

The Valence of Anselm in Balthasar's Theology

Analogy as Freedom

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In Anselm, as well as in the four by Balthasar in *The Glory of the Lord, vol. II* subsequently treated theologians, God implanted a profound awareness of his beauty. The whole of the Anselmian corpus attests, in Balthasar's view, to a harmony, order and intelligibility in the contingent world which is grounded in God. God's freedom is manifested in incarnate things so that as a full partner in the covenant with God humanity might grow in this freedom. By way of a reconstituted freedom, humankind may better perceive supreme beauty and transcend towards spontaneous, sacrificial love. What Anselm calls «necessary reasons», Balthasar explains, is no trite rationalism but the human response to God by contemplating divine beauty, freedom and love. With Anselm the *intelligere* always refers to and serves the *credere*. Thereby, the *intelligere* gains space to unfold and better become itself.

1. The Rythmn of Unity and Form

Anselm is characterized as breathing a pronounced sense of unity and form. Natural science and methodological exactitude are not eclipsed and by-passed by a *hiatus infusus* from the Holy Spirit in faith.

They would not enjoy such a shaping power if their talents had not themselves been transformed through the Spirit's shaping power: if, that is to say, these theologians were not in a Christian ecstasies, had not been caught and drawn into the unity of enthusiasm and holiness¹.

¹ H. U. VON BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, Vol. I, *Seeing the Form*, trans. E. Leiva-Meerikakis, San Francisco 1982, 78.

For Balthasar the *intellectus fidei* includes «this interior completion of the philosophical act in theology»² for God revealed his figure in a manner comprehensible to humanity (Jn 1,18). By this divine communication of Jesus Christ's full glory, the mysteries of faith – such as incarnation, resurrection and the Eucharist – come to be thought of as conforming to Anselm's axiom of the «necessity of faith».

Anselm lived in the Romanesque era. This style of architecture is an uninterrupted continuation from Roman days. On the intellectual plane as well one can detect no significant rupture. As a Benedictine monk, he views contemplative reason as an «aesthetic» category. It brings about a «spiritual intuition of measure and right relationship»³. The whole of the world as a form is the expression of God's inconceivable freedom and love. Therefore, the horizon of thought is already a priori encapsulated in a unity that is akin to an «unlimited limit». By wholly concentrating on «the inner structure and ordering of the mystery», Anselm frees his text of all personal features and attempts to faithfully mirror the divine impression. The intellectual, rational construction endeavors to explicate to the human mind what Christian faith is, fully knowing the «form» by what is apprehended in a faith which encompasses everything radically⁴. The light of faith is never seen as in contradiction to reason. God becomes impressed on the created spirit and thereby a further similarity is achieved.

2. The Elements of Balthasar's Treatment

In contrast to Barth⁵, Balthasar had at his disposal almost all of Anselm's corpus in the critical edition of F. S. Schmitt, O.S.B. As in all his other writings too, Balthasar makes abundant use of primary sources. He also desists from engaging in polemics. He devotes forty nine short pages to Anselm and treats his theology as having three moments:

1. aesthetic reason,
2. the radiance of freedom and
3. the victory of prayer.

² BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. I, 146.

³ BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. II, *Studies in theological Style: Clerical Styles*, trans. A. Louth, F. McDonagh, B. McNeil, San Francisco 1984, 18.

⁴ Cfr. AUGUSTINE, *De vera religione*.

⁵ Cfr. BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. II (*Anselm*), 233, footnote 170.

Alas, in this volume no other figure receives such a short treatment.

In the introduction Anselm is praised for being «perfectly balanced» and for realizing in the purest form the concerns of a «theological aesthetics», contemplating «God's beauty in the freely fashioned form of the world»⁶. He situates Anselm's theology already decades before Bacht, Penco and Härdlin⁷ in a Benedictine, monastic context, rather than in a Scholastic one. The monastic realm is viewed by Balthasar as enabling the specifically Anselmian understanding of freedom. Freedom experiences itself as actualized by freely embracing spatial limits. Such an appreciation of freedom is thought of as central to the Benedictine charisma: «manifest in the consciousness of freedom and in a form of life sealed by freedom»⁸.

By his contemplation of «the highest rectitude», Anselm is seen as contemplating the dimensions of harmony, necessity, utmost freedom and absolute beauty rooted in the Godhead. Beauty and reason are even correlated – *rationis pulchritudinem* – and Balthasar is quick to point out that Anselm's monastic contemplation does not allow him to be carried away. It is neither ecstasis, nor feeling, but contemplative reason: *rationis contemplatio*, albeit contemplation of a reason on a pilgrimage of longing, between earthly faith and eternal vision (*meditetur... esuriat... desideret tota substantia mea*)⁹. The monk is the utter realist for he apprehends God's beauty in the freely fashioned form of the world¹⁰. Such beauty is beheld by the monk not only in concrete categories but equally when the mind ponders «the beauty of reason (*rationis pulchritudinem*)»¹¹. Such *speciosa ratione* is more than a light-hearted treatment by artists. The Swiss theologian stresses that cognitive problematics dominate Anselm's opus. He has little immediate concern for the expressivity of the form. A close nexus between thought and contemplation is established, allowing for thought to take on the form of meditation and even prayer. Against this background *rationes necessariae* as the foundational philosophical method become understandable. The subject of the philosophical act is also «the free dealings of the free God with a man-

⁶ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁷ Cfr. H. BACHT, *Theologie der Mönche*, in *Christ in der Gegenwart* 33 (1981) 51ff; G. PENCO, *Medioevo monastico*, in *Studia Anselmiana* 96 (1988) 537-548; A. HÄRDLIN, *Monastische Theologie: eine praktische Theologie vor der Scholastik*, in *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 109 (1987) 400-415.

⁸ BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. II (*Anselm*), 211. See also at 251.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 212.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 211.

¹¹ *Ibid.* Balthasar seems to have gleaned this insight from a then recently discovered, but incomplete work by Anselm. Cfr. also at footnote 1.

kind freely created and brought into new freedom by Christ»¹². This does not yield to an identification or near synonymy of philosophy and theology. They are, however, reciprocally and mutually interpenetrated (in a way osmotically, and yet retaining their independence therein). The *Monologion* and the *Proslogion* are divined as primarily philosophical in intention, whereas the remaining works are theological.

Faithful to this vision (= «Schau»), philosophical contemplation almost inevitably receives in a Benedictine and therefore monastic context the proper experiential ambience to be also theological: the choice of experience shapes the hermeneutics: «qui non crediderit non experietur, et qui non expertus non fuerit non cognoscet»¹³. Balthasar considers Anselm to be viewing «form and contents, method and subject matter» as tension-filled unities, mutually dependent within one organism¹⁴.

3. Aesthetic Reason

Therefore, in the first section entitled «Aesthetic Reason»¹⁵ the consonance of philosophy and theology in Anselm's writings are stated. The monk as the perfect philosopher contemplates the divine realities. Here Balthasar dialogues primarily with the *Monologion* and the *Proslogion* as the sources for Anselm's epistemological method.

