

Saint Anselm on the Kingdom of Heaven: A Model of Right Order

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Although Saint Anselm never wrote a systematic treatise on heaven, the concept of heaven, as it is found in several of his writings, is robust; it is rich in meaning and content. All that is good and just, all that is blessing is included in the concept. Heaven is a sign of God's goodness and love for his angelic and human creatures. What stands out in Anselm's discussions of heaven is order: heaven is a model of right order. The paper will examine three kinds of order in the writings of Anselm that express his view of the order in heaven. First, there is the moral order in that sin and punishment are properly adjudicated by the work of the Son of God. Second, there is the salvific order in that heaven is the reward granted to those who persevere in the faith. Third, there is the mystical order in that heaven is to be inhabited by a perfect number of created beings. Thus when Anselm invokes heaven, as he does in many prayers and letters, he is invoking that which for him is a wonderful and powerful concept that reflects God's love.

In his life of Anselm, Eadmer recounts the dream vision that Anselm had in his youth. He was bidden to climb to the summit of a high mountain and enter into the hall of the Great King. As he approached the mountain, he saw in the surrounding plains those who had been sent out to gather the harvest for the King. Eadmer writes:

Before he began to climb, he saw in the plain through which he was approaching the foot of the mountain, serfs of the king who were reaping the corn, but doing so carelessly and idly.¹

The workers of the king were shirking their responsibilities and Anselm was troubled at their laziness and lack of zeal. Anselm intended to bring the matter up with the King. Eadmer continues:

Then he climbed the mountain and came to the royal court, where he found God alone with his steward.... The boy entered and was summoned by the Lord. He approached and sat at his feet. The Lord asked him in a pleasant and friendly way who he was, where he came from and what he wanted. He replied to the questions

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¹ Eadmer, *The Life of St Anselm*, trans. R. W. Southern (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) 4. The Latin texts of Anselm's works are from *Intelex Past Masters*, an online resource of texts from *S. Anselmi: Opera Omnia*, ed. F.S. Schmitt (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd. 1940–1961). English translations are mine unless otherwise indicated. For the footnotes, the following abbreviations will be used: C, *De Concordia*; Ca, *De casu diabolo*; Co, *De conceptu virginali et de originali peccato*; Cu, *Cur deus homo*; E, *Epistola*.

as best he could. Then, at God's command, the whitest of bread was brought to him by the steward, and he refreshed himself with it in God's presence.²

There are two matters of interest in this dream vision that go to the purpose of this paper. The first is Anselm's reaction to the behavior of the harvesters. They were not doing what they ought to have been doing, and certainly they were not full of zeal for the will and for the work of God. There was something disordered about their behavior, something unfitting for those so close to the presence of God. The second is the peaceful and loving order that Anselm experienced when he arrived in the court of the king. There he enjoyed the solicitude and kindness of the king who fed him with bread of finest wheat by which Anselm refreshed himself for the journey ahead.

The thesis of this paper is that for Anselm heaven is the model of order.³ It is important to make three preliminary remarks before the substance of the paper is presented. The first is that there is no systematic treatment of heaven in the writings of Anselm. References are made to heaven in several of his works, but he does not explore a theology or a philosophy of heaven at any length. Anselm uses several terms for heaven: *caelum* (heaven), *civis caelesti* (heavenly city), *regnum dei* (kingdom of God), *regnum angelorum* (kingdom of the angels), and *regnum caelorum* (kingdom of heaven). The term *paradiso* is primarily used by Anselm to designate the Garden of Eden; in only three instances does he use it to refer to heaven proper.⁴ While Anselm occasionally uses phrases that refer to a vision (*visio*) of God or of the Son or of the angels or of peace, the idea of heaven as a beatific vision of the knowledge of God, such as it is in Saint Albert the Great and other later medieval thinkers, was not an aspect of Anselm's thinking.⁵ All of these terms are found in several writings such as *Cur deus homo*, *De casu diaboli*, *De concordia*, and *Meditatio redemptoris humanae* as well as in numerous letters and prayers, but, again, what heaven is is discussed only to a limited extent.⁶

² *Idem*. The term Eadmer uses for court or palace is *aula* ("ad aulam magni regis Dei"), which Anselm also uses in his third prayer to St. Mary in an attribution to the Blessed Mother as "court of universal propitiation" (*aula universalis propitiationis*). "The whitest of bread" may be an indirect reference to "the finest of wheat" in Deut 32.14, and in Pss 81.16 and 147.14. It should be noted that while the laborers are sluggish in their duties, the King can still take the work of their hands and cause it to become this "whitest of bread."

