18."

Library of Congress Control Number: 00-133229

ISBN 0-938060-37-6

Printed in the United States of America

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## Preface [to the Three Dialogues on Truth, Freedom, and Evil]

At different times in the past I wrote three treatises pertaining to the study of Sacred Scripture. They are similar in having been written in dialogue form; the person inquiring is designated “the Student,” and the person answering, “the Teacher.” Because a fourth [treatise]—which begins with the words “*De Grammatico*,” and which I also published in dialogue form and regard as not without use to those who need to be introduced to dialectic—pertains to a different study from these three, I do not wish to number it with them.

One of the three is *On Truth*: [it asks] what truth is, in what things truth is usually said to be, and what justice is. A second treatise is on *Freedom of Choice*: [it asks] what freedom of choice is, whether a man always has it, and how many distinctions of freedom there are with respect to having or not having uprightness-of-will. (Freedom of choice was given to rational creatures in order that they might keep uprightness-of-will.) In this treatise I show only the natural strength of the will for keeping the uprightness which it has received; I do not show how in order to keep uprightness the will needs the accompaniment of grace. But the third treatise deals with the question of how, since God did not give the Devil the perseverance which he was not able to have without God's giving, it could have been sin for the Devil not to stand steadfast in the truth. For if God had given him perseverance, he would have had it—just as the good angels had it because God gave it to them. And although in this work I spoke about the confirmation of the good angels, I entitled the treatise *The Fall of the Devil*; for what I said about the good angels was incidental, but what I wrote about the evil angels was essential to the theme.

Although these three treatises are not connected through any continuation of text, their subject-matter and similarity of discussion require that they be placed together in the order in which I have mentioned them. Thus, although certain rash individuals have transcribed them in another order before they were completed, I want them ordered as I have listed them here.

[Anselm]

CHAPTER-TITLES  
for  
*DE VERITATE*

1. Truth has no beginning or end.
2. The truth of signification and the two truths of a statement.
3. The truth of thought.
4. The truth of the will.
5. The truth of natural action and non-natural action.
6. The truth of the senses.
7. The truth in the being of things.
8. The various meanings of “ought” and “ought not,” “to be able” and “not to be able.”
9. Every action signifies either what is true or what is false.
10. The Supreme Truth.
11. The definition of “truth.”
12. The definition of “justice.”
13. Truth is one in all true things.

**ON TRUTH<sup>1</sup>**  
*(De Veritate)*

CHAPTER ONE

Truth has no beginning or end.

*Student.* Since we believe that God is truth,<sup>2</sup> and since we say that truth is in many other things, I would like to know whether in whatever things it is said to be we ought to affirm that truth is God. For in your *Monologion*, by appealing to the truth of a statement, you too demonstrate that the Supreme Truth has no beginning and no end:

Let anyone who can, try to conceive of when it began to be true, or was ever not true, that something was going to exist. Or [let him try to conceive of] when it will cease being true and will not be true that something has existed in the past. Now, if neither of these things can be conceived, and if both statements can be true only if there is truth, then it is impossible even to think that truth has a beginning or an end. Indeed, suppose that truth had had a beginning, or sup-

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<sup>1</sup>Composed at Bec, probably between 1080-1085.   <sup>2</sup>See John 14:6.

pose that it would at some time come to an end: then even before truth had begun to be, it would have been true that there was no truth; and even after truth had come to an end, it would still be true that there would be no truth. But it could not be true without truth. Hence, there would have been truth before truth came to be, and there would still be truth after truth had ceased to be. But these conclusions are self-contradictory. Therefore, whether truth is said to have a beginning or an end, or whether it is understood not to have a beginning or an end, truth cannot be confined by any beginning or end.

You make this argument in your *Monologion*. Therefore, I hope to learn from you the definition of “truth.”

*Teacher.* I do not recall having arrived at a definition of “truth”; but if you wish, let us inquire as to what truth is by [examining] the various things in which we say there is truth.

S. If I cannot do anything else, I will at least help by being a good listener.

## CHAPTER TWO

The truth of signification and the two truths of a statement.

T. Then, let us first ask what truth in a statement is since quite frequently we call a statement true or false.

S. You conduct the investigation, and I will heed whatever you find out.

T. When is a statement true?

S. When what it states, whether affirmatively or negatively, is the case. I mean what it states even when it denies that what-is-not is; for even then it expresses what is the case (*quemadmodum res est*).

T. Then, does it seem to you that the thing stated is the truth of the statement?

S. No.

T. Why not?

S. Because nothing is true except by participating in truth; and so, the truth of something true is in that true thing. But the thing stated is not in the true statement, and thus must not be called its truth; rather, it must be called the cause of the statement's truth. Therefore, it seems to me that the truth of the statement must be sought only in the statement itself.

T. Consider, then, whether the truth you are looking for is either the statement itself or its signification or something in its def-

inition.

S. I do not think it is.

T. What is your reason?

S. Because if the truth of the statement were any of these, then the statement would always be true. For the statement's definition remains the same irrespective of whether what it states is or is not the case. In fact, the statement, its signification, and the other things remain the same.

