



ANSELM ON FREE CHOICE AND CHARACTER FORMATION

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Character formation is a central theme in Katherin Rogers's *Freedom and Self-Creation: Anselmian Libertarianism*. According to Rogers, Anselm holds that the purpose of free choice is to afford creatures the possibility of creating their own characters through their free choices. I argue that Anselm has no doctrine of character formation. Accordingly, he does not hold the view of the purpose of free choice that Rogers attributes to him. Creatures cannot bring about justice in themselves, let alone increase it by their own efforts; any moral progress is divine gift, not creaturely achievement. I offer an alternative account of the purpose of free choice.

Character formation is a central theme in Katherin Rogers's recent exposition of Anselm in *Freedom and Self-Creation: Anselmian Libertarianism*. According to Rogers, Anselm holds (1) that the purpose of free choice is to afford creatures the possibility of creating their own characters through their free choices, (2) that choices can be determined by an agent's character, and (3) that such character-determined choices are nonetheless free if the character that determines them is itself a product of free choices.

All these attributions are mistaken. For Anselm has no doctrine of character formation or habituation. Accordingly, he does not hold that the purpose of free choice is to afford creatures the possibility of creating their own characters through their choices. Likewise, he does not envision the possibility that a choice could be determined by an agent's character, and so he has no view about whether such a choice would be free.

After briefly showing that Rogers does indeed attribute all these claims to Anselm himself (and not merely to "the Anselmian"), I lay out the textual and philosophical case against Rogers's view. I show first that there is no text in the philosophical and theological works to support a doctrine of character formation in Anselm, and that the vocabulary of character, habituation, and virtue is almost entirely absent from his works. I then turn to broader thematic arguments, showing that the claims about character formation that Rogers attributes to Anselm are at odds with what Anselm says about both the purpose of free choice and the reason that the good angels can no longer sin.



1. Rogers's Attributions to Anselm

Rogers very properly distinguishes between what Anselm held and what someone inspired by Anselm might hold. As she puts it,

I attempt to cast the discussion in the contemporary idiom and within the contemporary literature, and so a new character, the Anselmian, has to be introduced. The Anselmian embraces the basic outline initially proposed by Anselm, and then attempts to fill it in and build upon it. "Anselm" and "Anselm's" indicate that it is indeed the historical figure whose thought is expressed.¹

My concern in this paper is to argue that Rogers is mistaken in attributing to Anselm the claims that she does, and so I begin by showing that she does in fact attribute claims (1)–(3) to Anselm, the historical figure, and not merely to the Anselmian.

As for (1), that the purpose of free choice is to afford creatures the possibility of creating their own characters through their free choices, we find this attributed to Anselm in several places. For example:

In Anselm's view the value of free will is that it allows for self-creation.²

For Anselm the whole point of our being able to choose freely is that it bestows upon us the objective value of being the sorts of things that can imitate God by contributing to the creation of ourselves.³

Anselm proposes libertarianism in defense of the elevated metaphysical status of the created agent as a self-creator.⁴

The central motivation for Anselm's construction of his libertarian theory is to elaborate a view which allows for created agents to self-create.⁵

As for (2), that choices can be determined by an agent's character, and (3) that such character-determined choices are nonetheless free if the character that determines them is itself a product of free choices, consider the following passages.

Anselm holds that a choice which is determined by the agent's character may be considered *a se* if the character itself is the product of the agent's past *a se* choices.⁶

Anselm's theory holds that an agent's responsibility for character-determined choices may be traceable to his responsibility for his self-formed character.⁷

¹Rogers, *Freedom and Self-Creation*, 2.

²Rogers, *Freedom and Self-Creation*, 3–4.

³Rogers, *Freedom and Self-Creation*, 25.

⁴Rogers, *Freedom and Self-Creation*, 33.

⁵Rogers, *Freedom and Self-Creation*, 209.

⁶Rogers, *Freedom and Self-Creation*, 13.

⁷Rogers, *Freedom and Self-Creation*, 216.

She also says that Anselm “assumes the tracing thesis,” which she defines as the view “that you may be responsible for your character-determined choices if you are responsible for your character.”⁸

Thus it is clear that Rogers attributes claims (1)–(3) to Anselm himself, and not merely to an Anselmian.