³ That right order is a significant aspect of Anselm's thought is a commonplace and is evident throughout his writings. Anselm scholars regularly assert his desire to find and acknowledge the order in the Creator and in creation. See, for example, Gregory Sadler, "A Perfectly Simple God and Our Complicated Lives," The 2008 Saint Anselm Lecture given at Saint Anselm College on April 22, 2008. Forthcoming in *The Saint Anselm Journal*; Katherin A Rogers, "Anselm on Eudaemonism and the Hierarchical Structure of Moral Choice," *Religious Studies* 2005, Vol. 41(3), 249–68; Eileen C. Sweeney, "Anselm's *Proslogion*: The Desire for the Word," *The Saint Anselm Journal* 1.1 (Fall 2003), 17–31.

⁴ C II.16; O 10; E 418.

⁵ See Jeffrey P. Hergan, *St. Albert the Great's Theory of the Beatific Vision* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2002). Indeed, Anselm never uses the phrase "beatific vision" while *visio Dei* is found only in two instances, E 185 and P 1, and *visio Filii* is found only in Pr 11.

⁶ The various terms Anselm uses for heaven can be traced in G. R. Evans, *A Concordance of the Works of St. Anselm* (Millwood, New York: Kraus International Publications, 1984), esp. 141–42 and 1329–30.

The second remark is that even as Anselm has composed no systematic study of heaven, neither has anyone written a systematic treatment of Anselm on this topic. Does the author of this paper, then, rush in where angels fear to tread? One can only hope not!

The third remark is that Anselm relies on Augustine as a major source for the expression of his thought, and so it should come as no surprise that in his comments on heaven Anselm borrows some of his material from Augustine. This is especially true of the notion of there ultimately being a perfect number of human and angelic beings in heaven, a notion that Augustine discusses in several places in his later writings (mid-420's) which are concerned in part with his efforts to explain his thoughts on predestination and limited salvation, such as found in *De corruptione et gratia* (13.39), *Enchiridion* (9.29), and *De civitate dei* (22.1). While Anselm may have been influenced by the description of heaven in the vision at Ostia in *Confessiones* IX.10, he does not use the language of ascent and of hearing so prominent in that passage.⁷

Given those three preliminary remarks, the paper will examine three kinds of order that can be found in the writings of Anselm that express his view of the order in heaven even though, as noted above, Anselm himself did not systematically present them as three distinct kinds of orders.⁸ First the paper will look at heaven as a moral order in that sin and punishment are properly regulated. Second it will study heaven as a salvific order in that heaven is the reward granted to those who persevere in the faith. Third it will consider heaven as a mystical order in that it is inhabited by a perfect number of beings.

I. Heaven as Moral Order

First, we examine the idea of heaven as moral order. For Anselm, heaven is a moral order in which there is perfect harmony of all that is good and in which there is no trace of anything that is evil. Nothing is out of place in heaven, and thus there is no evil there whatsoever.⁹ In discussing the knowledge of good and evil in the good angels, Anselm argues that sin need not have existed for the good angels to know the difference between good and evil. Even if no angels ever chose to rebel, God could have given this knowledge to the angels in some way. But since some angels did choose evil and sinned, God used them as an example for the good angels to confirm them in the goodness and obedience they chose, showing his power to bring good from

⁷ An examination of Anselm's sources will be the focus of a future study. Certainly Anselm would have been exposed to a number of medieval concepts of heaven as a garden, as a city, as an empyrean of radiant light, and how heaven would fulfill the promise of the knowledge of God and the promise of the love of God. See Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang, *Heaven: A History*, 2nd edition (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988). That Anselm is not considered a major figure for discussions of heaven is evidenced by the fact that McDannell and Lang do not cite Anselm as a source or make any reference to him. Anselm is not cited in *The Book of Heaven: An Anthology of Writings from Ancient to Modern Times*, eds. Carol Zaleski and Philip Zaleski (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁸ Planned future studies will examine in Anselm the other three components of what are traditionally called the four last things: death, judgment, and hell.