T. Then, as you see it, what is truth in the statement?

S. All I know is that when the statement signifies that what-is is, then it is true and truth is in it.

T. What is an affirmation designed to do?

S. To signify that what-is is.

T. Then, this is what an affirmation ought to do?

S. Certainly.

T. So when an affirmative statement signifies that what-is is, it signifies what it ought to.

S. Obviously.

T. But when it signifies what it ought to, it signifies rightly, or correctly.

S. That's right.

T. And when it signifies correctly, its signification is correct.

S. No doubt about it.

T. Therefore, when it signifies that what-is is, its signification is correct.

S. This follows.

T. Moreover, when it signifies that what-is is, its signification is true.

S. Yes, its signification is both correct and true when it signifies that what-is is.

T. So for an affirmation to be correct is the same as for it to be true, namely, for it to signify that what-is is.

S. Yes, these are the same.

T. Therefore, the affirmation's truth is simply its rightness, or correctness (*rectitudo*).

S. I now see clearly that truth is this rightness.

T. This conclusion also applies when the statement signifies that what-is-not is not.

S. I understand what you mean. But teach me how to reply, if

someone should maintain that even when a statement signifies that what-is-not is, it signifies what it ought to. For the statement has received the capability of signifying both that what-is is and that what-is-not is. For if it had not received the capability of signifying that what-is-not is, then it would not signify this. Hence, even when it signifies that what-is-not is, it signifies what it ought to. But if by signifying what it ought to the statement is correct and true, as you have argued, then it is true even when it states that what-is-not is.

*T.* Admittedly, we are not accustomed to call the statement true when it signifies that what-is-not is; nevertheless it has a truth and a correctness because it does what it ought. But when it signifies that what-is is, it does what it ought in two respects: for it signifies (1) what it has received the capability of signifying and (2) what it is designed to signify. Now, a statement is usually said to be correct and true in accordance with the latter correctness and truth, by which it signifies that what-is is; [and we do] not [ordinarily call a statement correct and true] in accordance with the former correctness and truth, by which it signifies that even what-is-not is. For the statement [does what it] ought more with respect to what it is designed to signify than with respect to what it is not designed to signify. Indeed, it has received the capability of signifying that a thing is, when it is not, or is not, when it is, only because it was not able to be restricted to signifying that this thing is, when it is, or that it is not, when it is not.

Therefore, a statement has one correctness and truth because it signifies what it is designed to signify; and it has another correctness and truth because it signifies what it has received the capability of signifying. The first of these correctnesses, or truths, belongs variably to the statement; but the second belongs to it invariably. The statement does not always have the first kind of truth; but it always possesses the second. The first kind of truth belongs to the statement accidentally and depends upon its usage, whereas the second kind of truth belongs to it naturally. For example, when I say "It is day" in order to signify that what-is is, I use the signification of this statement correctly because the statement is designed for this [viz., for signifying that what-is is]; and so it is said to signify correctly on this occasion. But when by means of the same statement I signify that what-is-not is, I do not

use the signification of the statement correctly, because the statement is not designed for signifying this; and so, its signification is said not to be correct on this occasion.

Now, in some statements these two truths, or correctnesses, are inseparable, as when we say “A man is an animal” or “A man is not a stone.” For the affirmative statement always signifies that what-is is, and the negative statement always signifies that what-is-not is not. Moreover, we cannot use the affirmation to signify that what-is-not is (for a man is always an animal); nor can we use the negation to signify that what-is is not (because a man is never a stone).

We began by inquiring about that truth which a statement has in accordance with someone’s using the statement correctly, for in accordance with that [truth] our common way of speaking judges the statement to be true. Later we shall speak about that truth which a statement cannot fail to have.

S. Return, then, to the issue with which you began. For you have distinguished to my satisfaction the two truths of a statement—provided you will show that a statement has a kind of truth when it lies, as you maintain.

T. For the time being let these things suffice regarding the truth of signification, with which we have begun. For the same notion of truth which we have examined in spoken statements must be examined in all the signs which are formed in order to signify that something is or is not—for example, in written characters or in sign-language with the fingers.

S. Proceed, then, to these other topics.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### The truth of thought.

T. We call a thought true when there is what we—either on the basis of reason or on some other basis—suppose there to be. And [we call a thought] false when there is not [what we suppose there to be].

S. This is our custom.

T. Then, what does truth in a thought seem to you to be?

S. According to the reasoning evidenced in the case of statements, the truth of thought is best called its rightness, or correctness (*rectitudo*). For to the end that we might think that what-



is is and that what-is-not is not, we have been given the capability of thinking that something is or is not. Thus, whoever thinks that what-is is thinks what he ought to; and so, his thinking is correct. Accordingly, if our thought is correct and true simply because we think that what-is is, or that what-is-not is not, then the truth of thought is simply its rightness, or correctness.

*T.* Your thinking is correct.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

##### The truth of the will.

*T.* But when Truth itself [viz., God] says that the Devil “did not stand in the truth,”<sup>1</sup> He declares that truth is also in the will. For it was only with respect to his will that the Devil was in the truth and deserted the truth.

*S.* I believe this. For he deserted the truth only by sinning; and if he had always willed what he ought to have willed, then he never would have sinned.

*T.* Tell me, then, what you understand truth in his will to be.

*S.* It is only rightness, or uprightness [*rectitudo*]. For as long as the Devil willed what he ought to have willed—namely, the end for which he had received a will—he was in the truth and in uprightness; and when he willed what he ought not to have willed, he deserted truth and uprightness. So truth in his will can only be understood to be uprightness, since truth and uprightness in the Devil's will each consisted only in his willing what he ought to have willed.

*T.* You understand well.

#### CHAPTER FIVE

##### The truth of natural action and non-natural action.

*T.* But we must no less believe that truth is also in actions—just as the Lord says, “He who does evil hates the light” and “He who does the truth comes to the light.”<sup>2</sup>

*S.* I see what you mean.

*T.* Then, if you can, consider what truth in actions is.

*S.* Unless I am mistaken, truth in actions must be considered

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<sup>1</sup>John 8:44. <sup>2</sup>John 3:20-21.

along the same lines as the truth we have already recognized in other things.

*T.* That's right. For if to do evil and to do the truth are opposites—as the Lord indicates when He says: “He who does evil hates the light” and “He who does the truth comes to the light”—then doing the truth is the same thing as doing good. For doing good and doing evil are opposites. Therefore, if doing the truth and doing good have the same opposite, their significations are not different. But everyone admits that whoever does what he ought does what is good and what is right. So it follows that to do what is right is to do the truth. For it is evident that to do the truth is to do what is good and that to do what is good is to do what is right. Therefore, nothing is clearer than that the truth of an action is its rightness [*rectitudo*].

