

in the flower and spring tide of his age." The university of Basle, too, shared in the grief, and it was often said there of him, "He whom God loves, is made perfect in the morning of life." When the report of his death was contradicted, the joy was commensurate with the grief that previously had been felt.

ARTICLE II.

PROOFS OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD. A REPLY TO ANSELM, AND ANSELM'S REJOINDER.

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I. A BOOK IN BEHALF OF THE FOOL; OR A REPLY TO THE REASONINGS OF ANSELM IN HIS PROSLOGION. BY GAUNILON, A MONK OF MARMOUTIER.

1. WHEN one doubts or denies the existence of a being which is such that nothing greater can be conceived, in proof that such a being does nevertheless exist, it is alleged in the first place, that he who denies or doubts this has already such a being in his intelligence or understanding, since when he hears this mentioned he understands what is said; and in the next place, that what he understands must of necessity exist, not in his intelligence alone, but also in reality; which is proved from the fact that it is something greater to exist in the intelligence and in the reality, than to exist in the intelligence alone. And if the being in question exists in the intelligence or understanding alone, then whatever exists in reality also will be greater than this, and thus that which is greater than everything will be less than something, and will not be greater than everything, which is a contradiction. Therefore, that which is greater than all, which is now proved to exist in the intelligence, must of necessity have an existence, not in the intelligence alone, but in reality also, since otherwise it could not be greater than all.

2. To this it may peradventure be replied, that this being is said to exist already in my intelligence only because when I hear it mentioned I understand what is said. May I not also, in the very same

manner be said to have in my intelligence false things of any kind which can have in themselves no existence whatever; since, should any one speak of these things I could understand whatever he might say? unless perhaps it be evident that this being is of such a nature that it is impossible to have it in our conception in the same manner as we do things that are chimerical or doubtful; and therefore when this being is named, I am not said merely to conceive or have in my conception the words employed, but to understand, and to have in my intelligence the thing itself; in other words, unless it is of such a nature, that I am unable even to conceive of it, otherwise than by understanding (*intelligendo*), that is, by including in my knowledge, that it exists in reality. But, if this is so, then in the first place it will not be one thing to have this being in the intelligence, and another to know that it exists; nor can the conception we form of it precede in the order of time a knowledge of its existence, as in the case of the picture which first existed in the mind of the painter and afterwards in his production. In the next place, it would be scarcely credible, that when one hears this being named, it would not be as possible to conceive it not to exist, as it would be to conceive God not to exist. For, if it is not possible, why all this disputation against one who denies or doubts that there is such a being? Finally, it must be proved to me by indubitable evidence, that this being is of such a nature, that as soon as it is suggested to the mind, it is impossible not to have a perfect knowledge of its undoubted existence; but it is not a sufficient proof of this to say that it exists already in my intelligence the moment that I understand the terms which designate it; for I still maintain that any other uncertain or even false things, may in like manner be in my intelligence, since, should any one mention them I could understand his words; and moreover they would be more truly there, if, being deceived, as is often the case, I should believe that these things exist, while as yet I do not believe in the existence of the being in question.

8. Wherefore, the example drawn from the painter, having in his intelligence the picture he was about to produce, has but little bearing upon this question. For this picture, before it is produced, exists in the art itself of the painter; and such a thing in the art of an artist, is nothing else than a part of his intelligence itself; because, as Augustine says, when a workman is about to construct a coffer, he first of all has it in his art; the coffer which is produced, is not life; the coffer which is in his art, is life, because it lives in the mind of the artist, in which repose all the productions of his genius before they

are brought forth. Now, why are these said to be life in the living soul of the artist, unless it is because they are nothing but the knowledge or intelligence of the soul itself? But, aside from these things which are known to pertain to the very nature of the mind, whatever real object may be perceived, whether a knowledge of this is attained by the hearing of the ear, or by the action of the intellect; undoubtedly this object is distinct from the intellect that perceives it; wherefore, even if it is true that there is something than which a greater cannot be conceived, yet this, however known, is very different in its nature from a picture yet unexecuted in the intellect of the painter.