2. *Anselm Has No Doctrine of Character Formation*

Anselm has no doctrine of character formation. But how does one go about showing a negative of this sort? It ought to be enough to point out that Rogers nowhere cites a text of Anselm that states, entails, presupposes, or in any other way indicates a belief in the possibility, let alone the importance, of character formation. (For there is no such text for her to cite.) But she makes the claim so many times, and it is so central to the argument of her book, that denying it seems to call for more argument than a one-sentence dismissal. So I begin by showing that the language of character, habit, and virtue is almost entirely absent from Anselm’s work. I then examine the one virtue-word that is commonly found in Anselm—*iustitia*—and show that it does not refer to a stable state of character acquired by habituation. Finally, I show that, far from believing in character formation, Anselm holds that rectitude of will is frighteningly precarious, easily lost (or, rather, thrown away) at any time.

One looks almost entirely in vain in the philosophical and theological treatises for the language of character. *Mores*, for example, is found only once:

Let no one, therefore, be in a hurry to plunge into the thicket of divine questions unless he has first sought in firmness of faith the weight of good character (*morum*) and wisdom, lest he should run carelessly and frivolously along the many side-roads of sophistries and be snared by some obstinate falsehood.⁹

Virtus is almost always “strength” or “power”; only once does it mean “virtue” (that is, a settled disposition or trait of character by which one is disposed to act rightly), and even there it appears in a description of a mistaken view of free choice:

⁸Rogers, *Freedom and Self-Creation*, 217.

⁹Anselm, *De incarnatione Verbi* 1 (II:9). (All citations to Anselm’s works are followed by a parenthetical reference to the volume and page number of the critical edition (Schmitt, *Opera Omnia*) and all translations are my own.) *Virtus* in the sense of “virtue” is much more common in the prayers and (especially) in the letters, but like Rogers I am concerned with Anselm’s explicit theorizing about free choice in his philosophical and theological works. An examination of his use of virtue-language in the letters would take us too far afield, and since Anselm is not working out philosophical theories about ethics and moral psychology in the letters in the way that he does in the treatises, it is fair to say that such an examination would not be germane to the project of this paper. Nevertheless, the letters do offer insight into Anselm’s ethical thought (as Sandra Visser and I discuss in our chapter on Anselm’s ethics in *Anselm*), and I consider some evidence from the letters below, in the section on “Moral Progress in Human Beings.”

Therefore, since we find some statements in Holy Scripture that appear to speak in favor of grace alone, and others that are thought to uphold free choice alone apart from grace, there have been certain arrogant people who have thought the whole efficacy of the virtues (*virtutum*) rests in freedom of choice alone, and there are many in our own day who have given up all hope that free choice is anything at all.¹⁰

Habitus is always either the perfect participle of *habere* or the monastic habit, never the settled disposition corresponding to Aristotle's *hexis*.

The vocabulary of the cardinal virtues, so common in Augustine, is likewise nearly absent from Anselm's work. *Fortitudo* for Anselm always means "strength," never "courage." *Prudentia* appears three times in the philosophical works, once¹¹ with the meaning "good judgment" (not specially confined to the moral domain) and twice¹² as an honorific, "Your Prudence," as one might say "Your Grace" or "Your Reverence." The word *temperantia* never appears in Anselm.

There is, however, one piece of the classical vocabulary of virtue that is central in Anselm's moral thought: *iustitia*, justice. What will emerge over the course of the rest of the paper is that justice likewise is not a state of character in the sense that Rogers envisions. It is acquired not by habituation but by divine gift; there is nothing anyone can do either to attain it or to increase it. Moreover, our possession of justice in this life is precarious, easily lost (or, to speak strictly, easily thrown away). Anselmian justice is therefore not a firm state of character, second nature, along the lines of an Aristotelian *hexis*. But before I can establish this point more fully, I need to examine what Anselm says about the purpose of free choice and about why the good angels are no longer able to sin.

3. The Purpose of Free Choice

Rogers is right that the purpose of free choice is to make room for creatures to have something from themselves, something that is not owed entirely to God. Since this point is not in dispute between us, I will not belabor it. Where we differ is in identifying *what* creatures are said to have from themselves through free choice. For Rogers, creatures have their *characters* through themselves; they engage in a kind of self-creation through the free choices that shape their characters. For example, she claims that Anselm

is motivated to pioneer this position [libertarianism] by the thought that if we human beings (and any other created rational and free agents there may be) are to bear any responsibility for what we do and, more importantly, for the kind of people we are, then we must be able to make choices which truly come from ourselves. He believes, as an entailment of his Christian faith, that God made us in His image. And he takes that to include the point

¹⁰Anselm, *De concordia* 3.1 (II:264).