⁹ Comp. Rev 21.27: "...nothing unclean will enter it, nor any (one) who does abominable things or tells lies."

evil. Evil, thus, serves a purpose and is not independent of God's will and power. Otherwise, Anselm concludes, "evil would abide unordered in the kingdom of omnipotent wisdom."¹⁰

Turning from angelic to human sinfulness, Anselm argues in *Cur deus homo* that it is necessary for satisfaction to be made for man's rebellion. Since God's honor was violated by sin, some kind of satisfaction had to be made for God's honor to be restored, that is, that the sinner may honor God in a fitting and appropriate way. God cannot simply forgive the sin out of mercy, Anselm argues, because if sin is not punished, if satisfaction is not made for it, it remains unregulated and unordered, and thus appears to be outside the realm of God's control. If sin is neither paid for nor punished, it is not subject to any law.¹¹ Anselm writes, "It is not fitting for God to leave anything in his kingdom unregulated."¹²

Anselm insists on this again later in *Cur deus homo* when a question is raised regarding the recompense for sin and the necessity for that recompense to be proportionate to the magnitude of the offense. Anselm argues that if the recompense is not proportionate to the magnitude of the offense, then once again the sin remains unregulated and outside the order of God's law. "In any other way sin would remain unregulated, but this is not possible if God allows nothing unregulated to abide in his kingdom."¹³ Anselm appeals to his earlier argument, already mentioned, that it is impossible for something inappropriate [*inconveniens*], however small [*quamlibet parvum*], to be allowed to exist in the kingdom of God.¹⁴

Anselm comments directly on the moral order of heaven in two other works. In *De conceptu virginali et de originali peccato*, Anselm writes: "[God] demands the honor due to him from unwilling sinners which they did not wish to render freely, and he places them apart from the just in due order so that nothing should be out of place in his kingdom."¹⁵ Sin creates a moral disorder in the kingdom of God and this disorder cannot stand. Sin, which is ontologically nothing and has no metaphysical status, being the absence of good,¹⁶ is thus repulsed by the kingdom of heaven. Further, Anselm writes in the *Meditatio redemptionis humanae*: "Human nature alone could not do this [i.e., obtain forgiveness and salvation], nor could it be reconciled

¹⁰ Ca 25: "ut nec malum inordinatum in regno omnipotentis sapientiae remaneret."

¹¹ Cu I.12: "Si autem peccatum nec solvitur nec punitur, nulli legi subiacet."

¹² Cu I.12: "Deum vero non decet aliquid inordinatum in suo regno dimittere." There are other reasons given why sin cannot simply be forgiven by the divine mercy. If sins are forgiven without satisfaction, then sinners and non-sinners would be treated equally in the eyes of God and it would not be fitting for God to act in this way. Further, a righteous man abides by the law of God and is rewarded for observing the law. If sin is not punished, it would not be subject to the law and this, too, would not be fitting for God.

¹³ Cu I.20: "Aliter aliquatenus inordinatum maneret peccatum, quod esse non potest, si deus nihil relinquit inordinatum in regno quo."

¹⁴ Cu I.10: "Sicut enim in deo quamlibet parvum inconveniens sequitur impossibilitas, ita quamlibet parvam rationem, si maiori non vincitur, comitatur necessitas."

¹⁵ Co 6. *Anselm of Canterbury: The Major Works*, trans. Brian Davies and G. R. Evans (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 366.