*S.* I see no respect in which your reasoning is shaky.

*T.* Consider whether every action which does what it ought is appropriately said to do the truth. For there are rational actions, such as giving alms, and there are non-rational actions—such as the action of fire, which heats. Now, is it appropriate to say that fire does the truth?

*S.* If fire has received the power to heat from Him from whom it has its being,<sup>1</sup> then when it heats it does what it ought. Therefore, I do not see anything inappropriate [in saying] that fire does what is true and what is right when it does what it ought.

*T.* That's the way it seems to me too. Hence, we can note that there is a necessary and a non-necessary rightness, or truth, of action. For of necessity fire does what is right and true when it heats; but out of no necessity a man does what is right and true when he does what is good. However, when the Lord said, “He who does the truth comes to the light,” He wanted us to understand the verb “to do” not only as standing for what is properly called a doing, but also as a substitute for every other verb. For He excludes from this truth, or light, neither the man who *undergoes* persecution for the sake of justice nor the man who *is* when and where he ought to be, nor the man who *is standing* or *sitting* when he ought to—and the like. For no one denies that such per-

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<sup>1</sup>Regarding the expression “*ab eo a quo habet esse accepit*,” see also *DLA* 10 (S I, 222:22) and *DCD* 1 (S I, 235:4-5)

sons do what is good. And when the apostle says that each man shall receive [recompense] “in accordance with what he has done,”<sup>1</sup> we must understand this phrase to indicate all that we commonly call doing good and doing evil.

S. Even our ordinary way of speaking calls enduring and many other things doings which are not [properly] doings. So unless I am wrong, we can also number among right actions upright willing, whose truth we discussed before dealing with the truth of action.

T. You are not mistaken. For he who wills what he ought is said to do what is right and good; and he is included among those who do the truth. But since we are speaking of truth by analyzing it, and since the Lord seems to be speaking especially of that truth which is in the will when He says that the Devil “did not stand in the truth,”<sup>2</sup> I wanted to examine separately what truth in the will is.

S. I am glad you did.

T. Since, then, it is evident that there is both a natural and a non-natural truth of action, *that* truth of a statement which (as we have seen) cannot be separated from it must be classified as natural. For just as when fire heats it does the truth because it has received [the power to heat] from Him from whom it has its being, so also the statement “It is day” does the truth when it signifies that it is day (whether it is daytime or not) since it has received the nature to do this.

S. Now for the first time I see the truth in a false statement.

## CHAPTER SIX

### The truth of the senses.

T. Do you think that we have discovered all the abodes of truth, leaving aside consideration of the Supreme Truth?

S. I recall now a certain truth which I do not find among those you have dealt with.

T. What is it?

S. There is truth in the bodily senses—but not always, for at times they deceive us. For sometimes when I am looking at an object through a glass, my sight deceives me, because sometimes it

<sup>1</sup>II Corinthians 5:10. <sup>2</sup>John 8:44.

reports to me that the object I see beyond the glass is the same color as the glass; yet, it really is a different color. And sometimes my sight causes me to believe that the glass is the color of the object on the other side of it, even though it is not that color. And there are many other cases in which sight and the other senses deceive.

*T.* This truth or falsity, it seems to me, is not in the senses but in the judgment (*opinione*). For the outer sense does not lie to the inner sense, but the latter deceives itself. This fact is sometimes easy to recognize, at other times difficult. For example, when a boy is afraid of the statue of an open-mouthed dragon, we easily recognize that sight does not cause this fear (for sight reports to the boy nothing other than it reports to aged people); rather, the fear is caused by the childish inner sense, which does not yet know how to discern well between a real object and its likeness. The same thing happens when we see a person who resembles someone else and we mistake him for the one he resembles—or, again, when someone who hears what is not a man's voice thinks it to be a man's voice. The inner sense also causes these mistakes.

Now, what you say about glass happens the way it does because when sight passes through a body which has the color of air, it is no more prevented from receiving the likeness of the color it sees beyond the glass than when it passes through the air. [And this is always the case] except insofar as the body it passes through is denser or darker than air. For example, [this is the case] when sight passes through glass of its own color—i.e., glass which has no color admixed to its own—or when it passes through very clear water or through a crystal or through something having a similar color. But when sight passes through some other color (for example, through glass not of its own color [i.e., not of the natural color of glass] but to which another color is added), it receives the color which it first encounters. Thus, after sight has received one color, then depending upon the extent to which it has been modified by this color, it receives either partially or not at all whatever other color it encounters. Therefore, sight reports the color it has apprehended first, and reports it either by itself or in combination with the color it meets subsequently. For if sight is modified by the first color up to its full capacity for receiving color, then it cannot at the same time sense another color. But if sight

is affected by the first color less than exhausts its capacity to sense color, then it can still sense another color.

For example, if sight passes through a certain body, say glass, which is so perfectly red that sight is fully modified by this redness, then it is unable to be modified by another color at the same time. But if sight finds and first encounters a lesser degree of redness than exhausts its capacity to sense color, then (being not yet full, so to speak) it will be able to receive an additional color, to the degree that its capacity has not been exhausted by the first color. Accordingly, someone who is unaware of this fact thinks that sight reports that all the things it perceives after receiving the first color are either partially or entirely the same color as the first. Thereby the inner sense imputes its own failure to the outer sense.