Such a Christian reason «grows organically» from the question of Being investigated by antiquity. The two strands of thought, biblical revelation and pagan philosophy, are brought to perfection in the revelation of Christ. The monk living the evangelical counsels mediates the One. He is received by Balthasar and Leclercq as «the philosopher in the Christian realm»¹⁶. Taking up the ancient philosophical quest, the monk apprehends God in faith as a person¹⁷. Rightly, Balthasar justifies this asser-

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 216; cfr. *I* 1: 284,27-31: «Nam qui non crediderit, non experietur; et qui expertus non fuerit, non cognoscet. Quantum enim rei auditum superat experientia, tantum vincit audientis cognitionem experientis scientia. Nemo ergo se temere immerget in condensa quaestionem, nisi prius in soliditate fidei conquista morum et sapientiae gravitate, ne per multiplicia sophismatum diverticula incauta levitate discurrens, aliqua tenaci illaqueetur falsitate»

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 212.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 213-237.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 213.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 214.

tion by calling to mind that ancient philosophy was primarily a quest for the numinous. Faith reveals this God as one, free and loving. A separation between faith and reason would deprive reason of its enabling foundation and goal. But reason cannot be severed from creation. By implication, Anselm is seen in an intellectual climate that would outright reject tendencies towards – *post festum* – fideistic reactions. Reason so constituted is a defense against unbelief and impells one towards God.

In Anselm's beauty of reasoning (*pulchritudo rationis*) Balthasar discerns three moments: 1. the life liberated by truth, 2. conceptual insight and 3. the joy of the truth found (*delectatio*). These are the ingredients for an aesthetic theology¹⁸. Faith and prayer lead to reason's (*intellectus*) unfolding which in turn results in the beholder's rejoicing over the unity of all. For this to occur one must free cogitation from subjective intentions so «that God may reveal what he had previously concealed»¹⁹. In the Swiss theologian's judgment one must embrace truth with «life-giving love»²⁰. Such a life for the sake of truth calls for freedom from sin. Purity is the groundwork for epistemological progress. It also entails freeing oneself from bad inclinations. This opens the human mind to rectitude and truth. One does not experience such knowledge simply through physical, intellectual or ascetical achievements²¹ but by a prayerful life. Worship and reverence are key dimensions, naturally, of the prayerful attitude.

In contrast to Roscelin, Anselm is fully aware that a cleansing of the soul and a constant struggle in faith are necessary for obtaining what antiquity terms θεωρία²². Anselm does not belittle the impact sin has on the human state. Yet, given sin, the epistemological weakness it brings can be overcome by prayer, as the *Proslogion* demonstrates. Here Balthasar finds the *analogia entis* presupposed: «I do not try, O Lord, to penetrate your depths, because I do not at all compare my understanding to that; but I desire to understand in some measure (*aliquatenus*) your truth, in which my heart believes and loves»²³. Seeing in the epistemological act God intervening, Anselm maintains well before the IV. Lateran Council's definition a yet *maior dissimilitudo*²⁴. On one's own, every sinful human being is bereft of the epistemological

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 215.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 216. Cfr. *Cu I* 1: 49,4: «ut Deus aperiat quod prius latebat».

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 215.

²¹ Cfr. *Regula Benedicti* and Plotinus.

²² BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. II (*Anselm*), 216.

²³ *Ibid.*, 217; *P* 1: 100,12-17.

²⁴ DH 806.

sensorium needed to think in a manner commensurate to the divine object. Grace ameliorates this distance by making this distance comprehensible as distance; i.e. eliminates the hiatus without doing away with the analogy. In the confrontation between «your beauty» and «your harmony» the human mind experiences its inadequacies. In spite of all effort «there are things in God that his understanding cannot penetrate»²⁵. Grace is necessary for epistemological advance. Precisely for this reason it cannot be something extrinsic, imposed upon nature as an alien entity. At the same time grace also shrouds.

4. «Intelligere»

This brings one to Anselm's specifically Christian understanding: *intelligere fidei*. To understand things of faith is for Anselm a question of showing gratitude. «It seems to me negligence, if, after we have been established in the faith, we do not make the effort to understand what we believe»²⁶. Rightly, Balthasar argues in favor of this Anselmian understanding of reason because there is no «pure reason». Either there exists the post-lapsarian reason or the graced reason. *Tertium non datur*. As Balthasar renders Anselm's position: there «is no "pure reason", but only a reason sinful and redeemed, and colored by the historical dimensions of existence, and that it demonstrates from historical reality the conditions of its possibility and therefore, reduces to silence those who deny and scoff»²⁷. Balthasar adds that Anselm's *intellectus* is neither simply related to the Patristic reason nor an anticipation of the *ratio* of later Scholasticism. It is not an autonomous human mind, but one that is being led to a spiritual seeing: *videre*.

Perhaps as a result of his intensive discussions with Przywara and Barth on this topic, Balthasar stresses the significance of the «*analogia entis*» in Anselm's thought. «The formula for the analogy between God and the creature so characteristic of Anselm (*videt se non plus posse videre propter tenebras suas*) makes the philosophical one with the theological»²⁸. In Balthasar's judgment, Anselm does not merely

²⁵ I 13: 31,3f.

²⁶ Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. II (Anselm), 219; Cu I 1: 48,18.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 217f.

echo Augustine, but sees original sin depriving humanity specifically of important Balthasarian divine «predications»: namely beauty and harmony²⁹. At this point the archbishop goes beyond Augustine.

To Anselm a thing's true nature is opened in a spiritual way. To Balthasar the aesthetic moment of *videre* is a key-term with which to understand Anselm. The teacher opens a perspective and the student confesses: «Now I see clearly what up to now I had not noticed»³⁰. The vision thus imparted is evident, obvious, necessarily convincing and beyond contradiction. *Videre* has, as Balthasar demonstrates, a multitude of synonyms in Anselm's vocabulary. Balthasar describes a process which allows «truth and its grounds... to appear in its incontrovertibility». For this reason Anselm uses terms as *claritas veritatis*, *ratio necessaria*, *rationis necessitas* and *necessitas veritatis*. Anselm cannot help but call resistance to the acceptance of the truth so evidenced an absurdity³¹.

Quite convincingly, Balthasar terms Anselm's process of thought on one level «a spiritual demonstration» which is a protest against the «modern dialectic» of the monk's day³². Insofar as it remains a dialectic it posits things of the sensible realm against one another. Bound to that realm, it can never gain the plateau to think the unity which is aesthetic reason: «a simple understanding, not overwhelmed by the multiplicity of imaginations»³³. From such a vista one does come to realize the validity of Anselm's notions, such as fitting-ness, necessity, etc.

5. Faith and Reason

The relationship of faith and reason is complementary and harmonious. Balthasar employs on other occasions the bridal imagery to illustrate the relationship of reason and faith. Reason does not arrive at faith on its own. It is in need of faith in order to experience its own fulfillment. Here both Anselm and Balthasar successfully avoid dualism and attempt to integrate the subjective and objective. Thereby they succeed

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 218; cfr. *P* 16: 113,4ff.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 220; cfr. *V* 9: 189,26: «video nunc aperte quod hactenus, non animadverti».

³¹ *Ibid.*, 222f.

³² *Ibid.*, 223; cfr. *I* 10: 289,18.

³³ *Ibid.*, 223; cfr. *I* 10: 289,18: «simplicem intellectum et non multiplicitate phantasmatum obrutum». One is reminded of Plato's observation, «the divine is simple»

in preventing faith from dwindling into interiority and reason from becoming the sole realm of objectivity.