¹⁶ Cf. Co 5: "Deesse vero bonum quod debet adesse, non est aliquid esse. Quare malum esse non est ulli essentiae aliquid esse."

without the satisfaction of the debt, nor could the justice of God pass over the disorder of sin in his kingdom.”¹⁷

Thus, for Anselm, heaven is a place of due and proper moral order wherein the disorder of sin and sinfulness, whether angelic or human, has no standing and no place. All have embraced the will of God.¹⁸ Nothing in the kingdom of God is unregulated, i.e., nothing there exists apart from the will of God flowing from the absolute goodness of his being. In heaven, therefore, there is perfect harmony of being and of beings. God indeed transforms moral disorder into a new, higher order through grace, by the power of forgiveness and the other aids he offers to humans to set things right: “It is divine grace, and grace alone, that restores the lost *affectio* for justice to the will of the fallen human agent.”¹⁹

II. Heaven as Salvific Order

Having considered the moral order, we turn now to the second kind of order of which Anselm speaks: the salvific order of the happiness and joy of the redeemed. At the time of creation, God willed humans to be happy and just: “It was the intention of God that he make his rational creature just and happy so that his creature could enjoy him.”²⁰ Though the possibility of enjoying the presence of God, as was the case when Adam and Eve walked with God in the Garden of Eden and conformed their will to his, was lost through their sin, it was eventually to be restored to the human race by the willing obedience of the Son of God. This is a salvific order, an economy of salvation, in which the promises of God for the salvation of the whole human race, promises which have been fulfilled in the Christ, are realized and experienced by those who have been faithful. This is beatitude, complete happiness. In *De concordia* Anselm writes: “In the case of those redeemed by Christ, those torments which humanity was to suffer in the underworld are remitted and many are gifted with the kingdom of God which they were to receive in due time after a period of intimacy with God in the earthly Paradise—on condition that they persevere right up to the end in the faith they promise at baptism.”²¹

Because of incorruptibility and immortality in heaven, those who are saved and rest there will experience a happiness which, as St. Paul notes, is what “eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and what has not entered the human heart, what God has prepared for those who love him” (I Cor 2.9). In *De Concordia* Anselm writes of the irresistibility of this heavenly homeland:

¹⁷ *The Prayers and Meditations of Saint Anselm with Proslogion*, trans. Benedicta Ward, S.L.G. (London: Penguin Books, 1973) 233.

¹⁸ In E 112 to the hermit Hugh, Anselm explains how to begin to attain heaven in this life by a total abandonment of one’s will to the will of God: “And thus they shall each be perfect kings, because what they will individually, shall come about; and all of them shall at the same time be one king with God and, as it were, one person, because they shall all will one thing, and what they will shall come about.” *The Letters of Saint Anselm* Volume One, trans. Walter Fröhlich (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1990) 269.

¹⁹ Katherin A. Rogers, “Anselm on Grace and Free Will,” *The Saint Anselm Journal* 2.2 (Spring, 2005) 66 [<http://www.anselm.edu/library/SAJ/pdf/22Rogers.pdf>].

²⁰ C 13: “Intentio namque dei fuit, ut iustam faceret atque beatam naturam rationalem ad fruendum se.”

²¹ C 3.9: Davies and Evans, 466.

“For since people would see those converts to Christ instantly passing into incorruptibility, there would be no one who could even will to withdraw from the overwhelming happiness to be seen.”²² Whatever good one desires will be found there in heaven. In *De humanis moribus* Anselm sets out the four-fold conditions to which human nature is susceptible: to be miserable [*miser*], those who live in the world; to be most miserable [*miserrimus*], those who are permanently fixed in the fires of hell; to be happy [*beatus*], those who enjoyed the earthly paradise before the fall, viz., Adam and Eve; to be most happy [*beatissimus*], those who reside with the saints in heaven.²³ The *beatus* condition no longer obtains and the *miser* condition is limited to this life. Thus at the end of time, all rational beings will exist either in a state of *beatissimus* or *miserrimus*. Those who order their lives according to the will of God will enjoy the condition of *beatissimus*.