Similarly, when an unbroken stick, partly in water, partly not, is thought to be broken, or when we think that our sight sees our real faces in a mirror, and when sight and the other senses seem to report to us many things as being other than they really are—the fault is not with the senses, which report what they are able to, since they have received thus to be able; rather, [the fault] must be attributed to the soul's judgment [*iudicium*], which does not clearly discern what the senses can and ought to do. I do not think that time need be spent in showing this [in any more detail], since for our purposes it would be more tedious than profitable. Let it suffice to say only that whatever the senses are seen to report, whether they do so as a result of their nature or of some other cause [for example, because of a tinted glass], they do what they ought. Therefore, they do what is right and true, and their truth falls within the classification of truth in actions.

S. Your answer has satisfied me. I do not wish for you to dwell longer on the topic of the senses.

#### CHAPTER SEVEN

The truth in the being of things.

T. Leaving out of consideration the Supreme Truth, consider now whether we must understand truth to be in anything other than the things we have already examined.

S. What could that be?

T. Do you think that there is anything, at any time or place,

which is not in the Supreme Truth, or has not received from the Supreme Truth what it is, insofar as it is, or is able to be other than what it is in the Supreme Truth?

S. No, we must not think so.

T. Therefore, whatever is is truly—insofar as it is what it is in the Supreme Truth.

S. You can conclude unreservedly that everything which is is truly since it is nothing other than what it is there.

T. Thus, there is truth in the being of all that exists, because all things are what they are in the Supreme Truth.

S. I see that in the being of things there is truth to such an extent that no falsehood can be there, since what falsely exists does not exist.

T. That's a good answer. But, tell me, ought anything to be different from what it is in the Supreme Truth?

S. No.

T. So if all things are what they are in the Supreme Truth, then without doubt they are what they ought to be.

S. Yes, all things are what they ought to be.

T. But whatever is what it ought to be, is rightly.

S. No other conclusion is possible.

T. Therefore, everything which is is rightly.

S. Nothing follows more consistently.

T. So if truth and rightness are in the being of things because these things are what they are in the Supreme Truth, then assuredly the truth of things is rightness [*rectitudo*].

S. Nothing is clearer with respect to the logic of the argument.

#### CHAPTER EIGHT

The various meanings of “ought” and “ought not,”  
“to be able” and “not to be able.”

S. But how can we say truthfully that whatever is ought to be, since there are many evil deeds which certainly ought not to be?

T. Why should it be strange that the same thing both ought to be and ought not to be?

S. How can this be so?

T. I know you believe that nothing at all is except by God's causing it or permitting it.

S. Nothing is more certain to me.

T. Would you dare to suggest that God unwisely or evilly causes or permits something?

S. I would say, rather, that [He causes or permits] something only wisely and well.

T. Would you say that what such great Goodness and Wisdom causes or permits ought not to be?

S. What intelligent person would dare to suppose this?

T. Therefore, both what happens by God's causing and what happens by His permitting ought to be.

S. What you say is evident.

T. Tell me also, do you think that the effect of an evil will ought to be?

S. This is the same as asking whether an evil deed ought to be; and no one with any sense would concede this.

T. Nevertheless, God permits some men to do evilly what they will evilly.

S. Would that He permitted it less often!

T. So the same thing both ought and ought not to be. It ought to be since it is permitted wisely and well by God, without whose permission it could not have happened. Yet, with respect to him by whose evil will it is committed (*concupitur*), it ought not to be. In this way, then, the Lord Jesus ought not to have undergone death because He alone [among men] was innocent; and no one ought to have inflicted death upon Him; nevertheless, He ought to have undergone death because He wisely and graciously and usefully willed to undergo it. For in many ways the same thing admits in different respects of opposites. This is frequently the case in regard to an action [*actio*]<sup>—</sup>for instance, a beating [*percussio*]. For “beating” is predicable both of one who gives it [i.e., of an agent] and of one who gets it [i.e., of a patient]. Hence, [in different respects] it can be called both an action and a passion. Nevertheless, according to their grammatical form “*actio*” and “*percussio*” (and likewise any other words which have passive forms but active meanings) seem to pertain more to a patient than to an agent. Indeed, with reference to acting, it seems more proper to say “*agentia*” or “*percutientia*”; and with reference to undergoing, it seems more proper to say “*actio*” and “*percussio*.” For “*agentia*” and “*percutientia*” are derived from “*agens*” and “*percutiens*,” even

as “*providentia*” is derived from “*providens*,” and as “*continentia*” from “*continens*”; all of these forms (viz., “*agens*,” “*percutiens*,” “*providens*,” and “*continens*”) are active. But “*actio*” and “*percussio*” are derived from “*actus*” and “*percussus*,” which are passives. Now—to take one example that holds true of the other terms as well—just as giving a beating (*percutiens*) always occurs in connection with getting a beating [*percussus*] and getting a beating always occurs in connection with giving a beating, so giving a beating and getting a beating cannot occur separately: one and the same thing is signified by different words in accordance with its different aspects. Hence, beating (*percussio*) is said to consist of both giving a beating [*percutiens*] and getting a beating [*percussus*].

Thus, depending upon whether agent and patient are subject to the same or to opposite judgments, the two aspects of the action will be judged to be alike or opposite. Therefore, (1) when the one who gives a beating does so rightly and the one who gets that beating does so rightly—for example, when a sinner is corrected by someone whose prerogative it is—both aspects of the action are right because in both respects a beating ought to be. And (2) when, on the contrary, a just man is beaten by an unjust man, neither aspect of the action is right because the just man ought not to get a beating nor ought the unjust man to give a beating, for in neither respect ought a beating to occur. But (3) when a sinner is beaten by one whose prerogative it is not, then a beating both ought and ought not to be, since the sinner ought to get a beating but the other man ought not to give a beating; and so the action cannot be denied to be both right and not right. But if you consider whether in accordance with the judgment of Supernal Wisdom and Goodness there ought not to be a beating in the one respect only or in both respects (viz., with respect to the agent and with respect to the patient), would you or anyone else dare to deny that what such great Wisdom and Goodness permits ought to be?