Balthasar further avoids the pitfalls of rationalism and fideism by placing emphasis on the concrete and historic form of Jesus Christ, a topos Anselm himself never explicitly considers, but one which nevertheless is present in his works. Only with the aid of God's grace does reason meet faith, does the object reveal itself to the subject as personal and yet shrouded. Reason obtains a greater certitude about reality and lends credibility to faith. For the Swiss theologian, this is a gradual introduction by reason to faith through understanding the *praeambula fidei*. Sometimes Balthasar speaks of the perichoretic nature of faith and reason. It is the object of faith which as form draws the subject forth. Going beyond anything Anselm stated, Balthasar sees the content of faith and the act of faith forming one aesthetic act.

Certainly, this goes well beyond what Anselm had explicitly envisioned. It is nevertheless consonant with his basic tenets, since the abbot of Bec thought of faith – in keeping with the Semitic mind-frame and the Patristic tradition – as an experience. The Middle Ages called this a *conversio ad phantasma*. Ignatius further elaborates this notion by his attempt to integrate the senses in the prayerful surrender (*indiferencia*)³⁴. Balthasar along with Anselm would never relinquish the objective evidence of faith, arrived at in an ecclesial, more specifically monastic experience.

Betraying his long occupation with Anselm, Balthasar brilliantly sums up Anselm's epistemology. He marks out as a central illustration of Anselm's teachings the tenth chapter of the *Monologion*. This is accomplished in a fourstep-summary:

1. the mere ostensive naming of a significant name, such as man; 2. the inward thinking of a name (*nomen cogitare*); 3. the spiritual apprehension of the thing itself through a sensible image (*imago*); 4. the spiritual apprehension of the thing itself by reason (*ratio*)³⁵.

Here Balthasar takes up an important distinction. While the *imago* only signifies the *figura sensibilis*, reason (*ratio*) is capable of apprehending the underlying and overarching *universalis essentia*³⁶. The *universalis essentia* can only be arrived at if one is able to derive from the sensible world general terms such as «species, man, person...». To Anselm, Balthasar concludes, Nominalist philosophy would be a

³⁴ P. Knauer (trans.), *Ignatius von Loyola, Gründungstexte der Gesellschaft Jesu*, Würzburg 1998, 110f; cfr. *Retreat Book*, No. 23.

³⁵ BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. II (*Anselm*), 224; cfr. M 10: 25,49.

³⁶ This beholding of the essence of matter is as old as occidental philosophy. In German since idealism this spiritual act is considered under the term "Wesensschau" and is aligned with the term "Wesenserkenntnis" (insight into the essence of matter).

«contradiction in itself»³⁷. Without universals, philosophy is an impossible task, for it would be unable to arrive at synthetic statements.

The conceptual vision (*simplex intellectus*) is no mean feat. It demands experience and a synthetic vision (called *speculatio*, *meditatio* and *consideratio*) in order to arrive at a unifying judgment, which is a *iudicium animae* not a *iudicium rationis*. This vision of the whole eclipses human reason, but one can perceive – Balthasar probably means this – features of it. While only fragments are beheld, they – the fragments – contain the guarantee of the whole³⁸. Balthasar does not tire of stressing that it is the *analogia entis* which allows the thinker to comprehend that he/she can no longer see: *videt se non plus posse videre*³⁹. Or, as Anselm puts it in the *Monologion*: «It can be comprehended most evidently... (that it) cannot be comprehended by human knowledge»⁴⁰. And he observes later on in the same treatise: one «understands rationally that it is incomprehensible (*rationabiliter comprehendit incomprehensibile esse*)»⁴¹. Here again, as in *Sponsa Verbi*, the Swiss theologian does not hesitate to remind the reader that «the theological act is rooted in the philosophical»⁴². Consonant with recent tendencies within scholarship to appreciate better the interrelated unity of both disciplines, Balthasar already made out in Anselm this correlation of the two. The free spiritual creature of God contrasts itself to the absolute Spirit and experiences itself as free and spiritual.

To Anselm ideas are not the result of a logical deduction from sensible matter alone. Rather, Balthasar implies they result from the central event of the incarnation. In this context Balthasar quotes the preface for the feast of Christmas:

Through the mystery of the incarnate Word the new light of your brightness has shone onto the eyes of our mind; that knowing God visibly, we might be snatched up by this into the love of invisible things⁴³.

The theological object supplies the enabling context for its being known, to Anselm, Bonaventure, Balthasar, and others. The «Gestalt's» effulgence is the condition for the possibility of rapture and knowledge. «The beautiful is above all a 'form' and

³⁷ BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. II (Anselm), 225.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 227.

³⁹ *Ibid.*; P 14: 112,1.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*; M 36: 54,16-18.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 228; M 64: 75,1-12.

⁴² *Ibid.*; cfr. BALTHASAR, *Sponsa Verbi. Skizzen zur Theologie II*, Einsiedeln 1961, 346ff, written two years prior to vol. II of *The Glory of the Lord*.

⁴³ BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. I, 119f.

the light does not fall from above and from outside, rather it breaks forth from the form's interior»⁴⁴. The *creatrix essentia* became human and the believer becomes Christoform. This actualizes the human spirit, and makes the theology it undertakes an *imago trinitatis*. In contrast to Augustine – so Balthasar – there is in Anselm's work a greater stress on the total freedom and spontaneity involved in God's self-disclosure⁴⁵.

In the *Monologion* a philosophical path is treaded to arrive at Christian reason. The arrival is not a simple human achievement but «the free self-expression of God», Whose «generation» is a Trinitarian achievement. While this reminds one of Augustine, Balthasar is quick to add that the insistence on divine freedom and the spontaneity of his self-disclosure is an Anselmian addition. Anselm was at the verge of giving up when suddenly the answer «emerged». By living the attitudes of faith, hope and charity, in Balthasar's judgment, Anselm was able to gain knowledge. Therein the *appetitus naturalis ad Deum* finds its movement and goal. The believing act becomes the ability to see matters divine. The human mind actualizes itself as *imago trinitatis* in this attitude by the strength of revelation, which Balthasar describes as «the word of eternal love»⁴⁶.

6. The *Proslogion*

Balthasar would receive scholarship's general agreement in observing that the *Proslogion* is but a condensed form of the *Monologion*. The formula, «quiddam maius quam cogitari possit», is the equivalent to the *Monologion*'s «id quo maius cogitari nequit». Both denote «a dynamic movement of thought»⁴⁷. However, this dynamism comes not from a concept, but rather from «the revelation of the mercy of the Father in the suffering son». Here a relevant formula appears: «That (mercy) can be thought neither greater nor more just»⁴⁸.

According to Balthasar, Anselm joins statements on essence and on existence. The abstract observation must find a «pendent» in reality. If this is the case, Anselm

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁴⁵ BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. II (*Anselm*), 229ff.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 231.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 232.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*; cfr. *Cu* II 20: 131,29: «ut nec maior (misericordia) nec iustior cogitari possit».

argues, the reality, which is cause for the highest thought, must exist. Therefore, one does not deduce God from a mere concept. Rather the philosophical occurs in the «theological experience of the revelation of the mercy of the Father in the suffering Son»⁴⁹. Balthasar gives Anselm's «philosophical» proof a soteriological justification. This «ut nec maior (misericordia) nec iustior cogitari possit» is for Balthasar nothing less than an «overwhelming of the aesthetic reason of faith by the incomprehensibility of the divine love». Balthasar thus appreciates Anselm's Johannine view.

