

“Interventiones Scholares”

Transcript of discussions among faculty of Oxford,
in which Simon of Faversham plays a small part.
Two Selections.

Edited by Little and Pelster,
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(1) II 2, fol. 12r

[Hycham] It is asked whether essence as essence is indifferent to being and non-being. That it is determined to being is shown: Augustine, in the *Soliloquies*—truth is that which it is. Therefore “true (thing)” is converted with “a being,” and the true is determined to being since the same disposition belongs to a reality in truth and in being according to the Philosopher in *Metaphysics* II. Therefore etc.

On the other hand: the whatness of a reality as such is not a being in actuality, for if it were it would determine being in actuality, and so it would be necessary that it be, which is not so except for God alone. And similarly, it is argued that it is not a non-being in actuality, for in this way it would be impossible for it to be.

[Horle] That something can be indifferent is said in three distinct ways. In one way, since it has no disposition or inclination which respect to contrary actualities, as surface with respect to white and black, and this way is the most strict—but in this way essence is not indifferent, since it is more inclined to being. For Augustine says, as wisdom is to being wise, so essence to being. In another way, it is indifferent when it is disposed more to one contrary than another, but not by a necessary disposition, at least it *can* remain under the other contrary. And essence is not indifferent in this way. In the third way, it is called indifferent when something inseparably determines one of the contraries, but neither is included in its concept, as human being is indifferent to risible. And this is a loose usage, for otherwise being would be indifferent (in a strict sense) to true and not true; and in this way essence is indifferent to being and not being since neither in . . .

To the first it is replied that it is more disposed to being. To the other argument on the other hand, it is obvious. It is argued against it that there is knowledge now of a rose and still not . . . [Some ten lines destroyed here]

Again, the divine essence is related under the formula of efficient cause to the existence of a creature, and under the formula of exemplary cause to its essence. But the formula of efficient cause is prior in god to the formula of exemplar, therefore the formula of being will be prior to that of essence, and is presupposed by it.

Again, a reality of second intention is only in the understanding and from its function; therefore a reality of the first intention will only be in reality and not in the understanding.

In response to the first of these, it is held that the formula of exemplary cause presupposes the formula of efficient cause in God according to the possible, and in this way essence

presupposes being, that is, that it is possible.

Again, the capacity of contradiction is related to either extreme indifferently, for, if more to one than to the other, it is not a capacity of contradiction, for between contradictories there is no middle, but essence is like this with respect to being, therefore etc.

Again, including the other extreme in a definition is indifferent, as matter with respect to its form is indifferent; therefore including neither will be indifferent; therefore etc.

Again, essence is indifferent as to existing as a singular and being understood; but as being understood it is not a reality existing as a singular, therefore etc.

Again, essence as it excludes being is something positive; therefore either it indicates reality different in nature from God or not; if not, then it is either God or nothing, which is absurd; if it is different in nature from God, then it has the formula of something produced, and being as a consequence; therefore if being is excluded it is not excluded.

[Feversham] Again, according to the Philosopher in the sixth book, a being is either true, or accidental, or perfect. But essence limited to being is not a true being, since the soul does not function in relation to it; nor accidental, for such has an indeterminate cause; therefore it is a perfect being and so includes being as a consequence. Therefore in response to the first of these it is held that, being being excluded, a being has the formula of the producible and not the formula of something produced.

[Laurencius] Again, essence as essence limited to being that moves the understanding, and not that which is in the soul, for there is nothing save a species¹ there; therefore it has some being intrinsic to it, for what is not cannot move another; therefore etc.

[Houden] Again, in response, the true limited to order is the same as a being which is or was, but what was is not; therefore essence is indifferent to being and non-being.

[Beverle] Again, the same in number is and earlier was to be, for according to the Philosopher, Book IX, in the same in number capacity precedes actuality. But what can afterwards be, is not in actuality. Therefore etc.

