

41

Anselm of Canterbury on Free Will

Chapters

1. That the power of sinning does not pertain to free will
2. Both the angel and man sinned by this capacity to sin and by free will and, though they could have become slaves of sin, sin did not have the power to dominate them
3. How free will is had after they have made themselves slaves of sin and what free will is
4. How those who do not have rectitude have the power to preserve it
5. That no temptation forces one to sin unwillingly
6. How our will, although it seems powerless, is powerful against temptations
7. How it is stronger than temptation even when it succumbs to it
8. That not even God can take away the rectitude of will
9. That nothing is more free than right will
10. How one who sins is a slave of sin, and that it is a greater miracle when God restores rectitude to one who has abandoned it than when he restores life to the dead
11. That this slavery does not take away freedom of will
12. Why a man who does not have rectitude is called free because if he had it no one could take it from him, and yet when he has rectitude he is not called a slave because if he loses it he cannot regain it by himself
13. That the power of preserving the rectitude of will for its own sake is a perfect definition of free will
14. The division of this freedom

1. That the power of sinning does not pertain to free will

Student. Since free will seems to be repugnant to grace, predestination and God's foreknowledge, I want to understand freedom of will and know whether we always have it. For if 'to be able to sin and not to sin' is due to free will, as some are accustomed to say, and we always have it, why do we sometimes need grace? But if we do not always have it, why is sin imputed to us when we sin without free will?

Teacher. I do not think free will is the power to sin or not to sin. Indeed if this were its definition, neither God nor the angels, who are unable to sin, would have free will, which it is impious to say.

S. But what if one were to say that the free will of God and the angels is different from ours?

T. Although the free will of men differs from the free will of God and the angels, the definition of freedom expressed by the word ought to be the same. For although one animal differs from another either substantially or accidentally, the definition attached to the word 'animal' is the same for all. That is why we must so define free will that the definition contains neither too little nor too much. Since the divine free will and that of the good angels cannot sin, to be able to sin does not belong in the definition of free will. Furthermore, the power to sin is neither liberty nor a part of liberty. Pay attention to what I am going to say and you will fully understand this.

S. That is why I am here.

T. Which free will seems more free to you, that which so wills that it cannot sin, such that it can in no way be deflected from the rectitude constituted by not sinning, or that which can in some way be deflected to sinning?

S. I do not see why that which is capable of both is not freer.

T. Do you not see that one who is as he ought to be, and as it is expedient for him to be, such that he is unable to lose this state, is freer than one who is such that he can lose it and be led into what is indecent and inexpedient for him?

S. I think there is no doubt that this is so.

T. And would you not say that it is no less doubtful that to sin is always indecent and harmful.

S. No one of healthy mind would think otherwise.

T. Therefore a will that cannot fall from rectitude into sin is more free than one that can desert it.

S. Nothing seems to me more reasonable to say.

T. Therefore, since the capacity to sin when added to will diminishes liberty, and its lack increases it, it is neither liberty nor a part of liberty.

S. Nothing is more obvious.

2. Both the angel and man sinned by this capacity to sin and by free will and, though they could have become slaves of sin, sin did not have the power to dominate them

T. What is extraneous to freedom does not pertain to free will.

S. I can contest none of your arguments, but I am not a little swayed by the fact that in the beginning both the angelic nature and ours had the capacity to sin, since without it, they would not have sinned. Wherefore, if by this capacity, which is alien to free will, both natures sinned, how can we say they sinned by free will? But if they did not sin by free will, it seems they sinned necessarily. That is, they sinned either willingly or necessarily. But if they sinned willingly, how so if not by free will? And if not by free will, then indeed it seems that they sinned necessarily.

And there is something else that strikes me in this ability to sin. One who can sin, can be the slave of sin, since 'he who commits sin, is the slave of sin' [John 8: 34]. But he who can be the slave of sin, can be dominated by sin. How was that nature created free then, and what kind of free will is it that can be dominated by sin?

T. It was through the capacity to sin willingly and freely and not of necessity that ours and the angelic nature first sinned and were able to serve sin, yet they cannot be dominated by sin in such a way that they and their judgement can no longer be called free.

S. You must expand on what you said since it is opaque to me.

T. The apostate angel and the first man sinned through free will, because they sinned through a judgement that is so free that it cannot be coerced to sin by anything else. That is why they are justly reprehended; when they had a free will that could not be coerced by anything else, they willingly and without necessity sinned. They sinned through their own free will, though not insofar as it was free, that is, not through that thanks to which it was free and had the power not to sin or to serve sin, but rather by the power it had of sinning, unaided by its freedom not to sin or to be coerced into the servitude of sin.

