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Making the Theory Fit the Practice: Augustine and Anselm on Prayer

(2) Anselm

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FEW of the multitude of Western medieval thinkers who drew lavishly on Augustine in their work rank with him in originality and importance. Among them Anselm of Canterbury (who died in 1109) stands high in any company. When he published the first work of his maturity, the *Monologion*, he stressed that although it did not contain quotations from Augustine, he was certain that it had in it nothing with which Augustine would disagree. It was in fact, an Augustine-inspired account of the manner in which human understanding can ascend through contemplation of this world's goods, that is, the good things God has created, to glimpse the Supreme Good; and of the image of the Trinity in the mind of man as Augustine describes it. In later works the debt to Augustine is less explicit and generally unacknowledged. But Augustine had been the staple of Anselm's patristic reading for a decade at Bec before his first book appeared and the fundamental assumptions of his thought in the areas where ancient philosophy had overlapped with Christian theology remained Augustine's throughout his life.

Anselm was not, as far as we know, a mystic. His biographer Eadmer knew him very well, and drew him out with great skill, eliciting from him most intimate reminiscences of his emotional and spiritual life. In any case, Anselm was unguarded in these matters, and his spiritual life was lived with frankness before his monks at Bec and later at Canterbury, where Eadmer knew him. The nearest we have to an arguably mystical experience is the arrival of the principle of the ontological argument which forms the backbone of the *Proslogion*. Anselm himself gives an account of it in the Prologue to the work, and Eadmer describes what happened in greater detail in his *Vita Anselmi*. After he had finished the *Monologion*, Anselm began to feel intellectually dissatisfied with it, because it seemed to him to be a chain of many arguments rather than a single elegant and all-sufficient argument. But it did not prove easy to hit on the single argument he sought. He became so distracted by worrying after it that he could not eat or sleep, and — what troubled him most — could not concentrate in church. He tried to put the quest out of his mind, because it seemed to have become a device of the Devil to seduce him from worship. Then suddenly, one night while he was at Matins, 'the grace of God shone in his heart' (*Dei gratia illuxit in corde eius*) and he saw the argument he needed clearly. His whole being was filled with great joy. But this seems to have been a 'eureka' experience, the flash of pleasure and excitement of intellectual discovery,

rather than the moment of knowing God which is of the essence of the mystical.

Eadmer describes visions which Anselm had evidently related to him, as he experienced them after an illness. His ardour to despise this world and desire only God had not abated during his illness, and as he began to recover he was given a vision of a fast-running river into which all the filth of the whole earth was emptied. It sucked into itself everyone it could catch and carried them off, men and women alike. Anselm asked in wonder how they survived. He was told that they were nourished by the water and that, far from finding its filth repugnant, they delighted in it. Then he was shown a vast cluster, whose walls were covered in shining silver. In the middle of it was fresh, soft, silvery, resilient grass. Next he was asked whether he would like to see true patience. He answered that he would, but then he woke up, with a sense of grief because the vision had been cut off unfinished. Although Eadmer says that he was 'caught up out of himself' in a rapture (*extra se per mentis excessum raptus*), this does not seem to have been an experience of knowing God, but merely a dream experienced in a weakened convalescent state. It is a picture-story of the sort he frequently told when he wanted to make a moral vivid and memorable for an audience. Indeed, this very story is used in the collection of his stories and sayings which circulated after his death. If, then, we must say that Anselm was not strictly a mystic, we can certainly call him a man of prayer.

Anselm of Canterbury was the author of a series of prayers and meditations which were more popular during the Middle Ages than anything else he wrote and which attracted a multitude of imitators. They are the most personal of his writings (with the exception of some of his early letters) and in them we see the balance of intellect and spirituality in him in evidence as nowhere else. They are also the most triumphantly successful of his achievements as a writer. Anselm had a power of clear and graceful expression rare in any language, but particularly hard to hit in the Latin of the day without falling on one side into the fault of over-writing and elaborate word-play, and on the other into a crude banality. Word-play there certainly is in Anselm, but it is used with reserve and with a skill which matches figures of thought to figures of diction. A verbal climax carries a climax of ideas. An antithesis is marked by an assonance. A parallelism of content echoes of parallelism of sound:

> *Vaca aliquantulum Deo; et requiesce aliquantulum in eo (Proslogion I).*
> 'Go apart to be with God for a time and rest for a while in him.'
>
> *Tendebam in Deum, et offendi in me ipsum (Proslogion I).*
> 'I was stretching out towards God, and I was a stumbling-block to myself.'