The realization of this dynamic structure of aesthetic reason gives cause for joy, *gaudium* and *delectatio*. The hidden terrestrial harmonies are likened to the experience of a discoverer who had concentrated his thought for a long time: «gaudeo invenisse - I rejoice in finding»⁵⁰. Yet, along with de Lubac, Balthasar notes a rupture in the *Proslogion* and cautions that this intellectual joy of discovering a proof for God's existence should not be confused with the *visio beatifica*: with the joy of beholding God face to face, which is still withheld. Constantly Balthasar stresses the *comprehendit incomprehensibile esse* – and its variants – and parallel to it the *sola fide* in his chapter on Anselm. This is further evidence that he wrote this chapter with Barth and the problematics surrounding the *analogia entis* in mind. The meditation leads into the joy of God and not back to the subject who conjectures. Consequently this joy of the aesthetic reason is seen to be grounded in a staurocentric attitude. In the third Meditation, Balthasar remarks as he closes the first section, Anselm finds nothing but the joy of a grace «given... as Christ's Easter present»⁵¹.

The second section, titled «The Radiance of Freedom»⁵², is more dogmatic in nature. Balthasar draws heavily on the treatises *Cur Deus Homo*, *De Veritate*, *De conceptu virginali et de originali peccato*, *De libertate arbitrii* and the *Meditatio*, dwelling on Anselm's definition of freedom. This freedom is ultimately found only in the *unitas* and *identitas* of the Godhead. To the degree that human freedom participates in triune freedom, it becomes free. Therefore, it cannot be a part of freedom in the full sense to choose between good and bad, i.e. to be exposed to temptations. Through the two components of law and grace, divine freedom encounters «creaturely freedom». One may consider *Cur Deus Homo* as a demythologizing of the doctrine of redemption by seeing salvation history as the revelation of divine freedom. If God is freedom, Augustine's teachings on sin and predestination need to be

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 234; cfr. *P* Prooem: 93,20.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 237.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 237-253.

reconsidered, in Anselm's judgment. Convincingly, Balthasar sees the *analogia entis* not as an abstract principle – as in later theologies – but as an *analogia libertatis* in Anselm's thought. Absolute freedom calls to creaturely freedom. The revelation of divine freedom is the encounter of humanity with its freedom as a permit to enter into communion. In this event humanity is drawn through grace to absolute freedom. The human freedom thereby attained freely wills (intends) what God freely wills (intends) human will (intention) to will (intend). Concord between divine will and human will is the goal. This in turn excludes the ability to sin as a constitutive element in the human condition. Triune freedom knows not the ability to sin. It is viewed as germane to Anselm's doctrine of freedom that human beings strive to attain this state of created freedom.

7. «Rectitudo»

The term used by Anselm to define this alignment of the true and good is rectitude. Balthasar here considers the dimension of the beautiful as again implied⁵³. The correspondence of something existent to the highest norm is termed true. Therefore, in Anselm's judgment, the ontic acknowledgment of truth always already contains an ethical truth. As a consequence, Anselm's definition of freedom is that «freedom of the will is the power of preserving the rectitude of the will for the sake of rectitude itself»⁵⁴. This effects a novel vista on what freedom, without the aberrations caused by original sin, truly means. Only where the opposition between autonomy and heteronomy has been overcome by a theistic view of life is true freedom beheld. By way of *rectitudo* the mind apprehends a way of participating in full, i.e. divine freedom. Again Balthasar quotes the central Anselmian line: «voluntas non est recta quia vult recte, sed recte vult quoniam recta est»⁵⁵.

Against this background Balthasar then illustrates how Anselm contrasts divine freedom with Adam's freedom. Anselm thinks of divine freedom as an identity of «being and self-being»⁵⁶, which is necessarily free of coercion, because it is existent

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 239.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 240; cfr. *Co* 3; 265, 28f. «A will is not upright because it wills rightly, but it wills rightly because it is upright».

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

prior to every other thing. In the fall Adam lost his *rectitudo voluntatis*. Balthasar seems to stress that unmerited grace alone can restore rectitude.

Balthasar seems to ask whether one can uphold the relational definition of truth and yet claim that God is in and of himself true. He finds an explanation in the «identity of being and self-being». Here one might ask whether a Trinitarian answer would not have been better. Trinitarian life has laid down prior to time the norms of willing. Since Trinitarian life is established by living the norms, necessity and freedom are one in the Godhead.

Although he had lost the original rectitude – which is the consonance of his will with the divinely ordained good – he still possesses freedom. This reduced freedom still can be utilized to preserve rectitude. Because it was God's free act which created Adam, his creature retains some form of freedom. This freedom is idled (*otiosa*) and is reactivated by prevenient and subsequent «grace alone». The acquisition of divine freedom by human freedom is seen in a dialogical and hence personal way. The human being is impelled towards the same rectitude as God's. To this salvific end *memoria* and *intellectus* serve: to establish the *rectum cor*⁵⁷. Interestingly, Balthasar points out that Anselm hardly mentions the Augustinian term of *delectatio spiritalis*, which was later to play an important role in the controversies surrounding Jansen⁵⁸. The *analogia entis* in Anselm's deliberations «becomes the *analogia personalitatis* or *libertatis*»⁵⁹; it is the freest and truest obedience to submit to the will of God. In this context Balthasar dwells on the bridegroom – bride analogies used by Anselm⁶⁰.

8. The *Cur Deus Homo*

If such is the nature of freedom, according to Balthasar, Anselm's treatment of redemption in the *Cur Deus Homo* must follow therefrom. Not by necessity (*debere*) but freely (*sponte*) does Christ suffer death to save humanity. Balthasar uses the term «inner necessities» to express Anselm's understanding of the divine salvific act. One might want to ponder whether today «congruencies» would not be a more fitting

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 244; cfr. *M* 68: 179, 5-9; *Co* 2: 265, 1-9.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 243.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 245.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 244f.

term. However, if this is freely willed, how have God's plans for creation been affected by humanity? As the abundant quotes from Anselm attest, Balthasar conducts a thorough exegesis. Anselm only briefly treats, in Balthasar's judgment, Augustine's aesthetic justification of evil. Human beings were not created as a substitute for the fallen angels, but possessed their own value in God's estimation. Going beyond Augustine, Anselm develops a subtle difference. While God's honor remains untouched by virtue of divine punitive justice, God's love suffers dishonor. He is therefore grateful for the love given him: *Deus ei scit gratias*⁶¹. Humanity's rendering this in turn originates in rectitude, a virtue given by God⁶².

In Balthasar's view Anselm's argument has «nothing of the "juristic"»⁶³. Anselm outright rejects the notion that God was in need of «the blood of the innocent». The Swiss theologian explains that the blemished pearl cannot be part of an ontological union⁶⁴. The rectitude is restored by human beings rising up again. Balthasar interprets Anselm to mean that humanity is an effective party in salvation. Were it merely an inner-Trinitarian event, salvation would not affect humanity, for God's expressivity would be missing. For this reason a God-man is needed. Only then is the covenant upheld and does humanity remain a full partner therein. Christ does not merely mediate in an Arian fashion between God and humanity. Echoing the Chalcedonian formula – fully human and fully divine –, Christ also effects a restoration of the covenant: *pacti efficacia*⁶⁵. Here again Balthasar's Chalcedonian Christocentrism comes to bear. This interpretation is consonant with Anselm. If the monk says, «I must (*debeo*) be wholly yours», when entering the monastery, he imitates the God-man: *suscipe*. The creaturely free act of wholly giving oneself to eternal freedom finds in Christ a model: both in its human *suscipe* and in its goal, Trinitarian freedom.