¹¹Anselm, *De incarnatione Verbi* 1 (II:4).

¹²Anselm, *Monologion*, epist. ad Lanfrancum (I:5); Anselm, *Epistola de sacrificio azimi et fermentati*, prooem. (II:223).

that we are remarkable reflections in that we are able to participate in the creation of our own characters.¹³

“The point of freedom is self-creation,” she says elsewhere,¹⁴ and “in Anselm’s view the value of free will is that it allows for self-creation.”¹⁵ She even goes so far as to say that we “are uniquely in the image of God in that, unlike everything else, we can participate in our own creation by making ourselves better *on our own*.”¹⁶

But in fact what Anselm says consistently and repeatedly is not that we create our characters or make ourselves better (a thoroughly Pelagian idea, surely), but rather that we *retain* or *preserve* justice. Whatever justice we may possess must be received from God, not achieved by our own character-building efforts or free choices. As I have argued elsewhere,¹⁷ our choice to preserve justice is our own; it is from ourselves, to use Rogers’s preferred formulation. It is from God only in the sense that God created the will by which we choose and allowed us the free exercise of that power of choice.

By contrast, our *having* justice is from God. We can speak of a creature’s giving himself justice, but only in the sense that the creature could have thrown justice away and didn’t, not in the sense that the creature brought it about that he had, or increased in, justice. Anselm could hardly be clearer about this:

the [angel] who stayed put (*stetit*) in the truth in which he was made did not make himself not have justice, although he could have; and thus he both gave himself justice and received all this from God. For both angels received from God the having of justice, the ability to retain justice, and the ability to abandon it. God gave them this last ability so that they could, in a certain way, give justice to themselves. For if there was no way in which they were able to take away justice from themselves, there was also no way in which they were able to give it to themselves.¹⁸

In other words, the good angels made themselves just, or gave themselves justice, only in the sense that by the exercise of their own God-given free choice they retained the justice God had already given them, even though they had the power to abandon justice. They did not bring about

¹³Rogers, *Freedom and Self-Creation*, 1. As I have shown elsewhere (Williams, “Review”), the association Rogers draws here between our being in the image of God and our having free choice—an association frequently made in both *Anselm on Freedom* (11, 20, 56, 72, 83, 87, 106–107, 124, 201, 205) and *Freedom and Self-Creation* (1, 2, 19, 24, 41, 73, 156, 173)—is her own invention. On the very rare occasions on which Anselm mentions our bearing the divine image (only in *Monologion* 67–68 and *Proslogion* 1), he understands that image as consisting in the Trinitarian structure and activity of the rational mind, especially when directed to remembering, understanding, and loving God.

¹⁴Rogers, *Freedom and Self-Creation*, 3.

¹⁵Rogers, *Freedom and Self-Creation*, 3–4.

¹⁶Rogers, *Freedom and Self-Creation*, 24 (emphasis in original).

¹⁷Williams, “Anselm’s Quiet Radicalism.”

¹⁸Anselm, *De casu diaboli* 18 (l:263).

in themselves any justice that was not previously present in them, or even increase in themselves the justice that was already present. There is therefore no sense in which they can be said to form their own characters—let alone to make themselves *better*—through their primal choice of justice over advantage.

4. *Why the Good Angels Cannot Sin*

Rogers is of course correct that the good angels, those who made the primal choice for justice over advantage, can no longer sin. But the explanation she offers for their inability to sin is entirely at odds with Anselm's account. According to her, the good angels' primal choice establishes such a firm character in them that they can no longer choose advantage over justice; their characters are such that they cannot but choose rightly.¹⁹ But Anselm says otherwise. To begin with, it is hard to imagine that a single choice—and the angels had only a single choice—could so firmly fix one's character. Of course, angelic psychology may, for all we know, be different from ours in some relevant way such that for angels, unlike for us, a single choice can fix their character firmly and for good. But by reflecting on human choice we can see why the primal angelic choice as Anselm describes it is not one that could fix their characters in that way.

Suppose one afternoon, feeling tempted to fritter away my time in idleness, I choose instead to sit down at the piano and put in a good hour of serious practice. That choice might well make it a bit easier for me to choose practice over idleness the next time the opportunity arises—this is precisely how habits are formed, after all—but it certainly does not so fix my character that I can never again choose idleness over practice. But although this choice does not fix my character, it does arguably change something intrinsic to me. (Otherwise how could it contribute to forming my character or establishing a habit?) My motivation to practice, or my disposition to choose to practice, is strengthened, if only slightly; my motivation to fritter my time away, or my disposition to avoid productive activity in favor of idleness, is weakened, if (again) only slightly.