In the treatises the clarity of the thought stands alone; in the prayers and meditations, and in those chapters of the *Proslogion* which wrap the chapters of argument in prayer, Anselm shows his feeling, and we glimpse

the depth of the faith which was deeply interfused with understanding in him. 'I do not seek to understand so that I may believe, but I believe so that I may understand' (*Proslogion I*).

Anselm's prayers and meditations make something new of an ancient pattern. Meditative, private prayer had commonly taken passages from the Psalms as a starting-point. Anselm focuses his prayer by addressing it to God or to a saint — in itself a quite usual practice — but only as a starting-point for the unfolding of a sequence of thought at once devotional and theological. That is not to say that the saint is not important. On the contrary: Anselm evokes the saints he speaks to with such vividness that he seems to be in conversation with someone as physically present to him as one of his monks. Yet the conference with the saint invariably brings him to thoughts of God: never is the saint allowed to stand between the soul at prayer and its Creator, but only to lead to an observation or an insight. John the Baptist is Jesus' baptizer, and soon we are talking to Jesus.

These are unusual in any case in being private prayers at all. The strong tradition of preceding centuries was of liturgical and public prayer. But Anselm had in view a readership not only of monks but also of a leisured and increasingly educated laity; a number of women in the family of Gilbert Crispin, once a monk of Bec; and the higher-born Mathilda of Tuscany and others were known to Anselm and some were his correspondents. It may be that it was partly for this pious lay readership that Anselm began his series of prayers to the Blessed Virgin. He says that he was asked to write a prayer about Mary by a friend whose name he does not give, and who may be no more than a literary device. The friend was not satisfied with his first prayer, so he wrote a second, and the still dissatisfied friend pressed him to write a third. Even this was a good deal revised after it had been copied and sent, so we may take it that Anselm himself became much involved in the writing of these Mary prayers and that they led him in directions he had not foreseen when he began. That is of some significance, for these were to be a major influence on the growth of devotion to the Virgin which was further fostered in the twelfth century by the writings of Bernard of Clairvaux.

These private prayers were to be used, Anselm insists, in an active and independent way by the reader. That is to say, they were not simply to be read, but taken as a starting-point for further reflections. One might begin anywhere. Anselm divided them into paragraphs to that they might more conveniently be dipped into.

What, then, is the theology to be found in the prayers and meditations? It is here that Anselm first comprehensively treats the problem of sin in its implications for the soul, and draws out of it a theology of redemption and the sacraments. Topics which receive little attention in the treatises are here explored at length and with a painful wrestling and the repetitiousness of bewildered personal suffering which is entirely foreign to the calm bright air of the treatises. In the *Cur Deus Homo* we see the logic of redemption; here is desperate human need and the immeasurable kindness of God.

Anselm is clear about the relationship in which the individual ought to stand to God. In the prayer to God he speaks of utter obedience, a life lived

according to God's purpose and will. He knows that he falls far short of this perfect submission of will and action to God, and not least in failing to take seriously enough the fearful danger in which he stands. He seeks again and again to whip himself to a full consciousness of his sin, to experience the terror of conscience which some of the sixteenth-century reformers saw as the mark of a real turning to God. I am convicted, by the facts, of being a great enemy of God, says Anselm, but a horror prevents me from admitting it (Prayer to John the Evangelist, 1). 'How lukewarm is my soul!' he exclaims. 'My heart is hardened with stupor' (Prayer of Nicholas). The first of the three meditations is designed to stir up that recognition of sinfulness and concomitant fear of judgement which Anselm finds so reprehensibly lacking in himself.

We hear more about Anselm's conception of sin throughout the prayers. How evil and bitter it is! How easy to commit; how hard to give up! (John the Baptist). We are trapped and misled by our sins, he says, in the Augustinian tradition (*ibid.*). We are dead in our sins, he says, again in the Augustinian tradition (*ibid.*). 'I came as a sinner to be reconciled, and . . . I find that I am a dead man to be raised' (Paul). Anselm's overwhelming sense is of loss. He speaks of it at length in the second meditation. The memory of lost innocence makes worse for him the torment of present unhappiness. 'I am tormented by a bad conscience and its tortures in which I am afraid that that I shall burn; I am tormented by a good conscience and the memory of the rewards of a good conscience which I know I have lost' (Meditation II). The impact of sin upon the soul is not its only penalty. 'The accused stands before the great Judge, accused of many great offences, convicted by the witness of his own conscience and by the Judge, who has seen him sin with his own eyes' (Stephen). The fear of judgement is terrible, for the judge is strict; he is angry; the offence against him is enormous (*ibid.*).