Earlier in the work, Anselm had set out the fourteen opposed pairs of beatitude and misery. The first set of seven belongs properly to the body: beauty and ugliness; agility and slowness; strength and weakness; freedom and servitude; sanity and insanity; calmness and anxiety; long-lived and short-lived. The second set of seven belongs properly to the soul: wise and foolish; friendly and unfriendly; agreeable and disagreeable; honorable and shameful; powerful and impotent; peaceful of mind and fearful; joyful and sad.²⁴ Those in heaven enjoy the fullness of all fourteen beatitudes and are most blessed while those in the underworld are cursed with the fourteen miseries.

This list bears a certain resemblance to the list of the goods of body and soul the saved will experience in heaven which Anselm presents in *Proslogion* 25. In speaking of the great good which is Father and Son and Holy Spirit, Anselm argues that the soul will find all that its heart loves and desires in that one good: beauty; swiftness or strength or freedom of the body; long and healthy life; satisfaction; quenching of thirst; melody; pleasure of every kind; friendship; peace; power; honors and riches; security. Not only will one’s joy be great beyond measure because of these goods accruing to oneself, but one will also rejoice together with all those in heaven over the goods enjoyed by all. While Anselm does not offer a similar description of life in heaven in *Monologion*, he does speak of the happy life for the rational creature as a life “truly immune from death and all distress,” a life in union with the Supreme Essence, while those who reject the Supreme Essence will know only utter and eternal unhappiness.²⁵

Those who have accepted the salvation won by Christ and have striven to fulfill his commandments will, by the grace of God, enter into that eternal kingdom that had been offered freely by God to Adam and Eve and their progeny, but which they forfeited because of their sin.

²² C 3.9: Davies and Evans, 464.

²³ *De humanis moribus* 125 in *Memorials of Saint Anselm*, ed. R. W. Southern and F. S. Schmitt (London: Oxford University Press, 1969) 86.

²⁴ *De humanis moribus* 48–71 (Southern and Schmitt, 57–63).

²⁵ *Monologion* 69 (Davies and Evans, 75). See *Monologion* 67–74 for a discussion of the proper relationship that ought to exist between the Supreme Essence and the rational creature, whether angelic or human, as this relationship speaks to the complete happiness which is the promise of heaven.

That same heaven and the perfect happiness promised to them are made available to those who persevere in faith. For the happiness of the saved is not promised to everyone. Anselm writes:

The beatitude of the just is not promised to [those who still have injustice in them] since just as true happiness possesses nothing unworthy of it, so it will be not be given to anyone unless such a one is just without any injustice whatsoever. For since happiness, which is promised to the just, will be like the happiness of the angels of God: just as in angelic goodness there is no injustice, so no one can be in their company who has any injustice in him.²⁶

III. Heaven as Mystical Order

The third kind of order in heaven is a mystical order of perfect number. Anselm considers the perfect number of beings who are to enjoy the rewards of heaven in an extended discussion in *Cur deus homo*. All of creation, having been made according to measure and number and weight (Wisdom 11.21), has been carefully and providentially ordered by God. The number of rational beings of this creation has likewise been set by the Creator. Anselm accommodates Deuteronomy 32.8 to illustrate this: “When the Most High assigned the nations their heritage, when he parceled out the descendants of Adam, He set up the boundaries of the peoples after the number of the sons of God.” He takes the phrase “sons of God” in the passage to refer to the angels. With the fall of the wicked angels, Anselm argues, following the thought of Augustine,²⁷ it was necessary that the original and perfect numbering be made up by other rational beings. The argument in these chapters of *Cur deus homo* (I.16–18) is primarily concerned with how the number is going to be made up: will only that number of humans be admitted to heaven which equals the number of angels who fell; will there be more good humans than bad angels, etc.? These questions do not concern us here. What is important for our consideration is that Anselm is convinced that there is a perfect number for the inhabitants of heaven, which number will be complete and fitting for the perfection of heaven, a perfect number he describes as being demanded by what is most proper.²⁸