S. Let him deny it who dares; but I do not dare.

T. If you also consider something from the standpoint of the nature of things—for example, the driving of iron nails into the body of the Lord—would you say that His frail flesh ought not to have been penetrated or that, once penetrated by sharp iron, it ought not to have felt pain?



S. I would be speaking against nature.

T. Therefore, it is possible that with respect to nature there ought to be either an action or a passion which, with respect to the agent or the patient, ought not to be, since neither the agent ought to do it nor the patient to undergo it.

S. I cannot deny any of this.

T. So you see that it very often can happen that the same action both ought and ought not to be, though in different respects.

S. You present this so clearly that I cannot help seeing it.

T. But I want you to be aware as well that “ought” and “ought not” are sometimes said improperly—as, for example, when I say that I ought to be loved by you. For if I truly *ought*, then I am indebted to repay what I *owe*, and am at fault if I am not loved by you.

S. It follows.

T. But when I ought to be loved by you, then payment should be exacted not from me but from you.

S. I must concede it.

T. So when I say that I ought to be loved by you this means not that I owe something but that you *owe* me love. Likewise, when I say that I ought not to be loved by you, what is meant is only that you ought not to love me.

This same mode of speaking also occurs in conjunction with the notions of ability and inability. We say, for instance, “Hector was able to be overpowered by Achilles” and “Achilles was not able to be overpowered by Hector.” Yet, ability was not in the one who was able to be overpowered but was in the one who was able to overpower; and inability was not in him who was not able to be overpowered but was in him who was not able to overpower.

S. What you say pleases me. Indeed, I think it useful to know.

T. You think correctly.

#### CHAPTER NINE

Every action signifies either what is true or what is false.

T. But let us return to [the topic of ] the truth of signification. I began with this topic in order to lead you from the more familiar to the less familiar. For everyone speaks about the truth of signification, but few consider the truth which is in the being of

things.

*S.* I have been aided by your having led me in this sequence.

*T.* Let us see, then, how extensive the truth of signification is. For there is a true or a false signification not only in those things which we ordinarily call signs but also in all the other things which we have discussed. For since someone should do only what he ought to do, then by the very fact that someone does something, he says and signifies that he ought to do it. Now, if [morally speaking] he ought to do what he does, he speaks the truth. But if [morally speaking] he ought not [to do what he does], he speaks a lie.

*S.* Although I seem to understand, show me more clearly what you mean, because I have not heard this before.

*T.* Suppose you were in a place where you knew there to be edible herbs and poisonous ones, but you did not know how to tell them apart; suppose too that with you was another person, whose ability to discriminate between the two you trusted. Now, suppose that you asked him which ones were edible and which were poisonous, and that he told you that the one kind was edible but himself ate the other kind. Which would you believe the more: his word or his deed?

*S.* I would believe his deed more than his word.

*T.* Therefore, by his action more than by his word he would be telling you about which herbs were edible.

*S.* Yes, that's right.

*T.* So, then, if you did not know that one should not lie, and if someone lied in your presence, then even were he to say to you that he ought not to lie, his telling you by his deed that he ought to lie would outweigh his telling you by his word that he ought not to lie. Similarly, when someone thinks or wills something: if you did not know whether he ought to think or will it, then if you could see his thought and will, by his act of thinking and of willing he would signify to you that he ought to think and will this thing. Now if, [morally speaking], this person ought [to be thinking and willing this, then by his thinking and willing] he would be telling the truth; and if, [morally speaking], he ought not [to be thinking and willing this], then he would be lying.

There is also a similarly true or a false signification in the existence of things, since by the very fact that they are, they declare

that they ought to be.

S. I now see clearly what I had not noticed before.

T. Let us go on to the remaining topics.

S. Lead the way. I will follow.

## CHAPTER TEN

### The Supreme Truth.

T. You will not deny that the Supreme Truth is rightness [*rectitudo*], will you?

S. Indeed not. I cannot call it anything else.

T. Consider the following: Although all the different rightnesses which were mentioned earlier are rightnesses because the things they are in either are what they *ought* to be or else do what they *ought* to do, nevertheless it is not the case that the Supreme Truth is rightness because it is under any *indebtedness*. For all other things are indebted to it; it does not owe anything to anyone. It has no other reason for being what it is except that it is.

S. I understand.

T. Do you also see how this Rightness is the cause of all other truths and rightnesses, and how nothing is the cause of it?

S. Yes, I do. And I notice among these other truths and rightnesses that some are only effects, whereas some are both causes and effects. For example, although the truth which is in the existence of things is the effect of the Supreme Truth, it is the cause of the truth of thought and of the truth which is in statements; but these two truths are not causes of any truth.

T. That's a keen observation. On the basis of it you can now understand how in my *Monologion* I proved by means of the truth of a statement that the Supreme Truth has neither beginning nor end. For when I asked "When was it ever not true that something was going to exist?" I did not mean to suggest (1) that the statement which asserted that something was going to exist was itself without a beginning or (2) that the truth of this statement was God. I meant to say only that, given the statement, we cannot understand there to be a time when truth would not have been in it—so that from the fact that we do not understand there to be a time when this truth could have failed to be in it (given the statement in which truth could be), we should understand that that

other Truth, which is the first cause of the statement's truth, was without beginning. Indeed, the truth of the statement could not always be unless its cause always were. For the statement which says that something is going to exist is true only if something is, in fact, going to exist. And something is going to exist only if it exists in the Supreme Truth.

We must understand in a similar way the other statement, which says that something has existed in the past. For if truth could in no respect fail to be in this statement (given the statement), then it follows that that Truth which is the supreme cause of this statement's truth cannot be understood to have an end. For it is true to say that something has existed, because thus in fact it has; and something has existed because thus it exists in the Supreme Truth.