Without some such intrinsic change in the agent, there is no improvement in character, whether the improvement is incremental or once-for-all. And the key point is that on Anselm's description of the primal angelic choice, there is no such intrinsic change in the good angels. It is telling that the word Anselm uses to characterize their primal choice is *stetit*: the good angels stayed put. Nothing intrinsic to them changed as a result of their choice: they retained the same motivational structure, the same *affectiones*, that they had before the choice. No desire, no motivation, no disposition in them changed even in the slightest. So it makes even less sense in the angels' case to posit complete habituation through a single choice than it does in my own case.

¹⁹For example, "the good angels forever set their character for good by clinging to the justice that God has given them" (Rogers, *Freedom and Self-Creation*, 217).

Fortunately there is no need to attribute to Anselm any such theory of complete habituation through a single choice. He is quite clear that the reason the angels can no longer sin is that God gave them, as a reward for their primal choice of justice over advantage, whatever advantage they had lacked before that choice:

And so the good angels willed the justice that they had, rather than that additional something which they didn't have. As far as their own will was concerned, they lost that good (as it were) for the sake of justice; but they received it as a reward for justice, and they remained for ever in secure possession of what they had. Hence, they have progressed so far that they have attained everything they could will, and they no longer see what more they could will; and because of this they are unable to sin.²⁰

So it is not because of any change intrinsic to their will—because they have developed a firm character they didn't have before—that they can no longer sin. They retain exactly the same desires, the same *affectiones*, they had before. Rather, it is because of a change extrinsic to their will: God gives them the additional something (*illud plus*)²¹ that he had withheld from them before their primal choice. Given that now, as before, they can will only justice and advantage, and there is no longer any advantage they lack that they could will in preference to justice, they cannot fail to will justice. There is nothing left that they could want or choose unjustly. It is God's gift of complete happiness, not their own free choice and some habituation or character formation resulting from that choice, that makes them unable to sin.

How, then, are the good angels still free? Anselm's answer is somewhat perfunctory. In the final chapter of *On Freedom of Choice*, in which Anselm lays out his classification of the varieties of free choice, he says that the freedom of the good angels (1) "is made by or received from God," (2) "has rectitude that it preserves," and indeed (3) "has rectitude inseparably."²² This power meets the definition of freedom of choice as the power to preserve rectitude of will for its own sake. One might worry whether "for its own sake" is still applicable—either because it is their perfect happiness that eliminates the possibility of choosing injustice or because they now know, thanks to the example of the fallen angels, that disobedience would be punished with the severest unhappiness. Are they not then, at least, in part preserving rectitude of will for the sake of maintaining happiness, rather than (or in addition to) preserving it for the sake of rectitude itself?

²⁰Anselm, *De casu diaboli* 6 (I:243).

²¹Anselm, *De casu diaboli* 6 (I:243). Of this "additional something" Anselm says simply, "I don't know what it was. But whatever it might have been, all we need to know is that it was something they were able to attain, which they did not receive when they were created, in order that they might advance to it by their own merit" (*De casu diaboli* 6 [I:244]).

²²Anselm, *De libertate arbitrii* 14 (I:226)

Anselm shrugs off such worries as irrelevant: "So if the good angel is said to be no longer able to sin solely because he has this knowledge [of the consequences of disobedience], it is perfectly clear that just as the knowledge itself, which was acquired by his praiseworthy perseverance, is glorious, so also the inability to sin that arises out of that glorious knowledge is to his glory."²³ Note that his real interest here is in defending the claim that the angel's inability to sin redounds to the angel's credit. He offers no argument for the claim that the angel's further actions are free; in fact, nowhere in his work does he even state that the acts of angels who have been confirmed in goodness are free, let alone offer an argument for that claim. Unlike Rogers, Anselm sees nothing of theoretical interest in that question.²⁴ He is content with saying that they are praiseworthy for their justice.