In the face of that judgement, Anselm seeks a forgiveness which will not only take away the fear of judgement, but also abolish all the consequences of sin in his own being. Forgiveness brings consolation, security, joy (Meditation II). Here Anselm explores both the forgiveness of the individual and the act of reconciliation by which Christ redeemed the world.

The prayers to Christ and to the Cross were written at the same time as the main collection, early in Anselm's career as a writer and about the same time as the *Monologion* and *Proslogion*. The third of his meditations, on Human Redemption, is much later and belongs to the period of the *Cur Deus Homo*. The prayer to Christ reflects the thought not only of Scripture and Augustine, but also of the Eucharistic liturgy.

The whole is a lifting up of the soul in thanksgiving for redemption. Anselm sees his soul as trying to 'pay its debt' by praise and thanks, as able to make such an effort for good only because Christ has made it possible ('If my soul wills any good, you gave it to me'). By remembering Christ's work he is set on fire with love. Yet when he tries to bring the Passion before him as a historical scene he has a desperate sense of failure because he was not

there. He treats the reader to a dramatic reconstruction of the most intense vividness: 'Why were you not there, my soul, to be pierced by a sword of bitter sorrow when you could not bear to see your Saviour pierced with a lance? . . . Why did you not feel horror to see the blood that poured out of your Redeemer's side? . . . Why did you not share the sufferings of his mother?' He speaks to the Virgin: 'My most merciful Lady, what am I to say about the tears which sprang from your most pure eyes when you saw your only Son before your eyes, bound, beaten and wounded?' He imagines himself with Joseph: 'O that I might have taken my Lord down from the Cross with fortunate Joseph and . . . laid him in the tomb, or even followed after.' Now Anselm feels bereft. All this it was denied him to see. He was not there. His Lord has ascended and like the Bride of the Song of Songs his soul is left longing. 'Where shall I go? Where shall I seek him? Where and when shall I find him?' Anselm prays for the comfort of his Lord's presence. In a single sequence Anselm compresses a whole soteriology. The soul is enabled to turn to Christ and to begin to want the good, but with gladness and thanksgiving goes an awakened longing which is unsatisfied this side of heaven and which leads the soul on endlessly in search of a Lord already possessed. Anselm expresses the paradox in this way: 'Give me what you have made me want.'

The prayer to the Cross has a place in a tradition of veneration of the Cross which is very ancient and had an established liturgical place in Anselm's day. Anselm uses the Cross as a starting-point for contemplation of that which the image of the Cross before him represents, the true Cross, 'and by that Cross', he says, 'I adore our merciful Lord, and what he has done in mercy for us.' He rehearses what the Cross has done as God's instrument in Christ's work. His emphasis throughout is upon Christ's willingness. 'He chose you, that he might do what he would in his goodness' — save sinners from death, destroy death itself, save the condemned, bring life to the dead, despoil hell, renew the world and make it beautiful with truth, restore the heavenly city and perfect it. He sees the Cross as itself 'exalted' by that work which was accomplished upon it, so that he can say, 'in you and through you is my life and salvation . . . and all my good'. It remains for him a powerful instrument for good: 'I am sure that if I give thanks, love and live to your glory, I shall at last come to . . . eternity . . . through you.' Here, as in the prayer to Christ, we see a full theology of the world's redemption coupled with an intimate sensitivity to the working out of salvation in the individual soul, a sense of the vastness and completeness of what was brought about once and for all by Christ's death, and of the inadequacy and uncertainty of a human response which needs that work applied again and again throughout life if the soul is to 'come to those good things for which man was created' (Prayer to the Cross).