Therefore, if it was never able not to be true that something was going to exist, and never will be able not to be true that something has existed, then it is impossible that the Supreme Truth had a beginning or will have an end.

S. I do not see any possible objection to your reasoning.

#### CHAPTER ELEVEN

##### The definition of "truth."

T. Let us return to the investigation of truth which we began.

S. All that [we were just discussing] is pertinent to investigating truth. But nonetheless, return to whatever you wish.

T. Tell me, then, whether you think that there is still another rightness in addition to those rightnesses we have examined.

S. There are no other rightnesses than those—except for the rightness which is in corporeal things, such as the rightness, or straightness, (*rectitudo*) of a stick. But this is quite different from the other kinds.

T. In what way does this rightness seem to you to differ from the others?

S. Because it can be apprehended by bodily sight, whereas rational reflection apprehends the others.

T. Cannot reason understand and apprehend the straightness of material objects separably from the objects? Or if there is doubt about whether the surface (*linea*) of an absent object is straight and it can be shown that no part of it is curved, then does not

reason infer that the surface must be straight?

S. Yes. But the same rightness which is thus known by reason is perceived in the object by sight, whereas the other kinds of rightness can be perceived only by the mind.

T. Therefore, unless I am mistaken we can define “truth” as “rightness perceptible only to the mind.”

S. I see that he who says this, is in no way mistaken. Without doubt, this definition of “truth” contains neither more nor less than is appropriate (*expediat*), since “rightness” distinguishes it from everything which is not called rightness, and “perceptible only to the mind” distinguishes it from visible rightness.

#### CHAPTER TWELVE

##### The definition of “justice.”

S. But since you have taught me that all truth is rightness and since rightness seems to me to be the same thing as justice, teach me also what I may understand justice to be. For it seems that whatever it is for a thing to be right is also what it is for that thing to be just, and that, conversely, whatever it is for a thing to be just is what it is for that thing to be right. For example, it seems to be both just and right for fire to be hot and for each person to reciprocate another's love. For if (as I believe) whatever ought to be, rightly and justly is, and if nothing else rightly and justly is except what ought to be, then justice can be only rightness. Indeed, although it is not the case that the Supreme and Simple Nature is just or right because it ought [to be or to do] anything, nevertheless rightness and justice are assuredly identical in it.

T. Therefore, if justice is nothing other than rightness, you have the definition of “justice.” And since we are speaking about the rightness which is perceptible only to the mind—“truth,” “rightness,” and “justice” are definable in terms of one another. As a result, if someone knows what one of them is but does not know what the other two are, he can infer from his knowledge of one to a knowledge of the others. In fact, if anyone knows one of them, he cannot keep from knowing the other two.

S. What then? Shall we call a stone *just* because it does what it ought when it seeks to move downwards—even as we call a man just when he does what he ought?

*T.* No, we usually do not call anything just on the basis of this kind of justice.

*S.* Why, then, is a man any more just than is a stone, if both behave justly?

*T.* Don't you think that the activity of a man differs in some respect from the activity of a stone?

*S.* I know that a man acts freely but that a stone acts by nature and not freely.

*T.* This is why we do not call a stone just; for if a thing which does what it ought does not will what it does, then it is not just.

*S.* Shall we say, then, that a horse is just when it wills to eat, because it willingly does what it ought?

*T.* I did not say that something is just which willingly does what it ought; rather, I said that whatever does not do willingly what it ought is not just.

*S.* Tell me, then, who or what is just.

*T.* As I see it, you are asking for a definition of that justice which is praiseworthy, even as its opposite, viz., injustice, is blameworthy.

*S.* That's the justice I am seeking.

*T.* It is evident that this justice is not in any nature which does not know rightness. For whatever does not will rightness does not merit to be praised for having it, even if it does have it. But that which does not know rightness is not able to will it.

*S.* That's true.

*T.* Therefore, the rightness which brings praise to a thing which has rightness is present only in a rational nature, which alone perceives the rightness we are talking about.

*S.* It follows.

*T.* Therefore, since all justice is rightness, the justice which makes the one who keeps it worthy of praise is present only in rational natures.

*S.* It cannot be otherwise.

*T.* Then where do you think this justice is to be found in man, who is rational?

*S.* It is nowhere except either in his will or in his knowledge or in his action.

*T.* What if someone understands rightly or acts rightly but does not will rightly: will anyone praise him on account of justice?

S. No.

T. Therefore, this justice is not rightness of knowledge or rightness of action but is rightness of will.

S. It shall be either this or nothing.

T. Do you think that the justice we are seeking has been adequately defined?

S. You decide.

T. Do you think that whoever wills what he ought wills rightly and has rightness, or uprightness, of will?

S. If someone unknowingly wills what he ought—for example, if someone wills to lock out another who, without his knowledge, wants to kill a third party inside the house—he does not have the uprightness-of-will that we are seeking, whether or not he has some kind of uprightness-of-will.

T. What do you say about a person who knows that he ought to will what he does will?

S. It can happen that he knowingly wills what he ought [to will] and yet does not want to be under the obligation [of so willing]. For example, when a robber is compelled to return the stolen money, it is evident that he does not want [*velle*] to be under this obligation, since he is *compelled* to will (*velle*) to return the money because he ought to. He is not at all entitled to be praised on account of this rightness.

T. Anyone who feeds a poor hungry man on account of his own vainglory does want to be under the obligation to will what he wills. And indeed, he is praised because he wills to do what he ought [to will to do]. So what is your judgment about him?

S. His rightness must not be praised; and so, it does not measure up to the justice we are seeking. But show now what does measure up.

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

S. We all recognize this in ourselves.

T. But in order for a man's will to be praiseworthy, *for what reason* do you think he ought to will what he does will? *What* he must

will is clear, since whoever does not will what he ought to will is not just.