5. Moral Progress in Human Beings

If Anselm were interested in character formation in the way that Rogers maintains, he would certainly not have used the primal angelic choice to lay out his theoretical understanding of free choice. The angels have a single choice, not a series of choices of the sort by which character can be developed. Moreover, the angels who choose justly become unable to sin, not because anything has changed in them—not because they have developed a certain sort of character—but because something external to them changes: God gives them the only aspect of happiness they had lacked, and so there is no longer anything they could will unjustly. Finally, Anselm is barely interested in the freedom of the angels who have been confirmed in goodness; he is far more concerned about their praiseworthiness. The primal angelic choice is thus an astoundingly inept device for Anselm to rely on if indeed he is trying to develop the view that Rogers attributes to him.²⁵

There is, however, conceptual room for some emphasis on character formation when it comes to human beings. For we face many choices over a long period of time, and repeated choices of a certain sort form our characters, for good or ill. So to see whether something of Rogers's thesis can be salvaged, I turn to the case of human beings. Unfortunately for Rogers, Anselm's account of human moral development is every bit as inhospitable to her reading as his account of the once-for-all angelic choice.

To begin with, far from thinking that a human being in this life could possess a firm, reliable good character, Anselm emphasizes that our possession of justice is precarious. Justice is easily lost—or, rather, thrown away. We cannot either acquire or develop justice by our own efforts, but

²³Anselm, *De casu diaboli* 25 (I:272).

²⁴The explanation Sandra Visser and I gave in *Anselm*, 184, of how an angel confirmed in goodness can preserve rectitude "on his own steam" seems a plausible account for Anselm to adopt, but it can claim no direct support in the texts of Anselm, who never considers the question.

²⁵On this point, see further Visser, "Review."

we can at any point lose it by our own negligence. So Anselm warns the monks of Saint Werburgh at Chester:

Although we can neither have nor preserve anything except through God, it is only as a result of our own negligence that we lose it or fall away from it. Quite often this starts with the slightest matters. Our crafty Enemy often deceives us by persuading us that not much hangs on such things. But what follows is the grave harm of which we read in Scripture: "One who does not heed small things falls little by little."²⁶

Since justice can be so easily lost, the moral life requires exceptional vigilance:

This present life is a journey, and as long as we are alive, we do nothing but travel. We are always going either upward or downward: either upward toward heaven or downward toward hell. When we do some good work, we take one step upward; but when we sin in any way, we take one step downward. . . . Now it is important to recognize that one goes downward far more quickly and easily than upward. For this reason, in every will and in every act Christian men and women ought to pay attention to whether they are on the upward or the downward path. Let them wholeheartedly embrace those in which they see themselves ascending. But as for those in which they recognize the downward path, let them flee and renounce them as though they were hell itself.²⁷

This sort of wariness about how easy it is to abandon justice—how readily one can fall into sin, how easily even good intentions can become corrupted²⁸—pervades Anselm's letters. It is not a wariness one would expect from someone who believes wholeheartedly in the centrality of character formation in the moral life.

Yet I must admit that the passage just quoted cuts both ways. Anselm speaks not only of the downward path but also of the upward path; and although "one goes downward far more quickly and easily than upward," one *can* apparently go upward. Perhaps here at least is some hint of character formation, of moral improvement deriving from repeated good choices, in Anselm.

Anselm envisions two different kinds of moral improvement: increase in the *intensity* of justice and increase in the *extent* of justice. In *On the Virginal Conception, and On Original Sin* 24 Anselm explains what it means for one person to be more just than another in terms of *intensity*:

In fact, someone is more just than another just person only if by his will he either pursues or avoids more strongly what he ought to; similarly, someone is more unjust than another unjust person only if he either loves or spurns more strongly what he ought not.²⁹

²⁶Letter 231 to the monks of the monastery of Saint Werburgh at Chester, ca. 1102 (IV:136–137), quoting Ecclesiasticus 19:1.

²⁷Letter 420 to Basilia (V:365–366). See also Letters 2, 167, 183, 184, and 403.

²⁸On this see especially Letter 80 to Abbot Paul (III:203–204).

²⁹Anselm, *De conceptu virginali* 24 (II:167).

Note that Anselm says here that this is the *only* way in which one person can be more just than another, even though later, in *De concordia*, he will envision another way: increase in the *extent* of justice. Note also that, strictly speaking, he is telling us how to compare two different people rather than a given person at different times. It is, however, a natural extension of his thought to suppose that just as Mary is more just than I am now because she clings to the good more tenaciously, so too I am more just than I was two years ago because I cling to the good more tenaciously. Anselm says nothing here about *how* such an increase in justice comes about.

