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When Anselm wrote to his old master Lanfranc in Letter 25 that Lanfranc had proved his love beyond doubt by a necessary argument (argumento necessario probaretis) [1] in sending his nephew to Bec to become a monk, he was making a small scholarly joke. The expression was certainly in use among Anselm's contemporaries and in the generation which followed as a technical term, [2] and Anselm would have heard it from Lanfranc in the schoolroom.

This is one of the few occasions in the Letters where Anselm displays his technical skill as a dialectician overtly. Even here he did not intend to dazzle his reader with erudition. The expression is commonplace enough; it belongs, not to the study of advanced dialectic, but to a fairly elementary stage in the syllabus. Anselm is simply making a private joke to an old friend and master. But the presence of such occasional indications of Anselm's logical training helps to draw attention to a neglected aspect of the Letters: that is, the extent to which they constitute a unique resource of comparisons between the arguments of Anselm's formal treatises and the more formal arguments of another genre of writing. Anselm often has to argue a case when he writes a letter; and yet the trained dialectician is not obviously in evidence.

A good deal of illuminating work has been done in recent years on Anselm's methods of arguing, and in particular on the groundwork of formal logical method which underlies the arguments of the treatises. [3] But the close analysis of technical terms and methods has, for the most part, been restricted to the argument of the treatises, which is in any case where Anselm might be expected to make the fullest use of formal methods of exposition. The more general summary J. Hopkins has made of the range of Anselm's methods of arguing is also drawn largely from the treatises. [4] The writer of the De Grammatico (which D.P. Henry has done so much to elucidate) and of the philosophical and theological treatises is, however, also the author of a number of prayers and meditations [5] and of a considerable body of letters. The prayers and meditations are designed to evoke devotional feeling and to persuade. They are in a special sense, which is not our concern here, vehicles of argument. The Letters contain arguments of great variety and on all sorts of subjects. Even if they do not always have the stamp of the careful and more formal logical construction of the treatises, they are important sources of evidence as to the working of Anselm's mind because they are relatively spontaneous in some cases; once or twice we see Anselm in momentary distress, writing under the influence of a passing mood. That is not to underestimate the extent to which Anselm saw them as finished literary works in their own right, but merely to suggest that the argument of some of these letters may have been less thoroughly worked over than that of the much polished treatises. [6] Invaluable

though the study of Anselm's formal dialectical knowledge is for the history of the dialectic of his day, the very discovery of its roots in the textbooks he knew tends to obscure the peculiar movement of Anselm's own thought. The Letters are not examples of entirely unstudied thinking because they are the work of a highly trained and disciplined mind. But they bring us as close as it may be possible to come to watching the free play of his thought in solving small and immediate problems as well as large and 'eternal' ones.

I have restricted myself in this study mainly to the letters Anselm wrote before he became Archbishop, because these were written while he still enjoyed comparative leisure and peace of mind. They were composed, too, during the period when he wrote those early treatises which most clearly demonstrate the influence of his dialectical training. They are highly inventive compositions in at least two respects: Anselm has to say much the same thing again and again on different occasions, sometimes to the same correspondent, when he thanks Gundulf or Lanfranc for gifts, for example, or when he reassures one friend after another that he still loves him, and that there is no need for either friend to suffer from the pains of separation since they are both present to one another in their hearts. He only occasionally repeats himself, and he appears to have an unlimited fund of devices for explaining his feelings. Secondly, Anselm's inventiveness is driven to some extremes by the often contradictory demands of what he has to say; he has been asked to pray for a friend, but he feels himself unworthy; on the other hand, it would be uncharitable to refuse; he wants to thank a friend for a present, but it is more important to thank him for the love which has prompted it, and yet there is no need to do that if the friends are, in fact, present to one another in their hearts, so that the sender of the gift already knows what Anselm feels. At every turn Anselm's mind meets the checks and balances of his vigilant judgement. The flavour of these letters, then, is often a rather anxious one; neither stylistically nor in their content can they be reckoned casual compositions. But the special demands they made force Anselm's inventiveness in fashioning arguments as if it were a hothouse flower, into strange and complex growths. The arguments of the Letters are not loose and second-rate versions of the arguments of the treatises; they are worthy Anselmian arguments. They reflect the tastes and practices of his day. But they show us the obverse of Anselm the dialectician.

There are a few letters in which technical terms of dialectic, or references to the type of argument Anselm employs in the treatises, show us Anselm's range of technical argumentative skills. It may be as well to consider these first, since their very contrast with the argumentative style of the bulk of the letters emphasises how out-of-place they seem in the context of letter-writing. In Letter 49, again to Lanfranc, Anselm says that he has learned in the school of Christ something which he now holds fast, and asserts:

> Didici in schola Christiana - quod teneo, tenendo assero, asserendo amo ... [7]

The 'assertion' and the reference to the schoolroom suggest that this, too, is a wry reference to the days when Anselm was Lanfranc's pupil. More obviously technical is yet another dialectical pun addressed to Lanfranc in Letter 57. Anselm feels uncomfortable because Lanfranc persists in addressing him as 'lord' and 'father'; he protests that he does not know for whom a letter so addressed may be intended, since it is certainly not designed for him.