4. Add to this, what has been intimated above, that this thing, greater than everything else that can be conceived, which is said to be nothing else than God himself, — when I hear it mentioned, can no more be conceived by me, or grasped by my intelligence as a thing known to me either in its species or its genus, than God can be, whom I also even for this same reason conceive not to exist. For, I neither know the thing which God is, nor am I able to learn it from anything similar, since you also assert it to be of such a nature, that there can be nothing similar. Should I hear anything said concerning some man entirely unknown to me, and of whose very existence I am ignorant, I might, nevertheless, through the aid of that knowledge, general or special, by which I know what man is, or what men are, represent him to myself according to my conception of what really constitutes a man; and yet it might happen that he who had spoken of this man, uttered falsehood, and that the man himself of whom I had formed a conception, had no existence, though I had conceived of him according to a true idea, not of what this man was, but of what any man is. When, however, I hear GOD mentioned, or THAT WHICH IS GREATER THAN ALL, I cannot have this in my conception or intelligence in the same manner as I had this feigned man; for while I am able to conceive of a particular man, from my knowledge of man in general, that is, from a reality known to me, it is utterly impossible to conceive of this Great Being, except from the sound of the words which alone can rarely, or never, convey a true conception of anything. If, indeed, we concede, what is also undoubtedly true, that when a conception is formed under such conditions, it is not the mere word, that is, the sound of the letters, but the signification of what is heard, that constitutes the real object of thought. Yet, to one who knows the object which is usually signified by a word, and who is therefore able to form the only true conception,

a very different signification is conveyed from that which occurs to one, who, by hypothesis, is entirely ignorant of the object, who is for the first time to be instructed in relation to it, and who is under the necessity of forming his conception only according to the mental movement produced by the sound of the word, and from this of endeavoring to construct for himself a true idea of the object referred to. It would be wonderful indeed, if, under these circumstances, his effort should ever prove successful. Thus, therefore, it is precisely under these conditions that I receive any notion or idea into my intelligence, when I hear and understand the words of one who asserts that there is something greater than all things else that can be conceived. This is my reply to the statement, that this supreme Being is already in my intelligence.

5. But that this being exists not only in the intelligence, but necessarily also in fact, is proved to me by the following argument, *to wit*: that unless this is the case, then whatever does exist in fact, will be greater than this, and that, therefore this, which is already proved to be in my intelligence, will not be greater than all. I still reply: if that may be said to be in the intelligence, which exists there only as to the sound of the words, and which cannot, even in thought, be represented under the form of any real thing, then I do not deny that the being in question is, in this sense, in my intelligence; but since it by no means follows from this that it exists also in fact, I do not as yet entirely concede this, until it is proved to me by an indubitable argument. But he who says, that this being, greater than all, would not otherwise be greater than all, does not properly consider to whom this argument is addressed; for I do not as yet admit, nay, I deny, or at least doubt, that this is greater than anything having a real existence; nor do I concede to it any other existence than that, if it may be called existence, which the mind imparts to it by its effort to represent to itself only from a word which it has heard, some real thing entirely unknown to it. How, therefore, can it be proved to me that this greater being exists in reality, by asserting it to be evident that this is greater than all, while I thus far still deny, or at least doubt, that this is evident? May I not still say that this greater being is in my intelligence or conception only in the same manner as even many doubtful and uncertain things are there; that is, in a manner which does not necessarily imply its actual existence? It is necessary that it should, in the first place, be made clear that this greater being really exists somewhere; then, from the fact that it is greater than all, it will no longer remain doubtful that it is also self-existent.

6. For example; they say that there is somewhere an island of the ocean, which from the difficulty, or rather the impossibility of finding what has no existence they call the *lost island*; they say that it abounds, in a much higher degree than is ascribed to the fortunate islands, with an incalculable abundance of riches and of all delicacies; and that, without owner or occupant it excels in every species of luxury all other lands inhabited by man. Let any one affirm to me that this is all true, I could easily understand what he says; there is here no difficulty. But should he then say, as if announcing a logical deduction, you can no longer doubt that this island, more excellent than all other lands, has a real existence somewhere, since you do not hesitate to admit that it is in your intelligence; and since it is more excellent to exist in reality also, than to exist in the intellect alone, therefore it necessarily follows that it does exist in reality; because, unless it does, any other land that exists in reality will be more excellent than this; and thus this very island, already understood by you to be more excellent, would not in reality be so; if, I say, any one should attempt to convince me by these things that this island truly exists, and that this can no longer be doubted, I should either believe that he was jesting, or I know not which I ought to regard the greater fool, myself, if I should yield to his argument; or him, if he should suppose that he has established the existence of this island with any certitude, unless he had first proved that its superiority is by no means a mere false or uncertain conception of my intellect, but an existing and undoubted reality.