In *Cur deus homo* Anselm and his interlocutor Boso agree that God intended to make up for the number of angels who fell from heaven by bringing into heaven a certain number of faithful humans. God has determined what that complete number of rational beings in heaven will be and admits to heaven that number of humans which will make the number complete. Anselm writes: “It should not be doubted that a reasoning being, who either is happy now or is to be happy in the future in the contemplation of God, is known by God to exist in a kind of

²⁶ C 4: “Talibus non promittitur beatitudo iustorum, quoniam sicut vera beatitudo est sine omni indigentia, ita nulli datur nisi iusto sine omni iniustitia. Nam quoniam beatitudo, quae iustis promittitur, erit similitudo angelorum dei: sicut in angelis bonis nulla est iniustitia, ita nullus illis sociabitur cum aliqua iniustitia.”

²⁷ See p. 3 *supra*.

²⁸ Cu I.18: “...quam illa perfecti numeri convenientia exigeret.”

foreknown rational and perfect number, such that it would not be fitting for that number to be greater or less than it is.”²⁹

Anselm discusses different possibilities for fulfilling the deficiency in the perfect number that resulted from the fall of the wicked angels, but can come to no clear resolution, save that there must be such a perfect number for the perfect order of heaven demands it. Thus he concludes: “It seems to me that, in the case of the angels, the number whereby the city above is to be given its full complement was not complete. For, if mankind was not created at the same time as the angels, this is a possibility, and if both mankind and the angels were created simultaneously it appears to be inevitable.”³⁰

Heaven must be inhabited by a perfect number of beings, that number being a mystical number known only to God and revealed to no one, a number which even the fall of the wicked angels cannot negate or cancel out. The perfect order which is heaven requires that this number be fulfilled either by the creation of more angels or by the welcoming into heaven of humans who have been redeemed or a combination of both. Whatever the case, that perfect number will be fulfilled so that the order of heaven will be perfect.³¹

The discussion about the angels is a reminder that there is another order one might have expected to find in Anselm’s writings, an order that was often discussed and written about in late antiquity and in the middle ages, but an order that is not found in any of his writings, namely, the hierarchical order of the angelic beings. This order has early precedents in Christian literature, beginning with the comments of Saint Paul in Ephesians and Colossians and in the first letter of Saint Peter.³² The most well known of the early texts is perhaps *The Celestial Hierarchy* of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, composed in the 4th or 5th century. But other authors before and after the Areopagite discussed this hierarchy: Clement of Rome, Ambrose, Jerome, Gregory the Great, Isidore of Seville, John of Damascus, Thomas Aquinas, and Dante Alighieri. While several schema were proposed with ranks of angelic beings numbering between seven and eleven, the Dionysian structure appears to have been most favorably received in the tradition. In

²⁹ Cu I.16: “Rationalem naturam, quae dei contemplatione beata vel est vel futura est, in quodam rationabili et perfecto numero praescitam esse a deo, ita ut nec maiorem nec minorem illum esse deceat, non est dubitandum.”

³⁰ Cu I.18. Davies and Evans, 293.

³¹ In Co 23 Anselm clearly asserts that after the Day of Judgment there will be no creature, human or angelic, who is not either in heaven or hell, but he never speaks of a perfect number in hell. In C 9 he writes, “We are not promised in baptism and faith the happiness which Adam enjoyed in Paradise before his sin. Instead we are promised the happiness which he would have when the number to be taken up to form the heavenly citizenry would be complete” (Davies and Evans, 464). In Cu I.18, he writes: “We believe that this will not come to pass until the number of elect humans has reached its final total, and the blessed city to which we have referred has been brought to completion” (Davies and Evans, 295). His thought recalls the statement in Rev. 6.11 wherein the martyrs are told to be patient until the number of their fellow martyrs is fulfilled or completed, i.e., perfect.