> Aut si servo et filio vestro scribitis, cur quod destruere non potestis per oppositam negationem, subvertere tentatis per relativam oppositionem? [8]

'Or if you are writing to your son and servant, why do you try to alter by reversing our relative positions what you cannot change by plain denial?' Opposita negatio and relativa oppositio refer to argumentative techniques of elementary dialectic, [9] and there is a special irony in the linking of 'relatives' with the pairs: 'father and son' and 'servant and master', since these are the examples chosen by Aristotle and Boethius in the discussion of relatives in the Categories. [10] In such instances Anselm is deliberately introducing a note of formal dialectic into the letter precisely because it will stand out in its surroundings and form a proper compliment to Anselm's old schoolmaster.

On several occasions, Anselm says that he has unfortunately no time to answer questions which have been put to him by his correspondents; some of these, to judge from questions he did find time to answer, dealt with matters of monastic discipline or with pastoral problems, but others touched perhaps on the kinds of issue Anselm deals with in the treatises. Only once in these early letters does Anselm go to the trouble of answering such a question in full. In Letter 97, to his own ex-pupil Maurice, he has instructed that the text of the treatise he is composing on the problem of evil is to be attached to the letter. [11] This is a special case for two reasons: first, Anselm was engaged in writing the work, the De Casu Diaboli, in any case; and, secondly, Maurice held a special place in his affections because he had been an apt pupil at Bec. He writes to him at length about his studies in Letter 64, and promises him in Letter 74 that if Lanfranc will permit it, he may have a copy of the Monologion to read while he is staying at Canterbury. He is simply sending Maurice a copy of a treatise they would have read and discussed together if Maurice had been allowed to remain at Bec. To no one else does Anselm send such an 'unfinished' work. Hugh, Archbishop of Lyons, received a copy of the Proslogion and of the Monologion, [12] and to Rainald, the Abbot, Anselm sends a copy of the Monologion in Letter 83, with anxious instructions that Rainald is not to let it fall into unsympathetic hands. But Anselm does not write anything fresh for them in the style or manner of the treatises.

It is only under pressure and when he is worried that Anselm attempts to summarize a formal philosophical or theological argument in one of these early letters. In Letter 83 he explains to Rainald very briefly what has evidently turned out to be a particularly often misunderstood point among readers of the Monologion. When Latin speakers speak of three Persons and one substance in the Godhead, and Greek speakers talk of three 'substances' and one 'person' their meaning is exactly the same; it is simply the usages of the two languages which differ. [13] In Letters 129 and 136, Anselm writes first to John, one of his monks, and then to Fulk, Bishop of Beauvais, about the Roscelin affair which was to oblige him to write the De Incarnatione Verbi. In both letters he summarizes portions of the argument of the treatise he has not yet written out in full, so as to make his own standpoint clear. He is not anxious to make an issue of the matter. He tells Fulk that he is not to make his letter public at the Council of Rheims where he has asked him to read it, unless Anselm's orthodoxy is seriously called into question as a result of Roscelin's accusations. [14] He has written his abbreviated defence in the argumentative style of the treatises, but in a condensed and truncated form, and without the leisurely development of the argument which is so characteristic of the finished treatises. Except in the special sense in which the De Incarnatione is an Epistola, Anselm evidently felt that this kind of writing and this kind of argumentation did not belong to the writing of letters.

Nevertheless, it would be very strange if none of the argumentative devices of the treatises made an appearance in the letters. What is of interest is the fact that they do so in a less formal way. Techniques of division and definition, for example, are entirely characteristic techniques of argument in the treatises. Anselm uses them in the letters in a much freer manner but nevertheless in a recognisable form. In Letter 2, for example, in a passage which he used again, almost unaltered, in Letter 51, Anselm discusses what we are to understand by the 'few' who are chosen. [15] The young monk who may think himself one of the 'few' must be careful not to be overconfident, since we have no way of knowing how many the 'few' are to be. [16] If his life does not yet reach the proper standard of the 'few', let him correct it. Even if he judges that it already does so, he should be careful not merely to match the standard of the 'few' he knows personally, but aim at the very highest standard, in case those 'few' are not, in fact, to remain among those ultimately chosen for eternal life. Anselm does not describe the qualities of the 'few', but he encourages his reader to think carefully what he himself understands by the term. In Letter 17, to Henry, the monk who wanted to go to Italy to rescue his sister from servitude, Anselm suggests that he, too, should reconsider, this time the nature of the 'good' he proposes to do:

> Cum igitur haec tot et tanta certa incommoda vel potius mala sint, si illud unum tam inopportunum, tam incertum, tam noxium

> bonum conferatur; quis intelligens illud bonum, ac non potius non bonum vel magis malum dixerit? [17]

'Since therefore so many and such certain disadvantages, or rather, evils, attend this, if this one rashly-conceived, uncertain and undesirable good is to result, who, understanding what that good is, would not rather say that it is not good but evil?' If the true nature of that 'good' is understood, it is to be re-defined as an evil. Letter 73 deals with the nature of patience and obedience. Anselm is trying to reconcile Prior Henry with Lanfranc, under whom he finds it difficult to live peacably:

> Cum igitur totum rei, de qua consulistis, consistat consilium in oboedientia et patientia. [18]

'My advice on the matter you ask about consists entirely in a counsel of obedience and patience.' Anselm goes on to work out the implications of a definition of obedience and patience in this set of circumstances. To obey your abbot's wish that you should make peace with the Archbishop is even more praiseworthy than merely accepting his instruction. Anselm tells Henry, and to be patient when you are unjustly accused and attacked is to fulfil the definition of patience better than to be patient only in the face of deserved punishment. To obey Lanfranc is to obey in his person the Abbot of Bec (Herluin) to whom you owe obedience in his own right, and who wishes you to obey the Archbishop. Gundulf, in Letter 78, is not to consider any suffering real tribulation unless it injures body or soul:

> Hortor itaque sanctitatem vestram, ut nullo modo tribulationem putetis quod nec corpus nec animam laedit. [19]

In a lighter vein, in Letter 90, Anselm writes to Lanfranc that the Abbot of Bec (now Anselm himself) has borrowed from 'brother' Anselm the gold Lanfranc has sent to make a chalice, because the money it will fetch is desperately needed at the moment; the debt will be faithfully repaid. [20] Here, Anselm is, as it were, 'redefining' himself, so that in one persona he may 'borrow' from his 'other self'. Nowhere does Anselm explicitly say that he is defining or dividing up a term or its meanings so as to consider its implications more closely, but that is, in fact, what he is doing in all these cases. He does so sometimes half-humourously, sometimes very seriously. His purpose is to help his reader to see more clearly exactly what is under discussion. He looks almost out of habit at the meaning and implications of every word he uses; verbal analysis, of however informal a kind, leads his thinking from point to point, and enables him to write with precision and clarity. Often, as in the treatises, he believes that all that is required to clear up a difficulty is a reconsideration of the exact nature of the issues, and especially of the words in which the issues are described.

The letters contain no formal syllogisms - and syllogisms are not in any case one of Anselm's favourite methods of argument even in the treatises. But some of Anselm's arguments in the letters may be reduced to mock-syllogisms. In Letter 17, for example, Anselm tries to persuade Henry that his sister's servitude is of no account because everyone is a servant in some sense, and the service of an earthly lord in no way demeans a Christian. Everyone, says Anselm, serves his superiors in some way. If a man is God's servant, he is a freeman who serves of his own will, and he who is free in God's sight is a servant of Christ. If everyone is a servant, and every servant of the Lord is free and everyone who is free in God's sight is a servant of Christ, what do we mean when we say that someone is a slave or a servant? There can be no shame in such an appellation. [21] The apparently formal shape of the series of hypothetical assertions and conditional statements Anselm makes in this letter gives an illusory 'conviction' to the 'conclusion' of what Henry evidently found a very weak argument, since he did, in fact, go to Italy to rescue his sister. Again in Letter 18 Anselm uses a mock-syllogism to persuade Abbot William to reinstate a young man who has let him down. If the young man's service was satisfactory in the past, Anselm argues, and you cannot recover the money he has taken, or caused to be lost to you (pecunia amissa), would it not be sensible to take him back for the sake of the service he will do you in the future? [22] A 'negative' argument of a mock-syllogistic kind appears in Letter 27, to Lanfranc. If Anselm had not told him of this opportunity to do good by pleading for a young man who lies condemned in the King's prison, and if as a result, no help was forthcoming, Lanfranc would have been deprived of an opportunity to perform an act of mercy, and thus of the reward for that act of mercy. [23]

A technique of argument which J. Hopkins identifies in Anselm's treatises as deriving from the modus ponens and the modus tollens [24] is also to be found in a very much less formal manner in the letters. On two occasions when Anselm was asked for advice when it was proposed to make an election to an abbacy or bishopric, he suggested that the candidate should proceed to make his decision by first trying every means he can to escape the responsibility. If he cannot do so without sin, that is, without causing offence to those who want him to accept the office, or even disobeying a superior, he must accept, and then carry the burden as well as he can. [25] What Anselm is suggesting here is that the candidate shall first try out the implications of one course of action, and then, if that proves unsatisfactory, look at the alternative. That is very much what he does in Hopkins' example from the De Casu Diaboli 21, in first eliminating the possibility that Satan did not know that he would fall as a result of his sin; [26] elsewhere in the treatises Anselm pursues similar lines of thought.