The Meditation on Human Redemption brings us to an older and more sober Anselm, in whom there is less of the ebullient word-play and daring ideas of the early devotional works. Here he unfolds a *Cur Deus Homo* in miniature. He asks in prayer why Christ hid his power in the humility of the incarnation and the death of the Cross. He holds up the great paradox:

'You did not assume human nature to hide what was known about you, but to reveal what was unknown.' He dispatches, as he does in the *Cur Deus Homo*, the notion that the Devil had any rights in the matter, that Christ's death was in any sense a payment of ransom to Satan. It was not this necessity which 'made the highest so humble himself', but a necessity which is more accurately called need. Human nature needed to make amends to God in this way, says Anselm: God had no need to suffer so: but for the sake of man, and because man could not do it for himself, Christ humbled himself in mercy to do what was necessary. Man could not be restored to the state in which he was created unless he could be purified of sin and become sinless like the angels. That could come about only if he received forgiveness for all his sins, and only if he made full satisfaction was that possible. Satisfaction required that the sinner gave to God something which he did not owe him, something of greater value than everything which is not God himself. It was not merely a matter of making up for the sin itself but of restoring God's honour by going beyond and honouring him with a gift. But only for God himself could such a gift come. God himself, in the person of Christ, took on himself all the debt which sinners owed, when he himself owed nothing, and freely and willingly made reparation to God for man, as himself fully a man. And in this divine nature was not humbled, though on the face of it, it must seem so. Instead, human nature was unimaginably exalted.

Anselm sets out the steps of the argument here without the full details he gives in the *Cur Deus Homo*, but so that its force is plain. He makes it a prelude to an account of his own experience of redemption. Christ was in darkness, descending into hell, a huge lead weight round his neck dragging him down, unbearably burdened. So it was with Anselm: 'Thus was I placed.' Then like the sun, Christ gave him light. The weight under which Anselm lay and which was inexorably dragging him down to hell was the burden of original sin which he had from his first parents. He faced demon enemies, doing their best to make him commit a multitude of actual sins, for which also he was to be damned. Christ removed the original sin and the condemnation which went with it. He made Anselm his own and acknowledged him. He set him upright and lifted his head to know and love him. He made him sure that his soul would be saved, 'For you have given your life for it, and you have promised me your glory if I follow you', says Anselm.

Yet all is not well with him. 'I owe you more than my whole self', he says, but he cannot find that 'more' to give; he cannot even give his whole self. He is conscious of a lifetime's need of help if he is to realize and enter into the good Christ has given him.

It is here that we move into the area of the theology of the Church, ministry and sacrament of which Anselm says relatively little in his treatises. (The sole exception here might have been the theology of the Eucharist, but the debate on transubstantiation between his former master Lanfranc and the grammarian Berengar was one from which he seems deliberately to have kept himself apart.) We can best begin with the prayer

to Mary Magdalene. Mary, says Anselm, knows by her own life 'how a sinful soul can be reconciled with its creator', 'what counsel a soul in misery needs', 'what medicine' will restore a sick soul to health. Anselm holds a broadly Augustinian view of predestination. Mary is one of the 'chosen'. But he couples it with the picture of a loving friendship between the soul and its Redeemer which pervades the prayers and meditations and with which the theme of longing and inadequacy in all the prayers is shot through as with gold. You are, he says to Mary, 'now with the chosen because you are beloved'; 'you are beloved because you are chosen of God'. The divine Gardener planted her soul in his garden. What he plants he also waters, but that watering is also a testing. Like the Bridge of the Song of Songs, she burns with anxiety, seeking him, desiring him, asking for him. 'For love's sake he cannot bear her grief for long'; he does not go on hiding himself. 'For the sweetness of love he shows himself.' She responds to the sound of the gentle voice in which he has been accustomed to call her by name. She is transformed, her sorrow gone and replaced by joy. This is the pattern of the soul's reconciliation, her discovery of friendship with her Lord who chooses her and makes her his own.

Anselm understands forgiveness as embracing not only himself but the whole Christian community, his enemies as well as his friends. 'I ask this punishment for those who serve with me and hate me', he says, 'Let us love you and each other . . . so that we may make amends . . . for our own offences and for one another's offences', and 'so that we may obey one Lord and one Master with one heart in love' (Prayer for Enemies). He knows that he is not succeeding as he would wish in forgiving those who are his enemies, 'but my will is set to do it', he promises (*ibid.*). For his friends he prays diffidently, as one not worthy to ask forgiveness even for himself, but as united with them in the community of love, with the Source of love, 'by whose command and gift' he loves them.

It is as standing within this community of love and friendship and mutual help that he prays to the saints as his helpers. To John the Evangelist he says that one who because of his sins feels the need of someone to intercede for him, turns naturally to the saint who is well known for his friendship with the Judge whom Anselm has cause to fear. 'What power you have through that same friendship!', he cries. To Saints Nicholas, Benedict, Stephen, he speaks as an unworthy friend in need of someone to ask on his behalf for that which he dare not ask. They stand secure in their friendship with Christ. They have merit in his eyes, where Anselm has none, and he begs them to plead their deserving on his behalf.