7. Such in the meantime is the reply which the fool may make to the things which have been advanced. Henceforth, when it is asserted to him that this greater being is of such a nature that it cannot even in thought not exist, and when this again is said to be proved by no other argument than this, that otherwise it will not be greater than all; he may make the same reply and say, When have I admitted that there is any such being as this, which is said to be greater than all, that from this it should be proved to me that its existence is so real and necessary that it cannot even be conceived not to exist? Wherefore it is necessary, first of all, to prove by some solid argument the existence of a superior being; that is, of a being greater and better than all others, in order that from this we may be able to prove all the other attributes which necessarily belong to such a being. But when it is said that this supreme being cannot be conceived not to exist, it might perhaps be more proper to say that it cannot be known that it does not exist, or that it is able not to exist; for, ac-

ording to the strict import of this word, false things cannot be known (intelligi); yet these things can assuredly be conceived of in the same manner as the fool has conceived that God is not. I know assuredly that I exist; yet I know, nevertheless, that I am able not to exist; and I know too beyond all doubt that this Supreme Being, which is God, both exists and is unable not to exist; yet does this prevent me from conceiving that he does not exist? I know not indeed that I am able to conceive that I do not exist, so long as I certainly know that I do exist; but if I am able, why may I not conceive the same of anything else of whose existence I am equally assured? If I am not able, then God is not the only Being of whom it may be said that I cannot conceive that he is not.

The other things described in this little book with so much truth, clearness and splendor, are so useful, and so fragrant with the odor of pious and holy feeling, that they ought not to be undervalued on account of those things, which in the beginning are advanced with good intention indeed, but with less strength of argument. While the latter require to be confirmed by a more rigorous logic, the whole should be received with great respect and veneration.

II. THE APOLOGY OF ANSELM IN REPLY TO GAUNILON RESPONDING IN BEHALF OF THE FOOL.

Preface.

Since it is not the fool, against whom I reasoned in the *Proslogion*, who here attacks my argument, but a Catholic, and no fool either, speaking in behalf of the fool, it is sufficient for me to reply to the Catholic.

CHAPTER I. *The reasoning of the objection refuted in general, and that than which a greater cannot be conceived shown to exist in reality.*

You maintain — whosoever you are who say that the fool may reply in these terms — that there exists not in the intelligence anything than which a greater cannot be conceived, except as to the mere sound of the words, and except in such a manner that it cannot even be thought to be represented under the form of any existing reality; and that it no more follows that this greatest conceivable being, to which I allude, has any real existence, from the mere fact that it is in the intelligence, than it follows that the *lost island* exists in reality from the fact that he who hears it described in words has no doubt that it