On several occasions, Anselm follows a sequence of cause and effect

to its conclusion, so as to show his reader quite explicitly what will follow from a given action. In Letter 67 he commends the reformed Osbern of Canterbury to Prior Henry with a reminder that there is never so compelling a need to show kindness as when dealing with a man who has only recently seen the error of his ways.[27] Harshness or severity will have one of two possible effects: either it will cause the penitent to falter in the progress he is making, or it will lead him to stop improving altogether. Kindness and encouragement, on the other hand, will 'nourish' his good intentions, and cause him to make speedier and more certain progress. Anselm gives reasons for his views. Unless a man has sinned out of deliberate wickedness, we must suppose him to have sinned out of weakness. It is therefore sensible to nourish him with the milk of loving-kindness so that he may grow stronger. It is reasonable, too, to show the penitent openly the love which underlay the discipline he received when he was unreformed, now that he has seen the error of his ways. It is not reasonable to punish him further. Lastly, there is nothing to be gained from trying to propel him by force into the path of right living (ad rectae vitae tramitem) if he cannot be led into it. Anselm is here giving an initial statement - that a recent convert should be treated gently - which he feels it necessary to 'prove' to be true by showing Henry the arguments for and against it, and by demonstrating the consequences which follow from it. Often Anselm employs what he considers to be self-evident statements without feeling the need to demonstrate their soundness. Throughout the letters runs a set of assumptions about the nature of friendship: a friend's love is always reciprocated; friendships do not need renewal or refreshment, although tokens of continuing love are always welcome and of spiritual benefit; the love between friends is always equal in warmth, because each has the other's heart within his own, and the image of the other's love imprinted on his soul, so that he can match his love to that of his friend. It is only occasionally that Anselm feels the need to do more than state these facts of friendship in celebration of their truth. In Letter 93, for example, he writes a short note to Henry the Prior to say that although he rarely writes to him, that does not indicate any diminution of love on his part. He gives a reason: reasonable love, conceived between reasonable men, cannot cease for any reason, as long as its causes lasts:

> Postquam enim de vera ratione dilectio inter rationabiles nascitur, nequaquam ipsa, quamdiu radix vivit, extinguitur.[28]

Networks of implication, chains of cause and effect, then, are stated or implied in the arguments of Anselm's letters with a comparative freedom from formal demonstration, but nevertheless with a tight, argumentative forcefulness which shows that his mind was actively engaged in making every case watertight. Everywhere sentences begin with: quoniam; quapropter; ergo; si, particles which indicate that an argument of some kind is in progress.

One method of proving a case which was in almost universal use among the writers of Anselm's day is proof by authority. Robert of Tombelaine, to whom Anselm addressed Letter 3, wrote a commentary on the Song of Songs: he says that when his brothers read it, they said that they felt its principal shortcoming was the absence of supportive authorities. [29] It seems to have been Lanfranc's chief criticism of the Monologion that it was not supported by authoritative texts: divinis auctoritabus accingenda. [30] There is no doubt that the use of authorities was felt to constitute a method of formal proof; the word probatio is used by Lanfranc in his commentaries on the Pauline Epistles both in the sense of dialectical proof and in the sense of proof by authority. [31] Anselm's treatises are unusual in the extreme in not containing more than a very small proportion of authoritative quotation, and in depending almost entirely on rational demonstration. The letters are much more representative of contemporary practice. Anselm often uses Scriptural quotation, in particular as a means of proof, and occasionally even patristic authority. [32] In Letter 49, for instance, he quotes from Matthew to 'prove' that he who gives even a cup of cold water for love of God or his neighbour, gives alms and will have his reward. [33] He cannot resist interpreting the text to make it fit the special case of the monk, who cannot give alms because he possesses nothing in his own right. Anselm says that if he abstains from the food which is set before him, so that one of his fellow-monks may have more, that is an act of almsgiving. Here, Anselm has taken an 'authority' and applied and extended it. In Letter 62, to Abbot Walter, who had fled from his monastery - as he did on several occasions - Anselm marshals a string of Scriptural authorities to 'prove' to Walter that it is his duty to return. Anselm quotes two passages to show that a man should not follow his own inclination against all advice, even if he thinks he is right; he goes on to point out that a fool always thinks he is right, [34] and that the actions which seem to men to be right often lead to the depths of hell. [35] Therefore, says Anselm, a man should not do as he thinks fit, but ask the advice of others. If Walter had done so, and considered all the reasons why he should have stayed in his abbey, in conformity with obedience and the demands of love and mercy, and the election he has accepted, and the needs of the sheep in his charge, and so on, he would not have found that his selfish desire to save his own skin could outweigh all these other considerations. Anselm rests his case on the force of Scriptural authority. The additional factors he introduces at the end are designed merely to pile up reasons why the Abbot should return, and so to overwhelm him, but the solid grounds of Anselm's reasoning lies in Scripture. It is in this way that Anselm proves his case by authority so often in these letters, as he rarely does in the treatises.

This kind of 'proof by authority' belongs broadly perhaps to a category of rhetorically-inspired proofs, rather than to dialectic proper. Anselm's knowledge of Boethian dialectic would have taught him nothing about the use of premisses whose truth rests on their standing as authoritative statements, any

more than it would have shown him how to determine whether a statement was self-evident or not. The dialectic of the day had to do with forms of arguments, not with their truth; Anselm himself frequently distinguishes truth from validity.[36] Rhetoric, on the other hand, had in classical and post-classical times concerned itself with the grounds on which the truth of an argument's conclusion or its initial premisses might be found to be acceptable to an audience or a reader.[37] Anselm is deeply interested in patterns of argument for their own sake, but he is also, as a theologian and as a pastor to his monks, much concerned with the truth of his assertions. The notion that an authoritative statement from Scripture or the Fathers - or even, on occasion, from a classical writer[38] - is the equivalent of a self-evident statement perhaps belongs to the field of rhetoric, rather than to that of dialectic.