Since the fall, the Fathers knew that satan holds dominion over humanity. The Fathers perceived satan to have rights over mankind like a master holding rights of ownership over his slaves. Inevitably this held the dangerous prospect of a dualism. God and satan could be seen as opponents on an equal footing. Some arrived at the conclusion that ransom had to be paid to satan in order to free humankind. Anselm rejects the concept of satan holding any rights at all over mankind. As a con-

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 248; cfr. EADMER, *Vita Anselmi* I, 41 (PL 158, 73B).

⁶² *Ibid.*, 249.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 243; cfr. *Cu* I 10: 66,25.

⁶⁵ *Cu* II 16: 118,18.

sequence, Anselm cannot share the Patristic view of Christ paying a ransom to the devil. Rather, Anselm argues that this debt is owed by humanity to God. Humanity has not given the honor due to God. Owing to the deleterious effects of sin, humanity has nothing to offer to satisfy God. Christ, God's only begotten, reconciled his Father with humanity in his death. In the *Cur Deus Homo* Anselm demonstrates how Jesus Christ repays the debt humankind owes to God since the fall in a manner rising above a merely juridical act.

When we say God exercises weakness or lowliness, we do not understand this in accordance with sublimity of his impassible nature but in accordance with the weakness of the human substance which he bore... We show that the person of God and of man was one. Therefore, we do not understand the incarnation of God to have involved any abasement: instead, we believe the nature of man was therein exalted⁶⁶.

Anselm reveals in his discussion with Boso that the incarnation would not have been necessary for satisfying satan's claims on humanity. This catches Balthasar's interest. He is less interested in the *rationes necessariae*. What, then, is the mission of Christ? To keep his commandments, to honor and serve him, God created rational beings. Humanity finds blessedness and perfection in this service to God. Yet, simply forgiving the sins would not be just in Anselm's argument. Then sinner and non-sinner would be on an equal footing. For this reason atonement is necessary. It is important to note that God in his omnipotence, *qua Deus*, is not dishonored. Rather, in his disobedience the sinner had destroyed the only order in which he can render praise and worship to God. Only insofar as humanity dishonors God does it destroy creation. The human being created by God no longer reflects the beauty of his/her maker and therefore no longer can praise the creator⁶⁷. Since humanity cannot out of itself restore the created order, only God can atone for sin. However, since on the other hand humanity owes this satisfaction, only the Son of God, only the God-man, could bring this about. To Anselm's mind God must fulfill *rectitudo* out of his own necessity, otherwise, the world would cease to be good⁶⁸.

⁶⁶ G. W. OLSEN, *Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Rehabilitation of St. Anselm's Doctrine of the Atonement*, in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 34 (1981) 49-61, at 51; cfr. J. HOPKINS, *A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm*, Minneapolis 1972, 187f.

⁶⁷ BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. II (*Anselm*), 251; cfr. above: «disorder in the divine entourage», or «disorder at the divine, royal court».

⁶⁸ Balthasar supports this view against some then current views: «Nowadays it has become fashionable... to revolt against the soteriology as outlined by St. Augustine and put into a system by Anselm of Canterbury (though it was first indicated by St. Paul himself), that God the Father, in order to restore peace between

Balthasar supports Anselm in his Trinitarian point of departure. Generally, Anselm's view of salvation is rejected as «feudal» and culturally deformed. Balthasar clearly disproves of this evaluation. Quite rightly and in felicitous agreement with numerous other philosophers and theologians, Balthasar thinks that Anselm's theory of satisfaction bears little resemblance to juridical thinking. One must go back along with Anselm to creation. By a free covenant with humanity God frees this humanity «for absolute freedom». Redemption is an outgrowth of creation. «Christ is not an (Arian) instance of mediation, but rather the effectiveness of the covenant itself (*pacti efficacia*); on him, therefore, the whole human race founded on Adam can converge as its center», Balthasar interprets Anselm⁶⁹. Reading Anselm closely, Balthasar quotes from the *Cur Deus Homo*: «you (human being) do not possess what you give of yourself»⁷⁰. On the other hand Christ does not effect something that is merely owed. The response can be but «the impetus of ever greater love», for Balthasar⁷¹.

God chose to rehabilitate humanity in order to have a full covenant partner in humanity. Humankind had to be enabled to share in divine freedom. The motive of incarnation and redemption is an *analogia personalitatis*. The triune God wishes to re-establish a correspondence between himself and the world. Thus, for Anselm God is content to remove the juridical consequences of Adam's fall. Only a purified heart can perceive the harmony of creation and behold the beauty of the world as a reference to the Trinity's immanence in the form of Christ. Only a purified soul will behold in the «figure défigurée» the beauty of theophany. What Anselm only indirectly suggests, Balthasar develops further. The *analogia entis* is ultimately the *analogia personalitatis*. This is the center of Balthasar's theological aesthetics. Perhaps Anselm served indeed as a co-inspirer. Through the incarnation the Christian is configured towards the τῶπος Χριστοῦ»and mediates God's being to the world⁷².

God and the world wished to or was obliged to sacrifice his Son. Does this not betray a cruel God, who in order to restore his honor, as Anselm phrases it, resorts to such horrible means as the total abandonment of his Son on the cross? To think and speak thus is to forget creation and salvation are not unilateral decisions of God the Father, but – speaking humanly – the result of trinitarian communication and prayer. Son and Spirit had a share no less original than that of the Father». Cfr. H. U. VON BALTHASAR, *Christian Prayer*, in *Communio* 5 (1978) 15-22, at 20f.

⁶⁹ BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. II (*Anselm*), 250.

⁷⁰ *Cu* I 20: 87,23f.

⁷¹ BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. II (*Anselm*),.

⁷² Since both «das Sein» as being and «das Sein» as Being are written with capital letters in German and Balthasar as a consequence does not distinguish between the two in his writings, one encounters in this regard some difficulty. For the above text: Here one senses him threading a *via media* between German idealism's self-actuation and Barth's theomonism (as Balthasar understands it). Going beyond Przywara,

9. John the Divine and Beauty

In general one sees now how a Johannine outlook assists the author in the interpretation of Anselm. At times the two are blurred. To Balthasar Anselm exemplifies Christian aesthetics almost *par excellence*. Since revelation is found in salvation and the created order, Anselm's theology radiates a rectitude and balance quite remarkable. Gerard Manley Hopkins is cited as a confirmation of this evaluation. The American Anselm scholar Jasper Hopkins had stated admiringly: «the systematic unfolding and almost total internal consistency of the writings of Anselm of Canterbury have long been cause for amazement». He notes «a perfect harmony» between the early and late writings⁷³. This is a feature Anselm has in common with Balthasar. The Swiss theologian also unravels one consistent and coherent mosaic of faith throughout his writings.

As a Benedictine monk, Anselm is aware of the underlying perfect harmony and balance of proportions in the one universe. The primary reality is the revelation of who Christ is. The wisdom of the divine Logos was understood to be cosmological. All of the world was *vestigium dei* and therefore sacred. For this reason he cannot help but see a necessary balance and harmony between human freedom and that of God. While human freedom depends on God's freedom, both together demonstrate the unsurpassable beauty of God to the world. The *rationis pulchritudo*, the beauty of reasoning, becomes an independent argument supporting Anselm's reasons for the incarnation. The *rationis pulchritudo* is paralleled by the *rationis contemplatio*, the monastic contemplation⁷⁴.