is in his intelligence. But I reply, that if this greatest conceivable being is neither understood nor conceived; if it exists neither in the intelligence nor in the thought, then surely God is not the greatest conceivable Being, or he is neither understood nor conceived, and exists neither in the intelligence nor the thought. But for the falseness of this conclusion I have an unanswerable argument in your own faith and conscience. Therefore we both truly understand and conceive we have in the intelligence and the thought, a being than which a greater cannot be conceived. Hence the premises from which you endeavor to prove the contrary are not true, or the conclusions which you think you logically draw from them are false. You suppose that from the mere fact that the greatest conceivable being is understood, it does not follow that it is in the intelligence, and if it is in the intelligence it does not follow that it exists in reality.¹ Certainly, I reply, if it can even be conceived to be, it of necessity is. For the greatest conceivable being can only be conceived to exist without a beginning; but whatever can be conceived to exist, and yet does not exist, can be conceived to exist only through a beginning. Therefore the greatest conceivable being cannot be conceived to be, and yet not be. Therefore if it can be conceived to be, it is of necessity. Again, if it is even possible to form a conception of this being, it necessarily exists. For no one who doubts or denies that there is anything than which a greater cannot be conceived, will doubt or deny that if it did exist it would be unable either in fact or in our conception not to exist, for otherwise it would not be that, than which a greater cannot be conceived; but whatever can be conceived and yet is not, if it should hereafter exist would be able both in fact and in our intelligence not to exist. Wherefore if it is even possible to conceive of the being in question, it is impossible for it not to exist. But let us suppose that this being does not exist, even if it can be conceived; then, whatsoever can be conceived and yet is not, should it hereafter exist, would not be the greatest being conceivable. If therefore this greatest conceivable should hereafter exist, it would not be the greatest conceivable; which is supremely absurd. It is false, therefore, that this greatest conceivable being does not exist, if it is possible even to form a conception of it; much more so if it is possible for it to be understood, and to exist in the intelligence. I will farther add that without

¹ Gaunilon's view is that from the mere fact that this being is understood, in the sense of understanding the words by which it is announced, it does not follow that it is in the intelligence, in the sense of being fully and perfectly comprehended.

doubt what does not exist in some place or at some time, even if it exist in some other place or at some other time, may yet be conceived to exist in no place or at no time, in the same way that it does not exist at any other particular place or time. For that which yesterday was not, and to-day is, may be conceived never to have been, just as it is known not to have been yesterday; and what here is not but elsewhere is, may be conceived to be in no place, just as it is not here. In like manner that of which each part does not exist at the same time and in the same place with all its other parts, may, with all its parts and therefore as a whole, be conceived to exist never and nowhere. For, although time is said to be always and the universe everywhere; yet the whole of time does not exist at each moment, nor does the universe as a whole exist in every place; and as each part of time does not exist at the same moment with all its other parts, so all the parts of time may be conceived as never existing; and as each part of the universe does not exist in the same place with all its other parts, so all parts of the universe may be conceived as existing nowhere; also, whatever is composed of parts, may in thought be decomposed and conceived as not existing. Wherefore, everything which does not exist as a whole at every particular time or place, even if it exist, may be conceived not to exist; but the greatest conceivable being, if it exist, cannot be conceived not to exist; otherwise, if it exist it is not the greatest being conceivable; which is a contradiction. There is, therefore, no time or place when, or in which, this being does not exist as a whole; but as a whole it exists everywhere and always. Do you question in any degree whether it is possible for a being of which such things are predicated to be conceived or understood; to exist in the thought or in the intelligence? For if this being cannot be conceived, these things cannot be predicated of it. But if you say it is not understood and it does not exist in the intelligence, because it is not fully and perfectly understood, you may as well say that he who is unable to look upon the bright effulgence of the sun does not see the light of day, which is nothing but the light of the sun. Unquestionably this greatest conceivable being is, so far at least, understood and in the intelligence, that these things can be predicated of it.

CHAPTER II. *The preceding reasoning farther urged, and this greatest conceivable being shown to be an object of thought and therefore to exist.*

Accordingly I have said in the argument which you reprehend, that when the fool hears this greatest conceivable being mentioned,

he understands what he hears. Clearly, he who does not understand this when he is addressed in a language with which he is acquainted, must either be entirely destitute of intelligence, or his intellect must indeed be exceedingly obtuse. I then said that if this is understood, then it is in his intelligence. Can that be denied to be in any intelligence, which is proved to have a real and necessary existence? But you will say if it is in the intelligence, it is not in consequence of its being understood. But, mark, it follows that it is in the intelligence precisely, because it is understood. For that which is conceived, is conceived by the thought; and whatever is conceived by the thought, is in the thought just as it is conceived; so, what is understood is understood by the intelligence; and what is understood by the intelligence is in the intelligence just as it is understood? What is more plain? Subsequently, I said that if it is in the intelligence alone, it can be conceived to exist in reality; which is greater. If, therefore, it exists in the intellect alone, then forsooth, this very being, the greatest conceivable is one, than which a greater can be conceived. What, I ask, can be more conclusive? For, if it is in the intellect alone, can it not be conceived to exist in reality also? and if it can, does not he who conceives this, conceive something greater than it, if it is in the intellect alone? What is more evident than that, if this greatest conceivable being exists in the intellect alone, this same being is such that a greater can be conceived. But, assuredly, that, than which a greater can be conceived, exists in no intellect, and is never apprehended as something than which a greater cannot be conceived. Does it not follow, therefore, that if that, than which a greater cannot be conceived, exists in any intellect, it does not exist in the intellect alone? For, if it exists in the intellect alone, then something greater can be conceived, which is a contradiction.