Further rhetorically-inspired devices of argument appear in the letters to a far greater extent than they do in the treatises. Anselm is able to emphasise the content of a paradoxical or antithetical statement by making it both a figure of speech and a figure of diction. In Letter 78 to Gundulf he expresses his paradoxical emotions of simultaneous joy and sorrow on Gundulf's behalf, on hearing that he has been elevated to the See of Rochester:

> Ex una igitur parte volo vestrae paternitati congaudere sicut illi, cuius praeteritam vitam divina gratia sibi placere ostendit, in hoc quod vos inter principes ecclesiae suae connumerare dignatur. Ex altera vero parte cogor vestra fraternitati condolere veluti illi, qui in eo ipso quo magis exaltatus est, maiori tribulatione gravatur.[39]

On the one hand, says Anselm, he wants to rejoice with Gundulf because God has found him worthy of such an office; on the other hand, he wants to commiserate with him, because such promotion brings stress and difficulty with it. The two halves of the antithesis are carefully matched, so as to resemble one another as closely as possible in syntactical form. Ex una igitur parte; ex altera vero parte; sicut illi; veluti illi; dignatur; gravatur. The letters are full of such stylistic contrivances, designed to underline the shape of the argument with a rhetorical flourish not often found in the treatises. Anselm enjoys baffling his readers with paradoxes, but his intention is not to obscure what he has to say, but rather to make them stop and think more deeply. In Letter 2 Anselm describes to Lanzo and Odo, as he was later to do in very much the same terms to Herluin,[40] how, paradoxically, the longer we live, the shorter is the time we have left to live, and yet the longer a man lives the more confident he tends to become that he will go on living for ever. In Letter 9, to Hernost, Anselm consoles him for his suffering in a current illness by reassuring him that, again paradoxically, the more we suffer in the body, the better it is for the welfare of our souls.[41] It is possible to turn suffering to account by

remembering that if we accept it willingly it is no longer suffering, but a state of affairs we have chosen to enjoy. Anger is always directed against an enemy. If we accept the justice of God's anger, we make ourselves his friends, and turn aside his wrath. [42] Anselm has not only provided Hernost with a rather conventional comfort in his troubles, in reminding him that suffering, if accepted in the right spirit, is salutary, but he has given him a positive line of thought to follow. If he meets God's anger as he should, it will no longer be anger but kindness. This kind of argument, like Anselm's love of paradox and antithesis in general, demonstrates again and again in the letters the marked sense of balance which characterises his thinking. Anselm cannot make a plain statement without considering how it might be modified. That is true of his treatises as it is of his letters, and it is one of the cardinal features of his thought.

Perhaps this habit of mind was brought into prominence in the letters in particular because Anselm so often found himself apologising for what he had to say; he feels unworthy; he is not sure how to offer advice to his superior; he has not written to an old friend for too long; he cannot do what is asked of him because he has no free time, or because some books which have been requested have already been lent to someone else. In the Prayers and Meditations, too, Anselm's mind is drawn to the paradoxes of God's mercy and his own ingratitude, of God's kindness and his own wickedness. But it is the letters which demonstrate his facility in contriving this kind of antithetical or paradoxical argument at its most varied, because they present him with so many different problems.

The method of argument by analogy also belongs perhaps more properly to rhetoric than to dialectic, and it was certainly used extensively by Anselm in conversation and in sermons, to judge from the reports of his sayings which survive. [43] Analogies occur not infrequently in the treatises, too. They are not noticeably more common in the letters, but they do occur there, as though Anselm found analogy a useful method of argument on occasion in almost every kind of writing. In Letter 2 he says that he was at first reluctant to write to Lanzo and Odo to give them spiritual advice because he felt himself a lukewarm counsellor for such hearts filled with burning zeal; but on reflection, he realises that a cool breeze can fan a burning fire, so he has decided to write after all. [44] Letter 112 contains a brief sermon for Hugh the hermit to use when a layman comes to him for spiritual inspiration. If the layman is a simple fellow and cannot read, a plain introduction to his faith by telling him a story will probably serve him best, in Anselm's opinion. The tale resembles other such stories told by Anselm himself, and reported by Eadmer and others. [45] It begins with the statement that God is putting the kingdom of heaven up for sale. Hugh is then to describe how glorious this kingdom is, how its purchaser will reign there with such power that everything he wishes will come about both in heaven and upon earth. Then he is to explain that God's price is not a monetary one, for money is of no value to Him, since He already owns everything which exists. Only love will purchase the kingdom. The story has the

merit of being simple and easy to understand. But above all, it has a freshness, almost a novelty of approach, which, without ever departing from strict orthodoxy, makes it compelling reading, and no doubt would have made it a very useful tale for Hugh to tell to any layman who came to him. Analogy, then, is one form of argument used by Anselm throughout his writings, but even in the treatises it constitutes a comparatively informal method of demonstration, a parallel or illustration, rather than a means of proof in its own right.