For that we must turn to the much fuller discussion in *De concordia* 3.3–6, where Anselm envisions increase in the *extent* as well as the intensity of justice. The consistent message of the discussion in *De concordia* is that “no creature has this rectitude of will I have been talking about except through God’s grace,”³⁰ whether we are talking about the initial rectitude of will that makes someone just or the further rectitude of will that makes someone increase in justice. Human beings can preserve or abandon that rectitude, but they cannot cause it to increase; increase in justice is gift, not achievement.

Accordingly, Anselm says,

just as no one receives rectitude unless grace comes first, no one preserves rectitude unless that same grace continues. So even though rectitude is preserved through free choice, the preserving of rectitude should not be attributed to free choice so much as it should be attributed to grace, since free choice has and preserves rectitude only through prevenient and subsequent grace. Now grace follows upon its previous gift in such a way that, whether the grace be great or small, it never ceases to give that gift unless free choice wills something else and thereby abandons the rectitude it has received. For this rectitude never ceases to be present in the will unless the will wills something else that is incompatible with rectitude. For example, someone receives the rectitude of willing sobriety and then throws it away by willing immoderate pleasure from drinking. When he does this, it is by his own will, and therefore by his own fault, that he loses the grace he had received.³¹

The idea of increase in justice by *extent* slips in here almost unnoticed: the suggestion is that one could have rectitude in some other domain and then receive “the rectitude of willing sobriety” as an additional gift (and then, of course, throw it away).³² The same idea recurs a little later on, when Anselm observes, “Some people, after all, are just in one respect and unjust in another: for example, someone who is chaste but envious.”³³ Heaven is

³⁰Anselm, *De concordia* 3.3 (II:266).

³¹Anselm, *De concordia* 3.4 (II:267–268).

³²I owe to Sandra Visser the observation that part of Anselm’s sense of the precariousness of justice and the impossibility of something like Aristotelian virtue in this life must have arisen from his experiences of seeing monks, good monks, fall into drunkenness and other sins. Reading through his letters one sees example after example of monks tempted into disobedience and worldliness of various kinds.

³³Anselm, *De concordia* 3.4 (II:268).

promised only to those whose justice is unlimited in extent—“those who are just without any injustice”³⁴—but Anselm does not elaborate on how such complete justification comes about. The point remains, however, that any increase in justice in the soul will be a divine gift and not a human achievement.

In *De concordia* 3.6 Anselm takes up an extended discussion of the cultivation of the soul, its growth in holiness through the Holy Spirit.³⁵ If we were going to find a doctrine of character formation anywhere in Anselm, it would surely be here. But in fact he continues to maintain that all moral development is gift. We can pray for an increase in justice, but we pray only in virtue of the justice we have already received; and if we indeed increase in justice, this will be a matter of grace and not our own doing. Thus, Anselm says,

those who say, “Turn us, O God” (Psalm 85:4 [84:5]), have already turned to some extent, since they have an upright will when they will to be turned. They pray in virtue of what they have already received, in order that their turning might be increased, like those who were already believers and said, “Increase our faith” (Luke 17:5). It is as if both were saying, “Increase in us what you have already given us; bring to completion what you have already begun.”³⁶

We do not attain greater justice by our own efforts, but by the increase of God’s grace.

6. Conclusion

The central contention of *Freedom and Self-Creation* is false: Anselm does not think that the purpose of free choice is to afford creatures the ability to form their own characters. Yes, free choice is given to creatures in order that they might have something for which they are genuinely responsible, something truly “from themselves”; but for Anselm what we have from ourselves is not our characters, but our choices. The good angels are unable to sin, not because they have developed firm characters through a single primal choice, but because of a change external to themselves. Anselm emphasizes, not that they retain free choice (though he does affirm this), but that they are praiseworthy for their inability to sin. (Whether their further just choices count as determined in some way is not a question I will pursue here, but it does follow trivially that those choices are not determined by their *characters* in Rogers’s sense, and therefore that the question whether character-determined choices can be free does not arise for Anselm.) As for human beings, whatever justice we possess in this earthly pilgrimage is gift, not achievement; we can neither attain it

³⁴Anselm, *De concordia* 3.4 (II:268).

³⁵For Anselm’s pneumatology, see Williams, “God Who Sows the Seed.”

³⁶Anselm, *De concordia* 3.6 (II:272).

nor increase it by our own efforts. Such justice, moreover, is not a secure possession, an Aristotelian *hexis*: we can very easily throw it away.³⁷

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