CHAPTER III. *The example of the objector, that it must follow that the fictitious island exists in reality, because it is conceived.*

But, you say, it is as if some one speaking of an island in the ocean excelling in fertility all other lands, which, owing to the difficulty, nay, the impossibility, of finding what does not exist, is called *the lost island*, should declare that it cannot therefore be doubted that this island has a real existence, because any one easily understands the words by which it is described. I reply confidently, that if any one will find for me any object whatever, existing either in reality or in the conception alone, to which the reasoning of my argument is applicable, besides that being, than which a greater cannot be con-

ceived, I will pledge myself that I will find for him this lost island, and will secure it to him in such a way that it will never be lost again. But it has already been made expressly to appear, that this greatest conceivable being cannot be conceived not to exist, because the grounds of its existence are so certain and necessary; for otherwise it could not exist at all. Finally, if any one affirms that he conceives this not to exist, I reply, that when he conceives this, he either conceives something than which a greater cannot be conceived, or he does not. If he does not, then obviously he does not conceive that not to exist which he has not conceived at all. But if he does, he unquestionably conceives something which cannot be conceived not to exist. For, if it could be conceived not to exist, it would be conceived to have a beginning and an end; but this can have neither. Whoever, therefore, conceives this, conceives something which cannot be conceived not to exist; but he who conceives this, does not conceive that this same thing does not exist; otherwise he conceives what cannot be conceived. This greatest conceivable being, therefore, cannot be conceived not to exist.

CHAPTER IV. *The difference between being able to be conceived not to exist, and being able to be known not to exist.*

But as you intimate, that when it is affirmed that this supreme thing cannot be conceived (*cogitari*) not to exist, it would be more proper to say, that it cannot be *known* (*intelligi*) not to exist, I still maintain that *conceived* was the best word to use. For, had I said that this thing cannot be *known* not to exist, you who say that according to the proper signification of this word, false things cannot be known, would, perhaps, object that nothing which is, can be known not to be; for it is false to say that that is not, which is; wherefore it is not peculiar to God, that He cannot be known not to exist. But if any one of these things which certainly are, can be known not to exist, in like manner other certain things can be known not to exist. But this objection evidently will not hold in relation to the word *conceived*, when properly considered. For although none of the things which are, can be *known* not to exist; yet they can all be *conceived* not to exist, except that which is supreme. For all those things, and these alone can be conceived not to be, which have a beginning and an end, and are composed of parts; and, as I have said, whatever does not exist as a whole at any time, or in any place; but that alone cannot be conceived not to exist, which has neither parts nor beginning nor end, and which no conception can find except existing as a

whole, everywhere and always. I know, therefore, that you are able to conceive yourself as not existing, while you certainly know that you do exist; I marvel that you should say you do not know that you can do this. For we conceive many things not to exist, which we know do exist; and many things to exist, which we know do not exist; not by believing, but by imagining, them to be as we conceive them. Indeed, we are able to conceive anything not to exist, while we know it does exist, because we are able to conceive the one and to know the other at the same time; and we are not able to conceive a thing not to exist, while we know that it does exist, because we are not able to conceive that it is, and is not, at the same moment. Whoever is able to appreciate the distinction made in these two sentences will easily understand that nothing can be conceived not to exist while it is known that it does exist; and, that whatever does exist, excepting the greatest conceivable being, can, even while it is known to exist, be conceived not to exist. Thus, therefore, it is both peculiar to God that he cannot be conceived not to be, and yet there are many things which cannot be conceived not to be while they are. But in what sense God is said to be conceived not to be, I think I sufficiently explained in my little book.¹

CHAPTER V. *A special consideration of various things advanced by the objector; and first, that he has in the outset mis-stated the reasoning he undertakes to refute.*

But there are other things which you, in behalf of the fool (pro insipiente) object to my reasoning, the fallacy of which I had supposed it would be unnecessary for me to expose, as this could be easily detected by one of even a feeble capacity. But since, as I hear, these things seem to weigh something against me with certain of my readers, I shall allude to them in a few words.