Again, essence is indifferent to everything that can truly be predicated for some time of it; but being and non-being are like this with respect to true essence.

VI 6, fol. 69rv.

It is asked whether a rational creature, purely from nature, can love God above all things, or more than itself.

That it cannot: Bernard says, “it is difficult, indeed impossible, for anyone wholly to turn his will to God and not turn back to his own, according to that of the apostle, each one loves what is his.”

In the same way, because of the weakness of nature one is devoted first to himself, even though it is right to devote oneself first to God.

Again, as the intellect is related to the first truth, so the will is related to the first good; but the intellect cannot ascend to the first truth, according to Dionysius in *On the Divine Names* and the *Mystical Theology*, and even if it ascends it remains in a certain ignorance, and consequently will not see God even then.

¹I.e., a representation or appearance.

In response to the question, it is claimed that will by nature loves God more than any other, for by nature it inclines to what is better, and otherwise it would be lacking; but to love God is better than any other.

In response to the first argument, these authorities do not intend that creatures love themselves more than God, but that they love God less because of weakness.

As regards the other, although the understanding cannot see God from its nature as it is, still it does not follow that one does not naturally love God above all things. As regards the proof, I reply that love follows on cognition on the part of the cognized and not on the part of the one who cognizes, for the more lovable is more cognizable, even though it is not at all cognized.

As regards the other about ignorance, Dionysius does not understand that there is complete ignorance with respect to God except when perfection in creatures are removed, and they cognize more that which He is not than that which He is, lest one should cognize something positive of God.

On the other hand, in the authorities a rational creature seems obviously to prefer its own love to the divine love, so that it is devoted to itself, as the authority says.

On the other hand, the opposite is said, that the will follows reason, as was assumed, and that the less cognized is more willed in response, so that opposites are said.

Again, one who understands a difference understands the extremes (between which there is the difference); therefore if one in that ignorance understands God to be neither this nor that, then he understands God and these others; therefore in that remotion there is not ignorance.

Again, if the will only loves God as far as it cognizes Him, then it does not exceed that amount. That is what is assumed. If one loves God under some species, then he cognized God under that species, since it is different to love God, and to love God under the species of the lovable. In the same way, on the part of the understanding, it is different to understand God, and to understand God as intelligible or under the species of the lovable. But it follows, if one loves God under the species of the lovable, he understands God as lovable under that species; therefore if he loves God under a species he understands God under that species.

Again, the loved is known, and the more loved more known, therefore the most loved is the most known.

As regards one of these arguments, note that one understands what it is not in comparing and so one understands creatures, but in the end one understands God not immediately but in a certain general concept formed by remotion from all creatures; and so one understands God not merely in general as far as He is God, but in a species thus <i.e. by remotion from creatures>, and in this general concept that is thus formed.

Again, because cognition is the *per se* cause of love, for potentiality is not the cause of actuality, therefore the object <of cognition is the cause why it is loved>. That potentiality is not the cause of actuality, the Commentator proves in *Metaphysics* V in the chapter on relation, for if potentiality were to cause <actuality> the same would be in actuality and potentiality with respect to the same. In the same way, the same would be referred to opposites and would be said in two ways, and the caused would be the cause of the cause, and either could be the middle <term for demonstrating the other>.

[Hycham] Note concerning the argument that potentiality causes its actuality, and we respond with the argument of the Commentator. Similarly, it is denied in the beginning.

Again, I assume that intellect and will are finite properties in the nature of the soul. In the second place, one property indicates why with respect to the other. The intellect indicates why

with respect to the will, but as potentiality is to potentiality, so actuality to actuality, therefore cognition indicates why with respect to volition.

Again, either the intellect attains to the vision of God (according to the degree with which one loves)² or it does not. If not, the beloved will be unknown, contrary to Augustine. If so, the intellect ascends to God as will.