S. And it seems no less clear to me that in order for a man's will to be just, he must will for the reason he ought, even as he must will what he ought.

T. You understand well that these two things are necessary for a will to be just: willing what it ought [to will] and willing for the reason it ought [to will]. But tell me whether these two things are sufficient [for the will's being just].

S. Why wouldn't they be?

T. When someone wills what he ought to will and does so because he is compelled [to will it], and is compelled [to will it] because he ought to will it, is he not in a certain sense willing what he ought [to will] for the reason he ought [to will]?

S. I cannot deny it. But whereas he wills in one manner, a just man wills in another manner.

T. Distinguish these two manners.

S. When a just man wills what he ought [to will], then—insofar as he is to be called just—he keeps uprightness-of-will only for its own sake. By contrast, someone who wills what he ought to will but does so only if compelled to or only if induced by external rewards, does not keep uprightness-of-will for its own sake but keeps it for the sake of something else—if he should at all be said to keep it.

T. Then, that will is just which keeps its uprightness on account of that uprightness itself.

S. Either that will is just or no will is.

T. Therefore, justice is uprightness (*rectitudo*)-of-will kept for its own sake.

S. Yes, this is the definition of “justice” I was seeking.

T. See whether something in this definition ought perhaps to be amended.

S. I do not see anything in it to be improved.

T. Nor do I. For there is no justice which is not rightness (*rectitudo*); and no rightness other than uprightness (*rectitudo*)-of-will is called, in and of itself, justice. For rightness-of-action is called justice, but only when that action is performed by means of a just will. However, even if what we rightly will is impossible to be done, nevertheless uprightness-of-will does not at all lose the



name "justice."

Now, as regards the word "kept," someone will perhaps say: "If uprightness-of-will is to be called justice only when it is kept, then uprightness-of-will is not justice from the moment this uprightness is possessed; and we do not receive justice when we receive uprightness-of-will, but we make this uprightness become justice by keeping it. For we receive and have uprightness-of-will before we keep it. We do not receive it and have it for the first time because we keep it, but we begin to keep it because we have received it and already have it."

But to these inferences we can reply that at one and the same time we receive the willing it and the having it. For we have uprightness only by willing it; and if we will it, then by this very act we have it. However, just as we simultaneously have it and will it, so we simultaneously will it and keep it; for just as we do not keep it except when we will it, so there is no time when we will it and do not keep it. Now, as long as we will it we keep it; and as long as we keep it we will it. Therefore, since our willing it and having it occur at the same time, and since our willing it and keeping it do not occur at different times, then it necessarily follows that we receive simultaneously the having of it and the keeping of it. And just as we have it as long as we keep it, so we keep it as long as we have it. These assertions involve no contradiction.

Of course, the receiving of this uprightness is by nature prior to having it or willing it (since having it or willing it is not the cause of receiving it, but receiving it makes possible both the having and the willing it); and yet receiving, having, and willing occur simultaneously (for we begin to receive and to have and to will this uprightness at the same time; and as soon as uprightness is received, it is both had and willed). Similarly, having uprightness and willing it occur simultaneously [with keeping it], even though they are by nature prior to keeping. Therefore, we receive justice through receiving simultaneously the having, the willing, and the keeping of uprightness-of-will. And as soon as we have and will this uprightness-of-will, this uprightness is to be called justice.

The phrase "for its own sake," which we included [in our definition of "justice,"] is so essential that this very uprightness is in no respect justice unless it is kept for its own sake.

S. I can think of no objections to this.

T. Do you think that this definition can be applied to the Supreme Justice—insofar, that is, as we are able to speak about a thing of which nothing, or almost nothing, can properly be said?

S. Since in God's divinity, power is not other than the divinity itself, we speak of the power of His divinity or of His divine power or of His powerful divinity. Similarly, although God's will is not one thing and His uprightness another, nevertheless it is not unsuitable for us to speak of His uprightness of will or of His voluntary uprightness or of His right will. But if we say that God's uprightness is kept for its own sake, then we seem not to be able to say this as suitably about anyone else's uprightness. For just as nothing else keeps God's uprightness, but it keeps itself, and just as it keeps itself through nothing other than through itself, so it keeps itself for the sake of nothing but itself.

T. Then, we can say with certainty that justice is uprightness-of-will which is being kept for its own sake.

Now, since [in Latin] we do not have a present passive participle of the verb "*servatur*" ("is being kept"), we can use the perfect passive participle of this verb in order to express present time.

S. We have the well-known practice of using perfect passive participles as substitutes for present passive participles, which Latin does not have. Similarly, Latin lacks perfect participles of active and neuter verbs; and for these past participles which are lacking we use present participles. For example, I might say about someone, "Only compelled (*coactus*) does he teach what he learned studying and reading (*studens et legens*)"; that is, "Only when he is compelled does he teach what he learned while he studied and read."

T. Then we did well to say that justice is uprightness-of-will kept (*servatam*) for its own sake, i.e., which is being kept (*servatur*) for its own sake. Accordingly, men who are just are sometimes called upright in heart (i.e., upright in will); and sometimes they are simply called upright, without the qualifying phrase "in heart," since no one is understood to be upright except one who has an upright will. For example: "Glory, all of you who are upright in heart,"<sup>1</sup> and also "The upright shall see and shall rejoice."<sup>2</sup>

S. With your definition of "justice" you have satisfied even chil-

<sup>1</sup>Psalms 31:11 (32:11). <sup>2</sup>Psalms 106:42 (107:42).

dren. Let us go on to other matters.

### CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Truth is one in all true things.

*T.* Let us go back to [the notion of ] rightness, or truth. Since we are talking about rightness perceptible only to the mind, “rightness,” or “truth,” signifies a single thing which is the genus of justice. Let us ask whether there is only one truth in all the things in which we say there is truth, or whether there is more than one truth, even as there is more than one thing in which we know truth to be.