In the first place you repeatedly represent me as saying that that which is greater than all things exists in the intelligence; and if it exists in the intelligence, it exists in reality also; otherwise, that which is greater than all would not be greater than all. Now such an argument is nowhere to be found in all that I have written. For in order to prove that the being in question exists in reality, it does not amount to the same thing whether we speak of a being *greater than all*, or of a being the *greatest that can be conceived*. For if any one should say that this greatest conceivable being has no real existence or that it is able not to exist, or even that it can be conceived

¹ Proslogion, Chapter III.

not to exist, he can easily be refuted. For what is not, is able not to be; and what is able not to be, can be conceived not to be; and whatsoever can be conceived not to be, if it exists, is not the greatest that can be conceived; and if it does not exist, even if it should, it would not be the greatest than can be conceived. But it cannot be said, that the greatest conceivable being, if it exists, is not the greatest conceivable; or if it should exist, that it would not be the greatest conceivable. It is evident, therefore, that this neither exists not, nor is it able not to exist, or to be conceived not to exist. For otherwise, if it does exist, it is not the being in question, nor would it be if it should exist. But this cannot be so easily proved of that which is merely said to be greater than all things. For it is not so evident that that which can be conceived not to be, is not greater than all things which exist, as it is, that it is not the greatest being conceivable. Nor is it so indubitable, that, if there is anything greater than all, it is not something different from the greatest conceivable being; or, if there should be, that it would not, in like manner, be something different, as it is certain in relation to the being in question, than which a greater cannot be conceived. For what if some one should say to me that there is something greater than all things which are, and yet that this same thing can be conceived not to be; and that something greater than this, even though it may not exist, may be conceived; could the inference be so clearly drawn in this case, that therefore it is not greater than all things which are, as it can most manifestly be said in the reasoning which I have adopted, that therefore it is not the being than which a greater cannot be conceived? In the former case, the object referred to would need some stronger proof of its existence than to be called greater than all; in the latter, the object needs no higher proof of its existence than is contained in the very terms which designate it as the being *than which a greater cannot be conceived*.

If, therefore, that cannot be equally proved of the being said to be greater than all, which can be shown to be self-evident in relation to that being than which a greater cannot be conceived, you do me injustice in censuring me for saying what I have not said, and in ascribing to me language so very different from that which I have employed. But if the same thing is true of that which is greater than all and can be proved by some other argument, why should I be thus censured for maintaining what can be proved? And whether it can be, he can easily decide who considers that the medium of proving this also, is furnished by the very idea of a being, than which

a greater cannot be conceived. For no being can be known to be the greatest conceivable, except that being alone which is *greater than all*. As, therefore, this greatest conceivable being is comprehended by us, and is in the intelligence, and on this account is asserted to be in reality also; so we may conclude that that being which is said to be greater than all is comprehended by us and is in the intelligence and on this account has a real and necessary existence. You see therefore with what propriety you compare me to that foolish person who proposes to prove the existence of the *lost island* from the mere fact that the description of it can be understood.

CHAPTER VI. *A consideration of the objector's statement in the second paragraph; that any false things whatsoever may in like manner be understood and may therefore exist.*