Again, just as love of a particular is in respect of a particular good, so love of a universal will be in respect of a universal good, and not as it is in the causal order, but as it is in abstraction. Therefore, it follows from this that one does not ascend to God through love.

Again, although the actuality occurs upon the presentation of the object, the manner is still on the part of the cognizer, (just as it is clear that vision sees more or less acutely on the part of the one who sees, therefore that the understanding cognizes more or not, this is on the part of the one who understands).³

[Kim] Again, as the intellect is capable as nature and will as nature, so will can ascend to the highest lovable, and so can the intellect. Again, what is cognized by the ascent of the intellect is either finite, and so a creature, or infinite. But Dionysius—that human knowledge cannot judge.

[Carmelita] Again, it is shown that the proper good is loved more naturally than the common, as the Philosopher says in *Ethics* IX, because one dies and exposes himself to danger so that he may acquire, through the exercise of virtue, a good for himself through the common good, so that he will be honored in the city. In the same way, the virtuous would rather allow the whole common good to perish than commit one shameful act, therefore he hates the proper evil more than the evil of the common good; therefore, through opposites, he loves the proper good <more than the common> good, etc.

Again, Augustine in *De Natura et Gratia*, says that convenient and just affections are two <different things>, for only the convenient affection is essential, and this is with respect to one's own good, and not the common good; therefore etc.

[Stratton] Again, one who loves medicine because it is the efficient cause of health, loves health principally. Similarly, one who loves God as efficient cause or author of nature principally loves nature.

Again, if someone were to love God as his author more than himself, that being could not be the same as the essence, since a created thing can be understood under the opposite of being, but if being were so understood, it could not be understood under the opposite of being. But if being were <so understood> it could not be understood under the opposite of being, therefore if it is essence it is not a creature . . . if a creature it is not an essence. Again, if the will is created by God . . . virtually be created . . . then the created.⁴

Again, Anselm, *On the Fall of the Devil*, Chapter 12, argues that one cannot by oneself

²This parenthetical qualification is in the margin.

³The parenthetical addition is in the margin.

⁴Much of the argument is obliterated in the manuscript. I don't see how to reconstruct it.

have the first willing by oneself,⁵ thus it is argued in the case at hand, that to love God above all things is not from the nature of the will but from God.

[Bucfast] Again, if one loves God above all things he loves God because of God, and he is blessed in God, and through grace. The first consequence is obvious from the opposite of the consequent.⁶ The second is obvious since nothing satisfies his love except God. The third consequence is obvious from faith.

[Wedesfield] Again, Hugh, *De Sacramentis*, second part, 13—to love is to enjoy, therefore if one loves God he enjoys God, and if he only enjoys God he loves himself the more, for he cannot will a higher good.⁷

Again, that there is not ignorance through remotio has been shown, for it is either ignorance of negation, and not in this way, for one knows God potentially in a way; or it is ignorance by disposition, and then the more he is advanced in the way to understanding God, the less disposed he is toward seeing God.

[Feversham] Again, one never intends and omits the same act in species except through diversity of the efficient and receptive principles. But given that the will is active, every act is the same in species, and from the same principle. Therefore no more can one intend the act of loving with respect to God than with respect to vermin.⁸

Again, such is the friendship of the earnest to himself that it must be second nature. But the friendship of the earnest to himself is greater than his friendship to God, for the friendship of the earnest to God is not as He is God, but as He contains the common good. But the friendship of the earnest to himself is to will more good for himself than to his country, that is, the good of the city, according to the Philosopher.

⁵I.e., because one cannot will that one will, and will that one will to will in that way, etc. in an infinite regress, and so the first willing arises from no prior willing, and so not from oneself!

⁶That is, if he does not love God for God's own sake, whatever it is for the sake of which he loves God, he loves more than God.

⁷The point is that if one desires only to enjoy God *himself*, which is all that the love of God amounts to, according to Hugh, then he loves himself more than God.

⁸The point seems to be related to that of Anselm in the quotation several paragraphs above.