Embedded here is a doctrine of ministry, which, like much of what Anselm had to say about the Church's role in the working out of salvation and the penitential system, appears embryonic in comparison with the maturing treatment of these matters in succeeding centuries. But it is a doctrine clear and strong in its main lines, so that it is apparent where Anselm would have stood in the discussions of later periods. Anselm sees ministry in the Church as primarily a matter of pastoral care, as Gregory the Great had done. The Prayer of St Peter addresses Peter as shepherd of the

flock of God. It also calls him 'Prince', able to bind and lose at will, to heal and raise up, to give the kingdom of heaven to whom he will. But Anselm does not see him as the proud ecclesiastical potentate of the latter medieval debates. 'I need your help', he says, and he sets the need for Peter's power side by side with the need for his kindness. If Anselm is sunk so low in his trouble that his cry cannot be heard by Peter, he begs him to bend down in goodness to listen. 'Have a care, kind shepherd, for the lamb of the flock which has been entrusted to you.' Anselm is a sickly sheep, lying at the shepherd's feet. But both stand before the Lord of the shepherd and the sheep. The sheep shows his shepherd his injuries, which he incurred when he strayed, the sore places he has had for a long time and which have been neglected. If the shepherd is inclined to ignore him, Anselm reminds him that he too is a sheep who has gone astray, denied his Lord three times, and himself stood in need of love and mercy. Peter's is a high office, but his office is to have mercy, to imitate his Lord as an apostle, as door-keeper of heaven to show a mercy which admits the unworthy sinner even though he has not known all his sins to confess them and has not sufficiently made amends and done penance as he should. Peter's ministry is empowered by the mercy shown to him, and he and his sheep stand side by side before their Lord as equals in the community of love made possible by divine mercy.

Anselm can be seen in many passages in the prayers to be taking it for granted that works have merit, and that there is a place for a formal process of confession, satisfaction and absolution. The complete forgiveness of baptism with its grace (though not its eternal benefits) is lost by the sinner and needs to be renewed. 'Give me back through the sorrow of penitence what you gave before in the sacrament of baptism', he pleads (Prayer to John the Baptist). In the prayer to be said by the consecrating priest before receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, he makes it plain that he understands the Eucharist to be efficacious. In the consecrated elements he adores the Lord and thanks him for the gift of his Body and Blood. He desires to receive it, 'as cleansing from sin' and as 'a defence against sin'. He knows his own unworthiness, but he 'presumes' to receive these gifts so that he may be 'justified' by them. They will be for his forgiveness and protection.

These points are wholly uncontroversial for Anselm. He receives them in simplicity. Nowhere does he query the compatibility of a doctrine of election with the notion that we must work for our salvation; of his security in faith with his anxiety to do well for his Lord; of his joy and thanksgiving with his sense of oppression and desolation because of sin. These are the attitudes of a mind and heart fundamentally unanxious about the facts of faith, and experienced in the vicissitudes of growth in holiness. Anselm, like others in the medieval world, was conscious in his daily life of the complexities of living out the process of sanctification, and of its interpenetration with the absoluteness of justification.

Now we come to putting all this into practice. Anselm was particularly sensitive to the need for inner calm without external distractions if he was

to pray and think and write and ascend in his soul towards the knowledge of God. In the years when he was Archbishop of Canterbury, he found the demands of administrative business and political affairs intensely uncongenial, as Eadmer's account reveals in every page. But worse of all was Anselm's discovery that the theory by which he had taught others to live, the rules by which he had lived at Bec, and which had enabled him to get on peaceably with everyone, did not work in this tougher world. There were people who could not be won round to the sensible and right view by kindness and reasoning with them. Some of those he had trusted proved unreliable. In short, Augustine and the rest of the Western tradition did not carry him undamaged in his spirituality through these new trials.