But as to your objection that any false or doubtful things can be understood and can exist in the intelligence, as well as that being of which I was speaking, I see not that your opinion in this particular, differs from my own, since I was aiming to prove what was yet supposed to be doubtful. It was sufficient for me, at first to show that this, in some sense, was understood and existed in the intelligence in order that it might be subsequently considered whether it existed in the intelligence alone, as false things; or in reality also, as true things. For if false and doubtful things are understood, and exist in the intelligence in this sense, that when they are mentioned, he who hears understands the meaning of him who speaks, there is no reason why that, of which I have been speaking, should not be understood and exist in the intellect. But how can the things which you advance harmonize with themselves? For you say that should any one speak to you of false things, you could understand his words; and that when you here mentioned that which exists, you are not said to conceive or have this in your thought, in the same manner as false things are held in the thought, because you cannot conceive of this in any other way than by *understanding* that is, by *comprehending in your knowledge*, that it exists in reality. How, I ask, can these things harmonize, both that false things are understood (intelligi), and that to understand anything is to comprehend in our knowledge that it exists in reality? This is nothing to me. It devolves on you to see that such contradictions are reconciled. But if you reply that false things are understood in a qualified sense, and that the definition you have given is not of understanding in general but only of a particular kind of understanding, then I ought not to be censured for saying that the

greatest conceivable being is understood and is in the intelligence, even before it is conceded to exist in reality.

CHAPTER VII. *Refutation of another assertion of the objector in the same paragraph; viz., that this being supremely great, can as easily be conceived not to exist as the fool conceives God not to exist.*

In the next place you object that it is scarcely credible that when we hear this being mentioned, it cannot be conceived not to exist, in the same manner as the fool conceives God not to exist. Let these answer for me who have attained but the slightest experience in argumentation and controversy. Can any one be consistently said to deny what he understands, because this is asserted to be identical with that which he denies for the very reason that he understands it not? Or, if at any time a thing is denied which is in some degree understood, and yet this is identical with that which is in no degree understood, would it not be more easy to prove what is doubtful in relation to that which is in some intellect, than it would be in relation to that which is in no intellect, and is in no degree understood? Wherefore it is not to be supposed that any one denies the existence of that being, than which a greater cannot be conceived, which, when mentioned to him he understands in some degree, merely because he denies the existence of God, of whom he has conceived no notion whatever. Or if the former is also denied because it is not entirely understood, yet, is it not easier to prove that which is in some sense, than that which is in no sense understood? It is not without reason, therefore, that I have adduced this being than which a greater cannot be conceived as a medium of proving, in opposition to the fool, the existence of God; for, of God he has no understanding; but this being he understands in a certain degree.

CHAPTER VIII. *Examination of the comparison of the picture in the third paragraph; and the source of our knowledge of that supreme good inquired for by the objector in the fourth paragraph.*

But it was entirely unnecessary for you to labor so assiduously to prove that this being, than which a greater cannot be conceived, is not like the picture yet unexecuted in the conception of the painter. For I did not adduce the example of this preconceived picture with any design of maintaining that the being in question was like it, but only to show that there can be something in the intelligence which can be known not to exist. You farther object, that when you hear this being mentioned, than which a greater cannot be conceived, you

are unable to have it in your intelligence or to form any conception of it corresponding to any real thing known to you either in its genus or species; since you neither know the thing itself, nor are you able to learn it from anything similar. Now, plainly, this position is untenable. For, since every less good, in so far as it is a good, is so far similar to a greater good, it is clear to any rational mind, that in ascending from the less good to the greater good, we may by means of that than which a greater can be conceived, do much towards attaining a knowledge of that good, than which a greater cannot be conceived. Who, for example, cannot, at least, conceive, though he may have no belief in the existence of the object of his conception, that, if there is any good which has a beginning and an end, that is a much greater good which has neither beginning nor end; and that, as the latter is greater than the former, so that will be a greater good still which has neither beginning nor end, even though it is constantly passing from the past through the present to the future; and that a far greater good even than this, must that be, which, whether it exists in reality or not, is conceived as being beyond the need of motion or change and is in no respect subject to either. Cannot a good like this be conceived; and can anything greater than this be conceived? But is not this to reason from these things, than which a greater can be conceived, and through these to acquire knowledge concerning that being than which a greater cannot be conceived? There are therefore existing, things from which we may interpret the character of this being. Thus also, the fool who receives not the sacred authority of the Scriptures, can easily be refuted if he denies that, from these things, we can acquire a knowledge of this greatest conceivable being. But if a believer in divine revelation denies this, let him remember that *the invisible things of God from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead.*

CHAPTER IX. *That a being supremely great can be conceived and understood; and the argument against the fool strengthened.*