It has been said that Anselm argues by equipollency, although this is a notoriously difficult form of argument to define in relation to the practices of Anselm's day. [46] But if we take one recognisable general sense of the term to imply an argument which proceeds by modifying and developing an initial statement point by point until it has turned into a rather different statement, then something of the kind is present in these letters. Anselm often takes a single thought and allows its implications to unfold as if he were opening a flower. His cousin Peter has expressed a desire to see him; in Letter 56, Anselm develops that wish into a full-blown monastic vocation, in order to encourage Peter to become a monk. In Letter 76, he woos Roger, who has said he would like to become a monk at Bec, and has sent gifts as pledges of his seriousness, but who has not yet followed them in person. Anselm leads him gently from assumption to assumption, so as to make him feel that he has already committed himself and there is really no going back. To Maurice he writes in Letter 79: 'The more I love you, the more I wish to have you with me'. [47] But, Anselm adds, he loves Maurice not for his own sake, but for God's sake and for Maurice's sake. And so he loves Maurice even more if he makes himself so acceptable to those he is with that they are unwilling to part with him. Anselm has brought Maurice to see that the natural consequence of Anselm's loving Maurice is not simply that he wants him to return, although he does long for that, but that he wants even more that he should stay where he is. In Letter 120, to his cousins Haimo and Rainald, Anselm uses a typical device in the letters, that of leading from one word to another, rather than from one thought to another:

> Denique accessistis, accedendo succendistis, succendendo conflastis, conflando consolidastis animam meam cum animabus vestris. [48]

They have come to Anselm and kindled his love, and in kindling it they have set it on fire, and in setting it on fire they have melted his soul and fused it with their own. Here, too, is a form of argument by equipollency.

None of these examples of methods of argument, dialectical, rhetorical of those which fall into neither category, will stand up to close technical analysis. The most that can be said for them is that they loosely resemble types of argument which Anselm uses much more precisely elsewhere. But the

fact remains that they are vehicles of argument and that the letters do contain a number of arguments which Anselm was very anxious to make compelling to his readers.

Anselm is a great advocate of the use of reason in the solution of theological, doctrinal and personal problems of every kind. At the end of Letter 17, the letter in which he begs the monk Henry not to go to Italy to help his sister, Anselm points out that if emotion is allowed to enter into the making of a decision, it will tend to outweigh every other consideration. Only the facts should be balanced against one another:

> Nam si pondus amoris ponderi rei amatae coniungimus, absque dubio in rerum discernendarum iudicio decipimur. [49]

Affectus must be weight separately from res. At the end of Letter 37, to Lanzo the novice, Anselm says that he wishes he could discuss at length the reasons the wise monk may bring to bear against the temptations of the Devil:

> quibus rationibus prudens monachus eius callidas persuasiones dissolvat et annihilet. [50]

He does not expect his correspondents to be able to construct a scheme of argumentation which would satisfy a trained logician; but he does encourage them to approach their problems with a clear head and a mind unclouded by emotion. Anselm himself was far from unemotional; several times he says that he is so affected by what he is writing that the tears are running down his fingers and on to his pen. Even if that is no more than a literary exaggeration, the depth of Anselm's feeling is often very evident in the letters. When he wrote Letter 12 to Rodulf to apologise for the error which has led to Rodulf's being asked to return some borrowed books to Bec without Anselm's knowledge, Anselm was greatly distressed to think that Rodulf might have been unnecessarily and unintentionally hurt by an accidental slight. When Anselm suggests that problems are best solved by reason, he is not writing from the standpoint of a man of little feeling, but as a compassionate friend. He does not allow the trained philosopher in him to take over any argument. Anselm tries to help friends of very varied educational attainments to use common sense to resolve their difficulties, and in so doing he forges the generally comprehensible methods of argument which he feels are appropriate to letter-writing.

The corpus of the letters was not written, as the treatises were, in the form of continuous, linked exposition. However long a period Anselm may have spent in composing an individual treatise, he intended the finished product to form a single chain of argumentation. The letters, of necessity, contain less extended sequences of argumentation; sometimes there are several within a

single letter. From Letter 2, for example, Anselm was later able to take two sections as they stood, and insert them into Letters 35 and 51 respectively. In Letter 80, to Abbot Paul, he tackles two quite separate aspects of the abbot's duties in two consecutive sections. First, he discusses Paul's duty to teach those in his pastoral care by example, even though he has been placed among people whose language is different from his own, so that he cannot teach them in words: quos verbis docere propter linguarum diversitatem non potestis. [51] In any case, says Anselm, a good example is a more powerful persuasive force than mere words. While Paul is setting an example, he should try to win love for his gentleness and mercy rather than for his severity and harsh justice. Then men of every kind will be glad that they have been given into the charge of a kindly father and shepherd, and not handed over to a tyrant. And they will not see Paul as a foreign invader but as a welcome newcomer. Thus Anselm, stage-by-stage, brings the argument round to the question of Paul's task among foreigners (barbari). (Paul had become Abbot of St. Albans, and had therefore had to move from Caen, where he had been a monk, to England.) In the subsequent section of the argument, Anselm goes on to consider those ecclesiastical superiors whose responsibilities make them so anxious not to lose any possession of God's which has been put in their charge, that they become positively cunning in their determination not to be swindled by others; they are so afraid of over-spending that they become misers. They try so hard to acquire fresh possessions for the Church that they steal from the needy in their anxiety. They are so anxious to correct the foolish (stulti) that they become cruel. Paul must be careful not to fall into any of these traps in his desire to fulfil his duties well. Here, too, Anselm has presented his correspondent with comparatively brief and easily digested, self-contained sequences of argumentation. His awareness of the difficulty most people find in following a long sequence of thought is clear enough in Letter 28, which accompanied the three prayers to the Virgin which were sent to Gundulf. Anselm has given orders, he says, that the prayers are to be divided into paragraphs according to the sense, so that Gundulf may begin to read at any point, and prevent himself becoming bored: ut anticipando longitudinis fastidium, ubi volueris, possis eas legendo incipere. [52] Anselm himself, then, evidently felt that the purpose and form of argument in a letter should conform to a rather different standard from that which was appropriate in a treatise.