*S.* I very much desire to know the answer to this.

*T.* It is evident that regardless of what thing truth is in, truth is nothing other than rightness (*rectitudo*).

*S.* I do not doubt this.

*T.* Then, if in accordance with the many things there were many truths, there would also be many rightnesses.

*S.* This is equally certain.

*T.* And if there had to be as many different rightnesses as there are different kinds of things, then surely these rightnesses would exist in accordance with these various things; and just as the things in which there is rightness vary, so there would have to be a variety of rightnesses.

*S.* By means of one thing in which we say that there is rightness, show me what I may understand about other things [in which we also say that there is rightness].

*T.* I mean that if the rightness of signification [i.e., correctness] were different from the rightness of the will [i.e., uprightness] simply because the former rightness is in the signification and the latter in the will, then the former rightness would exist on account of signification and would be changed in accordance with it.

*S.* But isn't this the case? For when what is is signified to be, or when what-is-not is signified not to be, then the signification is correct, or right, and (assuredly) rightness exists, without which the signification could not be right. But if what-is-not is signified to be, or if what is is signified not to be, or if nothing at all is signified, then there will be no rightness-of-signification, which exists only in the signification. Hence, this rightness has its existence

through the signification and is changed with the signification—just as color has its existence and non-existence through a material object. For as long as the material object exists it is necessary that its color exist; but when the material object perishes, it is impossible for its color to remain.

*T.* No. Rightness does not belong to signification as color belongs to a material object.

*S.* Show me the difference.

*T.* If no one wishes to signify by means of any sign what should be signified, then will there be any signification by means of signs?

*S.* No .

*T.* And so, it will not be right for what-ought-to-be-signified to be signified?

*S.* [On the contrary], it will not therefore be less right and rightness will no less demand this.

*T.* Therefore, when the signification does not exist, that rightness does not perish by which it is right that there be signified what should be signified and by which it is demanded that there be signified what should be signified.

*S.* If that rightness had perished, then it would not have been right [for what-ought-to-be-signified to be signified], and rightness would not have demanded this.

*T.* Don't you think that when what ought to be signified is signified, the signification is right on account of and in accordance with this very rightness?

*S.* Indeed, I cannot think differently. For if the signification were right by virtue of some other rightness, then were the above-mentioned rightness to perish, nothing would prevent the signification from being right. But no signification is right which signifies what is not right to be signified or which signifies what rightness does not demand [that it signify].

*T.* Therefore, no signification is right by virtue of any other rightness than that which remains when the signification perishes.

*S.* Clearly not.

*T.* Therefore, don't you see that rightness is in the signification not because rightness begins to be when what is signified to be or when what-is-not is signified not to be, but because the signification is made in accordance with a rightness which always

exists? [Don't you see too that] rightness is absent from signification not because rightness perishes when the signification is not as it ought to be or when there is no signification but because the signification lacks this rightness which never perishes?

*S.* I see this so clearly that I cannot fail to see it.

*T.* Then, the rightness in terms of which the signification is called correct, or right, neither exists through nor changes with the signification, regardless of how the signification changes.

*S.* Nothing is now clearer to me.

*T.* Can you prove that color is related to a material object similarly to how rightness is related to signification?

*S.* I am now more prepared to prove that they are related very dissimilarly.

*T.* I think you now know what must be thought about the will and its rightness, and about the other things which ought to have rightness.

*S.* I see perfectly that your reasoning proves that rightness remains unchangeable, regardless of how these other things are.

*T.* So what conclusion do you think follows regarding these rightnesses? Are they different from one another, or is there one and the same rightness of all things?

*S.* I conceded previously that if there is more than one rightness simply because there is more than one thing in which rightness is seen to be, then it necessarily follows that these rightnesses exist and change in accordance with those things. But this was proven not at all to happen. Therefore, it is not the case that there is more than one rightness simply because there is more than one thing in which there is rightness.

*T.* Do you have any other reason for supposing that there is a plurality of rightnesses except that there is a plurality of things?

*S.* Just as I recognize that the argument from a plurality of things is faulty, so I see that no other argument can be found.

*T.* Therefore, the rightness of all things is one and the same.

*S.* Yes, I have to agree.

*T.* Moreover, if it is only when things are in accordance with what they ought to be that rightness is in those things which ought to have it, and if for them to be right is only [for them to be in accordance with what they ought to be], then it is evident that the rightness of all these things is only one.

S. It cannot be denied.

T. Therefore, truth is one in all these things.

S. This is also impossible to be denied. But nevertheless, if truth assumes no diversity as a result of the [plurality of things], show me why we say “the truth of this thing” or “the truth of that thing,” as if we were distinguishing different truths. For many persons will be quite reluctant to concede that there is no difference between the truth of the will and what is called the truth of action, or [the truth of] one of the other things.

T. Truth is improperly said to be “of this thing” or “of that thing.” For truth does not have its being *in* or *from* or *through* the things in which it is said to be. But when these things are in accordance with truth, which is always present to things which are as they ought to be, then we say “the truth of this thing” or “the truth of that thing” (for example, “the truth of the will” or “the truth of action”). Similarly, we say “the time of this thing” or “the time of that thing,” although there is one and the same time for all things which exist together at the same time. And if *this* thing did not exist or if *that* thing did not exist, time would nonetheless remain the same; for we say “the time of this thing” or “the time of that thing” not because time is in these things but because these things are in time. Now, when considered in itself, time is not called the time of anything; but when we consider things which are in time, we say “the time of this thing” or “the time of that thing.” Similarly, Supreme Truth, existing in and of itself, is not the truth of anything; but when something accords with Supreme Truth, then we speak of the truth, or rightness, of that thing.