Balthasar convincingly regards «Anselm's aesthetic reason, which considers the mystery of salvation», as an «ultimately monastic reason»⁷⁵. The non-Christian contemplation of classical antiquity – seen in exemplary form in Plotinus – achieves in the revelation of Christ its *theoria*. Distinct from both the Patristic *intellectus* and the still future *ratio* of High-Scholasticism, «reason is for Anselm the spirit's capacity to gain insight is quite an original approach. To think means to make something spiritually visible. Therein both the monk and his commentator agree»⁷⁶. Contrary to dialectic

he emphasizes divine presence in the world. Cfr. G. DE SCHRIJVER, *Le merveilleux accord de l'homme et de Dieu: étude de l'analogie de l'être chez Hans Urs von Balthasar*, Leuven 1983.

⁷³ Cfr. HOPKINS, *A Companion*, 3.

⁷⁴ V 11: 191,11.

⁷⁵ BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. II (Anselm), 251.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 220.

tical theology, Anselm advances an «aesthetic reason», able to overcome a dialectics bound to sensible matter. Such «an aesthetic reason» is grounded in contemplation and is able to unite all perspectives into one whole vision. This is «a simple understanding, not overwhelmed by the multiplicity of imaginations»⁷⁷.

Both creation and salvation are necessarily free acts of God. Human reason possesses the capacity to uncover an internal, consistent logic which allows one to perceive the consonances, and consequently the necessities of various components in the reciprocal roles as contributors to the whole. In the spontaneity of human freedom – as the conscious affirmation of freedom comes about through relations – lies the key to understanding Anselm's theory of salvation.

It is loving, creaturely freedom, which wholly gives itself up to eternal freedom, and on its side finds a model in the trinitarian freedom of the Son, whose spontaneous loving obedience to the Father is necessitated by nothing, but in the splendors of his absolute freedom is that which is most acceptable to God and, to that extent, most necessary: «debut facere, quia quod voluit fieri debuit; et non debuit facere, quia non ex debito»⁷⁸.

The *Cur Deus Homo* states: «He ought to do it, because what he wills, ought to be done; and yet he does not have to do it, because it is not required of him as a debt»⁷⁹. With no harm to him, God makes his «con-descendence» proportionate to the human condition⁸⁰. For this reason «juridical» is in Balthasar's view not the correct adjective for Anselm's theory of salvation. Thereby, Balthasar means to state that while certainly atonement has a juridical element, it is not the heart of God's salvific intention according to Anselm. Participation in divine life is to be facilitated by the *bonitas Dei*.

Unlike Christ, no human being could offer himself beyond all calculation. Anselm sees in atonement the covenant of God with his people upheld. This is the deeper cause for rejecting a purely legalistic interpretation of Anselm's theory of atonement. As an outgrowth of triune life, it occurs «spontaneously». If a legal dimension is to be conceded, it is part of a yet greater moment: God is mercy and to that degree not in contradiction to his own laws (which he himself had promulgated in divine sovereignty), which are again a part of his divine inner consistency and coherence.

⁷⁷ «Simplicem intellectum et non multiplicare phantasmatum obrutum», *Ii* 10: 289,10. Cfr. BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. II (*Anselm*), 223, including footnote 111.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 252.

⁷⁹ *Cu* II 18: 129,6-8.

⁸⁰ OLSEN, *Hans Urs von Balthasar*, 56.

The necessity encountered here lies in the inner-Trinitarian freedom of the Son⁸¹. It occurs within the context of fittingness (*rectitudo*). God cannot be less than fully himself. In this perspective necessity is nothing external or accidental. To lay the narrow legalistic reading to rest, Balthasar quotes Anselm: because «it is not required of him (Christ) as a debt (*quia non ex debito*)»⁸².

10. Balthasar's Soteriology: a Nuanced Appropriation and Further Development of Anselm's Theory of Atonement

In pursuing Anselm's soteriology an examination of Balthasar's theory of atonement must go beyond the slender essay on Anselm in *The Glory of the Lord*. Balthasar attempts to tread in this regard a *via media*. He wants to posit neither a radical divine *απαθεια*, nor a simple, equal mutuality in effecting salvation. Both positions bring unwelcome results. If one states a simple equal mutuality between God and the contingent event of crucifixion, one cannot avoid the consequence of identifying God with the world process. History becomes a part of Trinitarian life. Balthasar wants to avoid a Hegelian identification of the world with the Trinity in a process-like approach. Still, like Bulgakov he considers the generation of the Son the first divine *κένωσις*⁸³. On the other hand, the model of divine immutability holds the prospect of deism.

Balthasar's interpretation of *Cur Deus Homo* can best be understood by considering volume III of *Theodramatik*. There one finds a sustained treatment of the soteriological problem. According to the biblical evidence sin touches something in God, perhaps an «outer honor» which calls forth divine wrath⁸⁴. Balthasar points out that the Old Testament attests to this about one thousand times.⁸⁵ The New Testament affirms it as well. God's judgment is divine anger at sin (Heb 12,29; 1Cor 3,12; 1Pet 1,7). Sin is taken seriously (Jn 12,31; 16,10f). God's saving justice saves humanity by the concentration of all sin in Christ (2Cor 5,21; Gal 3,13). Scripture attests to the re-

⁸¹ BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. II (*Anselm*), 252.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 252, footnote 277; *Cu* 18: 129,6-8.

⁸³ BALTHASAR, *Theodramatik*, Vol. III, *Die Handlung*, Einsiedeln 1980, 273-299; *Id.*, *Theodramatik*, Vol. III, *Das Endspiel*, Einsiedeln 1983, 148-155.

⁸⁴ BALTHASAR, *Theodramatik*, Vol. III, 236f; for Anselm, cfr. also 15-63.

⁸⁵ BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. II (*Anselm*), 290.

alism of salvation. This is the basis for Balthasar's soteriology. Lactantius' treatise *De Ira Dei* plays a significant role in demonstrating this⁸⁶. It shows divine involvement in the world and rejects the concept of divine impassibility held by numerous Church Fathers. In this perspective – as well as in Anselm's – anger is an integral moment of divine grace. In the Godhead mercy and justice as well as anger and dishonor are not contradictions. On the cross the divine anger is revealed as divine suffering. God engages with the world. Here – in contrast to Anselm – Balthasar makes a distinction between God's outer and inner dishonor, inflicted by humanity's sin.

Of central concern for Balthasar is to demonstrate that Christ's living obedience of the Father in crucifixion is more than a symbol for God's intense love of humanity, or simply the removal of God's anger. It is God's effecting reconciliation of humanity to himself, by «substituting» his only-begotten Son for humankind. The substitution *pro nobis* and *pro me* (Gal 2,20; 1Cor 15,3) is more than a mere act of superficial solidarity. It is an ontological concentration of sin in the God-man, which is rejected by God the Father. This in turn brings forth a total «abandonment» of Christ by his Father on the cross (as regards this sin).

While the notion of divine honor is problematic today in Balthasar's understanding, Anselm's basic intuition is correct: divine justice is gracious and exigent. Therein divine love is revealed. The Swiss theologian considers the cross as a Trinitarian drama and thereby he thinks he can overcome the objection that the Father is being cruel in sending his Son to such a death. All three divine persons freely conceive and execute the plan of redemption. In the extreme *diastasis* of abandonment and descent into hell by Father and Son in the Holy Spirit the divine love is revealed as overarching and annulling the sinfulness of the world. Such love is a fulfillment of God's role in the covenant and the restoration of humanity as a full covenant partner in divinely granted freedom. Anselm's theory of freedom shines through here. Within this horizon the Anselmian «juridical» theory of divine honor/dishonor and justice finds its proper place within a deeper penetration and profounder justification⁸⁷. Yet, in comparison to Anselm, Balthasar in no uncertain terms shifts the emphasis. No longer is God's injured honor in the foreground, but divine love is.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 315f.