If we take one or two complete letters as examples, the special quality of Anselm's very varied argumentative technique in the letters becomes more evident. In Letter 55, Anselm tried to show his cousin Folcerald why he could not come to see him. This is an argument which is concerned with practical issues, rather than with doctrinal problems, and Anselm keeps strictly to the point. Anselm cannot come to see Folcerald - which he emphasises his longing to do, so that Folcerald's feelings shall not be hurt - because the journey is very dangerous. There is so much crime and violence on the roads of France

that Anselm can in conscience send neither knight nor monk, nor can he risk coming himself. He gives an example, the story of what happened to Dom Rodulfus on his return from accompanying Folcerald home. Even though he was attacked in the territory of the Archbishop of Rheims, and even though he shouted out that he was under the Archbishop's protection, the attackers took no notice. But even if there were no danger in the journey, continues Anselm, his Abbot will not give him permission to travel. As to the possibility of Folcerald's coming to Bec: that has twice been requested of Folcerald's own abbot, and the Abbot of Bec is reluctant to ask a third time. The only solution lies in prayer, and patience in the face of God's will. When God sees that we wish to do His will and not our own, says Anselm, perhaps He will allow us to be together. In this way, Anselm amasses reasons why Folcerald cannot have his wish, and why he must bear his disappointment patiently.

By contrast, in Letter 101, to Helinand, Anselm uses arguments of a very different kind to persuade Helinand not to abandon his vocation, but to go on and fulfil his vows as a monk. His argument hinges on the Scriptural statement that no one who puts his hand to the plough and then looks back is fit for the kingdom of heaven. [53] This is the supreme reason why Helinand must not give up. But Anselm warns him that the harder he tries, the more cunningly will Satan seek to trap him. First, says Anselm, he will try to tempt the monk by reminding him how much he used to enjoy the pleasures he has foresworn. He will suggest to him that no one should be expected to persevere in a life of austerity for ever. In this way his mind will begin to find the higher things less desirable because it compares them with habitual and familiar pleasures now out of reach. The Devil will go further. He will suggest that a monk's life is 'unhealthy'; that it is better for a man (salubrius), to refrain from attempting the impossible. A man may save his soul without going to such extremes, and attempting to reach a standard which is beyond him. Anselm does not bother to refute these arguments. His purpose is merely to make Helinand realise that they come from Satan, and to help him recognise them when he meets them.

Satan's next ploy, if he sees that the monk is not to be turned from his intention, is to pretend to agree with him, warns Anselm, and to propose to come with him a little way along the road tecum ire. As they go, he will continue to set traps for the unwary monk. If all his sins can be wiped out at once, as easily as a single one of them, why should the monk not do as he pleases and then purge himself just the same as if he had not sinned so gravely? Sometimes Satan will suggest that, although the monk's intentions are beyond reproach, perhaps he is overambitious in trying to live so holy a life while he is young, and while discipline is particularly hard to bear. Why should the monk not put off his profession until later in life? He will suggest that if the monk waits until he is older he will be able in the meantime to influence others and bring them with him into the monastic life. Why should the monk

enter into so binding an oath when he can obtain the same result - his own salvation - in the world, and still be free to become a monk later if he wishes to do so? Anselm pursues the Devil's train of thought uninterrupted, so that Helinand shall be able to follow the sequence and remember what temptation is likely to befall him next, when he hears these whispers for himself.

Now at last, with an apology for not doing so at greater length, Anselm begins to offer Helinand suggestions for ways of refuting Satan's arguments. If he thinks it is too difficult to forsake worldly pleasures for ever, Helinand has never experienced the sensation of 'ruling the vices': imperare vitiis, in love and in hope of heaven; that is a far more delightful experience. If he thinks he may serve God as well outside the cloister, he should remember that men and women of every age and kind find it easy to live good lives in monasteries, but that it is much more difficult to be holy in the world. No one ceases to be a monk so that he may live a better life, although many leave the world in order to do so. If a man piles sin upon sin because all will be forgiven in the end, that shows that he does not deserve to have his sins forgiven. He who puts off his reformation of his life may not live to carry it out, and so he abandons a certain benefit for a very uncertain future good. If he thinks he cannot live so good a life in his youth in a monastery as he will be able to do when he is older, let him remember that it is better to do a lesser good than to fail even to attempt a greater one. The pattern of Anselm's argument here is a double one. First, he lets Satan have his say. He does not answer him point by point, so that the letter turns into a debate or disputation. He allows the cumulative weight of Satan's persuasiveness to build up fully, before he attempts to destroy it. When he comes to answer Satan, he does so point by point, but not in the order in which Satan has raised his own points. Instead, Anselm constructs a sequence of argument of his own. Such a scheme would be most uncharacteristic if it were to be found in one of the treatises. There, Anselm much prefers to let the two partners in a dialogue answer one another on each detail before he proceeds to the next.