It is important to the study of prayer in its intellectual and emotional inner life not to forget the terrible risk of disillusionment to which the idealist exposes himself, and especially when he is naturally drawn, as Anselm was, to the conviction that the beauty of order and reasonableness is strong enough to stand up to the challenge of human evil in any of its manifestations and to overcome it. Here he might have learned more from Augustine than he did. Augustine understood the forcefulness of evil in a way that Anselm seems not have done at Bec, despite his free acknowledgement in his prayers and meditations of its power in his own soul. He shared Augustine's view that evil is nothing. He understood that that did not mean that it was of no account. But it can convincingly be argued that it was not until he came up against the problem of intractable evil in other people that he was forced to recognise the *tortuousness* of evil's effects, and then we see the fundamental tranquillity of his spiritual life profoundly disturbed and the beginnings of disillusionment. It was not merely the natural increasing cynicism or loss of idealism of middle age; Anselm was entering old age when he became Archbishop of Canterbury, and he had reached it without needing to rethink the fundamental assumptions of his spirituality as it was lived out in daily life. We can still see those at work where the new life did not present insuperable unpleasantness.

A church at Harrow was to be dedicated, and a clerk stole the chrism and ran off with it (probably to prevent what the canons of St Paul's regarded as an invasion of the episcopal rights of their bishop). When the clerk was captured and the chrism returned, Anselm was told of the episode. He was not angry or even disturbed. Mildly, he instructed that the offence was to be forgiven and the clerk set free to go home. Clearly, the politics of the affair seemed to him essentially unimportant, and his only concern was to behave to the clerk in a manner which imitated Christ's forgiving love. Eadmer tells two more stories which illustrate Anselm's spontaneous and uncomplicated kindness. Twice, when he saw children torturing animals, some boys chasing a leveret with their dogs and another who had a bird's leg tied by a string so that it fluttered desperately as it tried to escape, he ensured that the creature was safely freed, and then told his companions that what they had seen was a graphic image of the way the Devil plays with the human soul. This, then, was what we may call the uncorrupted Anselm, the gentle and merciful soul which seeks to bring beauty and order to daily life in a

practical way which he consciously saw as in tune with the beauty and order of a right spiritual life. But as Archbishop had faced a greedy king, and years of dispute over the respective spheres of authority of Church and State, and time-serving, unprincipled politicians and even men among his own bishops who were after their own advantage.

Several things distressed him when he was unable to live as heart and discipline dictated. He felt that time for God was being crowded out by unwelcome administrative concerns. He met with malice, which was something new to him. He found that men who had shown him devotion before he became archbishop now wanted benefices and horses and gifts of money. Those who got what they wanted were sycophantically pleased and promised him every service; those who did not, spoke ill of him and threatened him. Even his virtues were mocked by those who said that they were merely spiritual pride.

We all have experience of apparently intractable difficulties in our dealings with others, of those who will not come half-way to meet us, who refuse reconciliation, and there, I suspect is where we are most likely to experience dark nights of the soul and feel that we have encountered evil with all its ability to behave like a black hole and swallow us up. Anselm reacted in both negative and positive ways. His instinct was to avoid this unpleasantness and retreat to the cloister. He compared himself with an owl. When she is with her chicks, he said, she is happy; when she is away from the nest among crows and rooks and other birds, she is attacked and torn to pieces. He feared for his soul amidst the pressures of secular business and the crowding of disputes. When he could spend his time in 'heavenly studies' or in instructing those who were in difficulties over a text of Scripture or uncertain about some point of right behaviour, he was content. He tried, too, to do what he could in a practical way to relieve the poor. Where he could not avoid dealing with business and its conflicts, he sought to be a peacemaker. He persisted in thinking the best of even wicked men, taking the view that he would rather be deceived in believing good of them, than mistakenly think ill of those who did not deserve it. He tried to grieve more for the condemnation which must come to the wicked than for the evil they were doing him. This approach was ineffective with some, who thought that his mildness and gentleness meant that he was easy to deceive, and whose wickedness increased. Where he found he could not bring a dispute to an end, he would withdraw from it, and sometimes become deeply depressed, so that his monks had to distract him with a theological problem in order to cheer his spirits. This inability to cope, and a certain naivety over human nature, account in large measure for his failures as an administrator and a spiritual baron of the realm, and we see in them the practical limitations of Anselm's nature.