But even were it true that this greatest conceivable being cannot be conceived and understood, yet it would not be false that such a being can be conceived and understood. For, as nothing hinders but that we may speak of a being whose nature is *ineffable*, though that cannot be expressed which is said to be ineffable; and as we can conceive of a being whose nature is *inconceivable*, although that cannot be conceived which can properly be called *non-conceivable*;

so, when a thing is mentioned, than which a greater cannot be conceived, beyond doubt that which is heard can be conceived and understood, although it may not be possible fully to conceive and understand the thing itself. For although any one should be so foolish as to assert, that there is nothing than which a greater cannot be conceived, yet he will not have the hardihood to say that he neither understands nor conceives what he asserts; or should any such an one be found, not only is his statement to be rejected, but he himself is to be despised.¹ Whoever, therefore, denies that there is anything, than which a greater cannot be conceived, undoubtedly conceives and understands the negation which he makes; and this negation he cannot understand and conceive without its parts; but one of its parts includes a conception of that being *than which a greater cannot be conceived*. Whoever, therefore, denies this, conceives and understands a being than which a greater cannot be conceived. It is, also, obvious that what is not able not to exist, can, in like manner, be conceived and understood; but he who conceives this, conceives something greater than he who conceives what is able not to exist. Therefore, when this greatest conceivable being is conceived, if it is supposed to be something which is able not to be, then it is not conceived as the greatest conceivable; but the same thing cannot be conceived and not conceived at the same time. Wherefore, he who conceives the greatest being conceivable, conceives not what is able, but what is not able, not to exist. Hence, what he conceives, necessarily exists; because, what is able not to exist, is not what he conceives.

CHAPTER X. *Force of the preceding reasoning. Conclusion.*

I think I have now made it evident, that in the Prosligion I have proved that there exists in reality something than which a greater cannot be conceived; and that, too, not by a weak, but by a necessary, argument, which no objection is sufficient to invalidate. The great force of this proof lies in the peculiar nature of the demonstration employed, as the being in question is proved to have a real and necessary existence, from the very fact that it is conceived and understood; and that this being is whatever it is proper for us to believe concerning the Divine substance to be. For, we predicate of the Divine Nature, whatever can be absolutely conceived as better, to be than not to be. For example, it is better to be eternal than not eternal; good, than not good; nay, goodness itself than not goodness itself.

¹ Non modo sermo ejus est respiciendus, sed et ipse conspiciendus.

But anything of this kind cannot but be that than which a greater cannot be conceived. This greatest conceivable being is therefore necessarily whatever it is proper for us to believe concerning the Divine Nature. I tender to you my thanks for the kindness with which you have both censured and approved my little work. For the high commendation which you have bestowed upon those things which appeared to you worthy of reception, are a sufficient proof that in reprehending what you regarded as the weaker points of my argument, you were actuated by no malevolent design.

ARTICLE III.

HARRISON'S ENGLISH LANGUAGE.¹

By Daniel R. Goodwin, Professor in Bowdoin College.

MR. HARRISON seems to have been in the habit of noting down the grammatical errors he encountered in his English reading until he had accumulated such a store, that, arranging them, with desultory remarks, under the several Parts of Speech, and prefixing some "historical" and "philological" dissertations, he ventured to publish a book, with the imposing title of "The Rise, Progress, and Present Structure of the English Language." Such a genesis does not augur all the depth, breadth, thoroughness, and systematic completeness which we might desire and might otherwise have expected under such a title. We must confess that, in our apprehension, the work is in its substance too light, and in its style too "flippant," for the gravity of the subject; besides being guilty of committing many gross errors in the very act of assuming to correct the alleged errors of others. Had it not been thought worthy of special notice on the other side of the water, and of republication on this, we should not have thought it worth while to disturb its distant repose with any criticisms of ours. But as we have now ventured a charge, we must be allowed to produce at least a few of our witnesses. Not having seen the English

¹ The Rise, Progress, and Present Structure of the English Language. By the Rev. MATTHEW HARRISON, A. M., Rector of Church Oakley, Hants; and late Fellow of Queen's College, Oxford. 12mo. pp. 393. Philadelphia. 1850.