⁸⁷ BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. VII, 207ff.

11. Interjections

Gerald O'Collins⁸⁸ characterizes Balthasar's position as «monstrous». This amounts to a misunderstanding of Balthasarian theology as a whole. But as Raymond Schwager proposes, if Balthasar were to emphasize more the divine anger as an expression of divine compassion and solidarity, such a misunderstanding could have been avoided⁸⁹. In critical dialogue with contemporary theologians such as Küng, Galot, Schillebeeckx and Bultmann, Balthasar's position on the salvific value of Jesus' crucifixion gained its unmistakable contours. He particularly expressed disagreement with Karl Rahner's position⁹⁰. Christ's obedience on the cross does not merely signify and express the fact that God is «always already» reconciled with sinners, but, as Balthasar never fails to insist that through and in the cross Christ effects reconciliation⁹¹.

Rahner contends, in a fashion faithful to Thomas, that it is impossible for a secondary cause to effect change in the divine. Therefore Rahner outright rejects the Anselmian notion that Christ's sacrifice appeased divine wrath; no change occurs in God. On the other hand, Balthasar must grant that a change occurs. For this reason Jesus must be the Christ, that is to say, must be both God and man. No Arian-like subordinate identity will suffice. One might make the case that Anselm's soteriology assists Balthasar in combating what he perceives as Arian tendencies in twentieth century theology.

We must get away from a subordinationist or Arian view of the redemption: a supreme God the Father issuing orders to an inferior God (*theos deuterios*) or demigod or superman. No, as Christians our starting point can only be a consubstantial (*homoousios*) trinity, in which the freedom, dignity and spontaneity of the Son and Spirit do not just approve and execute the orders of the Father's creative and salvific plan, but conceive it at the very beginning in the most perfect unity with him. Now, in this plan of salvation, it is the Son who will have to suffer in order to justify the world, even though guilty, being judged finally "very good"; it is he who will have to bear the weight like a spiritual Atlas. So it is not enough to think of him just acquiescing in what the Father proposes. No we have to accept that the proposal proceeds originally from him, that he offers himself to the Father in order to sustain and save the work of creation. And it seems to me that this proposal of the Son touches the heart of the Father – to speak in human

⁸⁸ G. O'COLLINS, *Interpreting Christ*, Oxford 1983, 152-155.

⁸⁹ R. SCHWAGER, "Der wunderbare Tausch" zur Geschichte und Deutung der Erlösungslehre, München 1986, 5-44.

⁹⁰ K. RAHNER, *Schriften zur Theologie. Wissenschaft und christlicher Glaube*, Vol. 15, Zürich 1983, 236-264.

⁹¹ BALTHASAR, *Theodramatik*, Vol. III, 253-262.

terms – more profoundly than even the world's sin; it opens in God a wound of love from before creation – or, if you like, it is the sign and expression of this ever-open wound in the heart of the trinity. A wound identical with the procession and circuminsession of the divine persons in their perfect beatitude. This wound comes before the fall, which is the point St. Anselm is concerned with, namely, the offence done to the Father by sin, the offence expiated by the Son, the only one capable of this work which must be supererogatory. And if the wound of which we speak comes before all this, there is no problem in accepting that. For the salvation of the world, the Father sends the Son, guided on the earth by the Spirit, who at every moment indicates to him the will of the Father and that this will is at once an infinite love of creatures and infinite respect for the offer of the Son, which has been accepted by the Father and allowed by the Spirit to be realized, to the point of that supreme diastasis of the Father and the Son on the Cross, which is in truth the ultimate revelation of the tripersonality of God⁹².

Following in Bulgakov's wake, Balthasar sees the wound inflicted on the Father as discrediting creation⁹³. Creation is a Trinitarian opus. The dishonor original sin had caused, is *vis-à-vis* almighty divine nature – and therefore secondarily also for humanity – surely superficial, i.e. not mortal, yet real. Whatever change occurs in God is effected by the inner-Trinitarian initiative. On the other hand vulnerability is eternal and is addressed by the divinity. Hence, no harm is done to divine sovereignty – and adjoined to its immutability⁹⁴. In the introduction to *Die großen Ordensregeln*, Balthasar sees in Christ not only a mission which distinguishes him as a person; he is the Father's mission. «He does not identify with it; from eternity he is identical with it. This is his truth... he is not obedience, his (very) essence is complete obedience, and this is for him eternal freedom». The reference to eternal freedom indicates his debt to Anselm⁹⁵.

12. The Trinitarian Ductus

From early on Balthasar does not separate Christology from the Trinitarian doctrine. Along with the Cyrillian reception of the council of Chalcedon, he maintains

⁹² As translated by J. Saward, *The Mysteries of March. Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Incarnation and Easter*, Washington 1990, 159f, note 15, from BALTHASAR, *Au Coeur du mystère rédempteur*, Paris 1980, 39f.

⁹³ BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. VII, 213ff.

⁹⁴ Cfr. BALTHASAR, *Theodramatik*, Vol. III, 240f. 248, 252-262; Id., *Cordula oder der Ernstfall*, 4th ed., Einsiedeln 1966, 63-65; Id., *Mysterium Paschale*, in *Mysterium Salutis*, III, 2. Einsiedeln 1962, 133-137; Id., *The Glory of the Lord. A Theological Aesthetics*, Vol. VII, *Theology: The New Covenant*, trans. O. Davies, A. Louth, B. McNeil, J. Saward, San Francisco 1991, 213ff.

⁹⁵ BALTHASAR, *Die großen Ordensleben*, 2nd rev. ed., Einsiedeln-Zürich-Köln 1962, 9f.

that «one of the Trinity suffers for us»⁹⁶. Without the reality of the contents of this formula, soteriology is an impossible task. Also this aspect reveals the internal consistency and abundant wealth of insights characteristic of Balthasar's endeavor. If he defines the «Gestalt» as the «universale concretum et personale», i.e. God's universal truth and love in one concrete form, then he does not make a case for a vague unifying principle. His «Schau der Gestalt», his sense for the whole, navigates him successfully through the treacherous waters of soteriology. In Christ the *plerôma* of the trinity corporeally dwells⁹⁷.

By recapitulating the central moments of Balthasar's soteriology one senses a nuanced change in the appropriation-process of Anselm's soteriology. The Trinitarian dimensions are fully developed and the «wound» takes on a different quality. Yet, the wound/dishonor in the Godhead remains and is repaired by the actual crucifixion of Christ. This is integrated into the wealth of the Father's soteriology and Balthasar's own contribution.

In spite of its richness, this polychrome tableau defies systematization. Every serious critique of Balthasar's model must be cognizant of this (O'Collins, Rahner, Schwager). The salvific event – as a Trinitarian event – defies a forced interpretation into a totally coherent system because of the mystery-nature of salvation⁹⁸.

13. Affirming the Christian Genius

The whole of Anselm's thought reaches its culmination and «final illumination» in his prayers. «Aesthetic reason» is prayer⁹⁹. It is neither a Patristic *intellectus* nor a Scholastic *ratio* but a «spiritual vision»¹⁰⁰. In every life-situation it might occur suddenly (*subito*). It is an occurrence similar to the Platonic «exaiphnes»¹⁰¹. Fulfilled

⁹⁶ Rahner avoids using this formula lest one confuse the two natures of Christ. Cfr. RAHNER, *Schriften zur Theologie*, Vol. 15, 210-213.