Anselm's letters would be recognisably his even if independent evidence did not vouch for their authenticity. They bear the mark of his patterns of thought and of his habitual methods of approaching the task of constructing an argument. But they demonstrate two things which the treatises cannot show - Anselm's skill in adapting the level of what he has to say to the needs of individual readers whose knowledge of the technicalities of formal argument rarely matches his own, and, secondly, the fact that he wrote his letters in an age when there was still considerable freedom of structure open to exponents of the art of letter-writing. [54] In other words, Anselm was free to choose whether or not to employ his technical skills of argument. In his letters he generally prefers to allow a more unstudied line of thought to develop.

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NOTES

1. Anselmi Opera Omnia, ed. F.S. Schmitt, Rome/Edinburgh, 1938-68, 6 vols. [= S] 3.132.7-8, Letter 25, cf. Boethius, De Interpretatione, PL 64.375-8; 606-13.

2. Cf. Thierry of Chartres, Commentaries on Boethius (ed. N.M. Häring), Toronto, 1971, p.495.68; Peter Abelard, Dialectica (ed. L.M. de Rijk), Assen, 1956, p.461.3.

3. See J. Hopkins, A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm, Minneapolis, 1972, bibliography, especially the works of D.P. Henry. To this list should be added D.P. Henry, Commentary on De Grammatico, Dordrecht, 1974.

4. Hopkins, op.cit., pp.246-53.

5. These have recently been translated with an introduction by Sister Benedicta Ward, Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm, London, 1973.

6. Anselm himself describes how he liked to ensure that his work was perfectum and exquisitum, in the preface to the Cur Deus Homo, S 2.42.2-3.

7. S 3.162.22-3 (Letter 49).

8. S 3.172.12-3 (Letter 57).

9. See Boethius on the Categories, PL 64.263-83; 228-30.

10. PL 64.228-30.

11. S 3.225.17-21 (Letter 97). The text which follows is substantially that of the De Casu Diaboli, S 1.247 ff.

12. Letters 100 and 109.

13. S 3.208.12-20 (Letter 83).

14. S 3.281.42-5 (Letter 136).

15. S 3.99.31-100.53; cf. S 3.165.18-39 (Letters 2 and 51).

16. D.P. Henry remarks on St. Anselm's use of 'numerically definite reasoning' in The Logic of St. Anselm, Oxford, 1967, chapter 7.

17. S 3.123.35-8 (Letter 17).

18. S 3.194.11 (Letter 73).

19. S 3.201.30-1 (Letter 78).

20. S 3.217.17-21 (Letter 90).

21. S 3.123.11-27 (Letter 17).

22. S 3.125.6-8 (Letter 18).

23. S 3.135.14-9 (Letter 27).

24. J. Hopkins, op.cit., p.246-7.

25. Letters 52 and 61; in Letter 88, Fulk (recipient of Letter 61), quotes Anselm's own advice back to him when he himself is reluctant to accept the abbacy of Bec.

26. J. Hopkins, op.cit., p.246-7.

27. S 3.187.8-20 (Letter 67).

28. S 3.220.3-5 (Letter 93).

29. PL 150. 1363.

30. S 3.199.14-6 (Letter 77).

31. PL 150.131, 363.

32. S 3.183.57-66 (Letter 65).

33. Matthew 10.42, S 3.162.23-6 (Letter 49).

34. Proverbs 12.15.

35. Ibid., 14.12.

36. S 1.149.11-4 (De Grammatico).

37. Cicero, De Inventione I.xix-xxx.

38. See Letters 19 and 20.

39. S 3.200.7-11 (Letter 78).

40. S 3.100.54-101.70 (Letter 2) and S 3.142-43 (Letter 35).

41. S 3.112.11-24 (Letter 9).

42. Ibid.

43. See Memorials of St. Anselm (ed. R.W. Southern and F.S. Schmitt), London, 1969.

44. S 3.99.23-4 (Letter 2).

45. For example, in the stories contained in the De Humanibus Moribus and the Dicta Anselmi, both edited in the Memorials.

46. It is a term used by Abbo of Fleury, Lanfranc, and Peter Abelard, as well as by a number of authors on arithmetical topics, but not until Abelard's time or later can it be said to have a precise technical meaning.

47. S 3.202.3-7 (Letter 79).

48. S 3.259.33-4 (Letter 120).

49. S 3.124.42-5 (Letter 17).

50. S 3.147.75-6 (Letter 37).

51. S 3.203.9-10 (Letter 80).

52. S 3.136.18-20 (Letter 28).

53. Luke 9.62.

54. On the Art of Letter-Writing, see J.J. Murphy, A Bibliography of Mediaeval Rhetoric, Toronto, 1971; and for a study of a letter-writer of the later twelfth century, see the chapter on Peter of Blois in R.W. Southern, Mediaeval Humanism, Oxford, 1970.