³² Ephesians 1.20–21: “...raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens, far above *every principality, authority, power, and dominion*, and every name that is named not only in this age but also in the one to come;” Colossians 1.16: “For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether *thrones or dominions or principalities or powers*; all things were created through him and for him;” I Peter 3.22: “...[Jesus Christ] who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with *angels, authorities, and powers* subject to him” (emphases added).

it there are three hierarchies or spheres or triads each with three orders or choirs of divine beings: in descending order the first hierarchy consisting of Seraphim, Cherubim, and Ophanim; the second hierarchy consisting of Thrones, Dominions, and Principalities; the third hierarchy consisting of Powers, Archangels, and Angels.

Anselm, though he speaks of angelic powers, does not mention any hierarchy or order among them nor does he distinguish between the spheres and the choirs. Anselm did not, at least in his extant writings, speculate on such an order. For Anselm, the reality of heaven lay not so much in nor did it depend upon an understanding of such structures but rather in approaching as much as one could in this life an understanding of and attempt to live out even now, with the grace of God, the fullness and perfection of beatitude promised by God. Heaven, in other words, is the goal of a life lived in harmony with the will of God.

IV. Conclusion

In many of his letters, Saint Anselm invokes heaven. This is especially the case in the salutations and the closings. For example, in writing to Albert, a physician whom Anselm had been trying to persuade to join the monastery, Anselm greets the addressee with the wish that “he may despise earthly goods for the sake of heaven and receive the goods of heaven in exchange for earthly ones.”³³ To Ida, Countess of Boulogne, Anselm wishes that “she may so serve God in this life that she may deserve to reign with God in the life to come.”³⁴ In closing a letter to King Henry, Anselm writes: “May almighty God long rule your earthly kingdom with joy to you and strengthen your rule over the English, so that after this life he may cause you to reign among the angels. Amen.”³⁵ These are not simply polite and/or pious invocations. They are rather invocations of a heaven that is for Anselm a robust and rich concept, filled with meaning and significance. To wish the blessings of heaven on someone is, for Anselm, to wish him/her all the blessings of a wholly good life, a life of perfect happiness, to be enjoyed in a kingdom filled to capacity with those who seek to love and serve God alone and to love all others in God.

In a heaven of perfect beatitude, there will be a perfect moral order which regulates all that is in it and does not allow the disorder of sin; there will be a perfect salvific order which offers to those who are faithful that paradise of pure happiness promised to Adam and Eve; there will be a perfect mystical order which consists of the perfect number of rational beings who will give due praise and worship to the God who created, saved, and sanctified them. As Anselm writes in *Monologion* 70:

We may conclude, then, with absolute truth, that every rational soul that strives,
as it ought, to love and desire supreme happiness will, at some point, behold and

³³ E 44. Fröhlich, Volume One, 149. Other letters with similar salutations that speak of heaven include 67, 81, 82, 99, 178, 183, 235, 324, 332, and 435. Letters with closing that invoke heaven include 249, 262, 288, 301, 378, 402, 419, and 427. Several of Anselm’s prayers also speak of heaven: 4, 9, 12, 14, 15, and 16.

³⁴ E 167. Fröhlich, Volume Two, 62.

³⁵ E 301. Fröhlich, Volume Two, 322–23.

enjoy it. So that what it “now” sees “through a glass darkly,” as it were, it will then see “face to face.” And of course it enjoys supreme happiness without end.... Such happiness will not abandon what loves it. Nor is there anything more powerful that could separate them against their will. So, then, once the soul begins to enjoy supreme happiness, it will live the happy life for ever.³⁶

Although he became familiar, perhaps all too familiar given his personal interests and personality, with the secular courts of kings, in particular William Rufus and his brother Henry II, and with the courts of the ecclesiastical world of archbishops and popes, Anselm set his sights from the days of his youthful dream on the Court of the Great King and he sought in his life, teachings, and prayers to bring others to see the order, beatitude, joy, and harmony of that Court which awaits those who are faithful and which offers genuine happiness and peace, even if only partially in this life, to those who order their lives after the will of God.

³⁶ Davies and Evans, 76.