⁹⁷ Cfr. Col 2,9; BALTHASAR, *Theologik*, Vol. II, *Wahrheit Gottes*, Einsiedeln 1985, 20-23.

⁹⁸ Cfr. BALTHASAR, *Mysterium Paschale*, 133-153, 104; Id., *Au coeur du mystère Rédempteur*, 10ff; Id., *Pneuma and Institution*, *Skizzen zur Theologie*, V, Einsiedeln 1974, 403f; Id., *Theodramatik*, Vol. III, 211. 218-224. 236. 310.

⁹⁹ BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. II (*Anselm*), 212.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 220.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 230-234.

freedom is «freedom [grounded] in the good»¹⁰². Anselm sees freedom fulfilled as the ability to «see nothing that lies beyond their desire and thus can no longer sin because of it»¹⁰³. The most fitting term is concord. Human freedom transcends itself and attains a quality of freedom which is concord and love. Here the church becomes most real.

The only alternative is the abyss «sine fundo... nisi misericordia retineatur»¹⁰⁴. This is the consequence of the loss of rectitude. Again, Anselm is referred to: God did not have to suffer, but humanity needed a suffering God. Anselm is consistently interpreted by Balthasar in a staurocentric manner. Balthasar cites Anselm even to state that the mother of God is angry at the sins committed. After thematizing the Christological, staurocentric and Trinitarian dimensions of Anselm's thought, Balthasar touches briefly the Marian dimension in Anselm's works. The hope of humanity rests in the third prayer to Mary, in the fact that the Mother of God has made Jesus humanity's brother. This fact brings consolation, for therein lies salvation's certitude.

In what follows, Balthasar quotes from Anselm's Orations dealing with Christ and Peter, Paul, John and Mary Magdalene. This is done to demonstrate Anselm's broad understanding of faith as multi-dimensional. It integrates the Petrine («gather up the sheep»), Pauline («teaching-you... educate in the faith of Christ»), Johannine («love one another») and even the Magdalenian («grief») elements of faith¹⁰⁵. It serves to illustrate how «Anselm puts down his roots everywhere in the manifest almightiness of love»¹⁰⁶. Every state of life is open to the *analogia libertatis* which is «this concord of love». In the controversy over investiture Balthasar considers the defense of the liberty of the Church and of the Holy See as articulating his life-long care for the *concordia* of the mystical body. The unity and the holiness of the Church, the uncompelled freedom of Christ's bride, are threatened. The secular order can only defend this ecclesial freedom and never dominate it. To Anselm, freedom is an indispensable necessity.

As if to put to shame those criticizing Anselm for being rationalistic, Balthasar quotes Anselm:

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 253.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 253; *Ca* 6: 243,20-22; 25: 273,29f.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 254; *C* 8: 275,13f.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 256f.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 257f.

as we are aware of the sun through its rays before we see it unveiled, so we are aware of God from the reflection (speculation) of our reason: if we discover anything true in the light of truth, then we are aware at the same time of him by recognition and love in faith and hope. In the future we shall see him face to face¹⁰⁷...

And so, for Anselm there remains – as Balthasar observes – a «yearning longing for glory»¹⁰⁸.

One might object to Balthasar's overflowing wealth of citations. They hold the danger of a lost focus, structure and theme. Over long sections it is more a dialogue with the respective texts than a rigorously sustained argument. Hints are dropped, suggestions floated and vistas opened, only to be explained and developed at other places. The vision is sometimes blurred by virtue of its comprehensiveness. These are the negative consequences of a broad approach. Sometimes one is tempted to believe one should not press all of a theologian's writings under the overarching aesthetic concern. This notwithstanding, he certainly does not abuse Anselm's writings as a mere stone-quarry for a deliberate construction of his own approach to theology. He is able to demonstrate a fundamental, inner harmony which ultimately is non-contradictory. He considers the symphonic interrelatedness of theology as grounded in scripture and tradition. Like Anselm and all major theologians he struggles to join with the symphony of the Church Catholic through time and space: *sentire cum ecclesia*. Balthasar avoids the rigidity of a system and even points out how scripture is deliberately unsystematic.

Balthasar writes in the style of an artist on a meandering journey of exploration. One shares in the joys of discovery the author makes. The author is quite independent from scholarly opinions on Anselm and refrains from engaging in a dialogue with such sources even in the footnotes. This has the advantage of producing yet more sharply the intellectual profile of Anselm. The result is a greater fidelity to the issues Anselm raised and the solutions he offered.

Balthasar's approach has frequently been criticized as Christomonism. Knowledge of God occurs only in Christ. The pneumatological and ecclesiological dimensions receive little attention in «clerical styles» but are treated later in volume VII. Easily one can take the last quote Balthasar has on the chapter devoted to Anselm as an indication of what his ideal of a theologian was. It is a citation from Eadmer's *Vita II*:

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 259.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

He whose aim in serving is directed towards the recovery of the kingdom of eternal life strives to stick to God through thick and thin and with unshakeable perseverance to place his whole trust in him... Strong in patience, he rejoices in all things and says with the Psalmist: *Magna est gloria Domini*. This glory, even in this earthen pilgrimage, he has a taste of; and as he savours he desires it; and with great desire he salutes it while yet far off. Thus he is supported by the hope of attaining it, and consoled by it in the midst of all earthly dangers, and he sings with great joy: *Magna est gloria Domini*¹⁰⁹.

It is important to note the valence Balthasar attributes to the thought of Anselm he profiles. Rather Anselm's attitude to faith and his theological conduct are central to the cognitive and existential actuation of faith (= «Vollzug des Glaubens») in the Church. The monastic unity of philosophy and theology serve this purpose.

Prayer is not a mere beautiful postlude, but central to understanding Anselm. Prayer is the fitting description of Trinitarian dialogue: «What we describe anthropomorphically as Trinitarian dialogue might just as rightly be called Trinitarian prayer»¹¹⁰. Both Anselm and Balthasar see in theology a particular form of participation in divine life. It is «pure archetypal prayer», paradigmatic for the entire attitude, form and contents of our human prayer¹¹¹. Therefore, Balthasar believes «creation and salvation to be acts of the whole trinity»¹¹².

The exuberance of perspectives and citations Balthasar supplies can endanger the ability to keep the aesthetic focus. One does detect a slight tendency towards description and narration rather than argumentation. Philosophers and biblical scholars find this somewhat disconcerting at times. His ability to perceive all the figures in one sweeping perspective is a convincing argument for his aesthetic intuition. The rediscovery of Christ in the center of theology entails seeing that all facets of this discipline refer to this one form. All theologians play the one and same score. One finds, even in a theologian like Anselm, a contrapuntal blending of opposites into one symphonic concordance.

Balthasar judges Anselm to represent something of the *kairos* of his age.¹¹³ His theology is deemed singular, harmonic and symphonic because it is oriented towards truth¹¹⁴. Flowing from this, scripture and Magisterium are judged to be interrelat-

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 259; cfr. EADMER, *Vita* II; 32; PL 158, 93.

¹¹⁰ BALTHASAR, *Christian Prayer*, 19.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 21f.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 22f.

ed¹¹⁵. Anselm is seen as continuing the monastic-contemplative tradition of the first millennium with a special concern for the Benedictine emphasis on freedom, community and dialogue.

¹¹⁵ BALTHASAR, *The Glory of the Lord*, Vol. I, 555.