The question is whether they also constitute faults of practical spirituality. In short, were the principles on which Anselm tried to live actually in some way wrong or inadequate for these new circumstances? He was capable of being persuaded against his better judgement. At St Omer, some of his entourage persuaded him to refuse the request of yet one more

girl who wanted to be confirmed, on the grounds that there was a long day's journey ahead, and she would certainly not be the last; if he acceded to her request, more and more would appear. Anselm let them convince him that he ought to refuse her, but afterwards he was overcome with a painful and lasting remorse. That, however, was an exceptional instance, and Eadmer reports it as such. His simplicity was far from being unable to perceive the unavoidable mixture of bad and good in things. He realised that by going to Rome as he felt he must, he was leaving behind men faithful to him who would be treated badly by the King in his absence. He was able to grieve sincerely for the death of the King. But the theory of right behaviour on which he continued to try to work was the monastic rule of perfect obedience. He explained that although permission may be given for the obedient soul to do something which it has foresworn, by way of engaging in worldly affairs, only the deed can be excused by the permission; if the doer *wants* to do it, his *will* is *culpable*. But although his own will was certainly not inclined that way, he did not find it possible to act in perfect obedience in all quarters. He could not, in practice, obey both God and the King. Although he continued to hold up perseverance as essential, it could not be a straightforward matter for him as Archbishop to persevere in obedience as he had done when he was at Bec. He was discovering the problems of applying clear simple moral rules to morally complex situations.

It has to be recognised, too, that there were peculiar satisfactions for him in the love which used to reward his goodness, and that the loss of them when he came up against human unpleasantness in an intransigent form took away from him an assurance of doing good which was important to him. From time to time he was able to enjoy it again, in a series of episodes described by Eadmer. On his way to Rome to ask the Pope's advice about the quarrel with the King which drove him into exile, he stopped at St Omer, where he greatly pleased the inhabitants by consenting to confirm their children, for the bishopric of Thérouanne were St Omer lay had been disputed for many years and they had not had a bishop to minister confirmation for some time. While he was with the Pope in South Italy in 1098, Anselm attracted many (even Moslems) by the humility and simplicity of his manner, in contrast to the forbidding high dignity of the Pope. As he passed by, a huge crowd would bless him and kneel to thank him for his kindness. In Rome, too, he met vast popular goodwill; he was spoken of as 'the Saint'; even his entourage, which included Eadmer the reporter of these events, was held in universal honour and affection.

On his way back to England Anselm was forced to wait at Lyons, and he settled down there to a life of peace and good works, 'as of old', as Eadmer puts it, returning as far as he could to the way of life he had lived at Bec. So I think we have to say that his solution to problems which challenged the rules of his spirituality was to retreat from them and to try to reconstruct a world in which they did not arise.

It is hard to know what to say in conclusion. In Augustine and Anselm we see two great spirits, able to see further than most into the depths of Christian truth, men of prayer, friends with God, battered and bewildered

like the rest of us when life gets tough. Both relied upon the community of the Church to keep them afloat in bad patches. Both concluded that it was not the good which had failed them, but in some way themselves. Neither died in despair. Perhaps it has to be enough to say that.

A Decade of Evangelism — or Evangelisation?

An opening comment : BRIAN HOARE

THE fact that our Roman Catholic friends speak of a 'Decade of Evangelisation' whereas the Protestant denominations have all committed themselves to a 'Decade of Evangelism' makes for a certain awkwardness. But is it anything deeper than a mere terminological difference? Are the two phrases describing the same activity, or is there a clear distinction between them? And if there is, which is the preferable term to describe what we are about during this Decade?

It is worth noting that the President's Council Report to the 1990 Conference, in response to which Methodism is committed to a Decade of Evangelism, actually used both terms. Indeed, the Council's first comment in commending the Decade of Evangelism was to say: 'For Methodists evangelism is clearly linked to social caring and the struggle for justice as *Sharing in God's Mission* made clear. In this sense the word "evangelisation" as used in the Roman Catholic Church meaning, "bringing the good news into all strata of humanity from within and making it new", is particularly apt.' That is surely what the great majority of Methodists believe and certainly describes my own conviction. The sort of evangelism which is divorced from social concern and drives a wedge between the Great Commission and the Great Commandment cannot claim to be true to the New Testament.

Would it not be better, therefore, to abandon the word 'evangelism' altogether in favour of 'evangelisation'? There are several comments to be made in response to that question. First, whilst the New Testament frequently uses the noun 'euangellion' (gospel, good news) and the verb 'euangellizo' (to evangelise), the terms 'evangelism' and 'evangelisation' are not used at all. Neither is actually a biblical word, so that resorting to Scripture cannot settle the matter. Second, semantically it is difficult to establish any real distinction of meaning between evangelism and evangelisation. I was interested to learn from a Roman Catholic priest recently that in Spanish both have to be translated by a single word — and the same must be true in other languages also. The real difference between these