What seemed to you to follow does not, namely, that if will could be a slave to sin it could be dominated by sin, and therefore neither it nor its judgement are free. But this is not so. For what has it in its power not to serve cannot be forced by another to serve, although it can serve by its own power: for as long as the power uses that which is for serving and not that which is for not serving, nothing can dominate it so that it should serve. For if the rich man is free to make a poor man his servant, as long as he does not do so, he does not lose the name of freedom nor is the poor man said to be able to be dominated or, if this is said, it is said improperly, for this is not in his power but in another's. Therefore nothing prevents either angel or man from being free prior to sin or from having had free will.

3. How free will is had after they have made themselves slaves of sin and what free will is

S. You have satisfied me that nothing certainly prevents this prior to sin, but how can they retain free will after they have made themselves slaves of sin?

T. Although they subjected themselves to sin, they were unable to lose natural free will. But now they cannot use that freedom without a grace other than that which they previously had.

S. I believe that, but I want to understand it.

T. Let us first consider the kind of free will they had before sin when they certainly had free will.

S. I am ready.

T. Why do you think they had free will: to attain what they want or to will what they ought and what is expedient for them to will?

S. The latter.

T. Therefore they had free will for the sake of rectitude of will. As long as they willed what they ought, they had rectitude of will.

S. That is so.

T. Still to say that they had free will for the sake of rectitude of will is open to doubt unless something is added. So I ask: How did they have free will for the sake of rectitude of will? To take it without any giver when they did not yet have it? To receive what they did not have when it was given to them? To abandon what they received and to get it back again after they had let it go? Or to receive it in order to keep it always?

S. I do not think they had the liberty for the sake of rectitude without a giver, since there is nothing they have that they have not received. We should not say that they had liberty to receive from a giver what they previously did not have, because we ought not to think

that they were made without right will. Although it should not be denied that they had the freedom to receive this rectitude, if they abandon it it would be restored to them by the original giver. We often see men brought back from injustice to justice by heavenly grace.

T. It is true as you say that they can receive the lost rectitude if it is restored, but we are asking about the freedom they had before they sinned, since without any doubt they had free will then, and not about what no one would need if he had never abandoned the truth.

S. I will now respond to the other things you asked me. It is not true that they had liberty in order to abandon that rectitude, because to abandon the rectitude of the will is to sin, and we showed above that the power to sin is not liberty nor any part of it. They do not receive liberty in order to take on again a rectitude they had abandoned, since such rectitude is given in order that it might never be lost. The power of receiving again what is lost would bring about negligence in retaining what is had. It follows then that freedom of will was given to the rational nature in order that it might retain the rectitude of will it has received.

T. You have responded well to what was asked, but we must still consider for what purpose a rational nature ought to retain that rectitude, whether for the sake of the rectitude itself, or for the sake of something else.

S. If that liberty were not given to such a nature in order that it might preserve rectitude of will for the sake of rectitude, it would not avail for justice. Justice seems to be the retention of rectitude of will for its own sake. But we believe that free will is for the sake of justice. Therefore without a doubt we should assert that the rational nature receives liberty solely to preserve rectitude of will for its own sake.

T. Therefore, since all liberty is a capacity, the liberty of will is the capacity for preserving rectitude of the will for the sake of rectitude itself.

S. It cannot be otherwise.

T. So it is now clear that free judgement is nothing other than a judgement capable of preserving the rectitude of will for the sake of rectitude itself.

S. It is indeed clear. But as long as will has that rectitude it can preserve what it has. But how, after it has lost it, can it preserve what it does not have? In the absence of the rectitude that can be preserved, there is no free will capable of preserving it. For it does not avail for preserving what is not had.

T. But even if the rectitude of will is absent, the rational nature still has undiminished what is proper to it. I think we have no power sufficient unto itself for action, and yet when those things are lacking without which our powers can scarcely be led to act, we are no less said to have them insofar as they are in us. Just as no instrument suffices of itself to act, and yet when the conditions for using the instrument are wanting, it is not false to say that we have the instrument to do something. What you may observe in many things, I will show you in one. No one having sight is said to be incapable of seeing a mountain.

S. Indeed, one who cannot see a mountain, does not have sight.

T. He who has sight has the power and means of seeing a mountain. And yet if the mountain were absent and you said to him, 'Look at the mountain,' he would answer, 'I cannot, because it is not there. If it were there, I could see it.' Again, if the mountain were there and light absent, he would say that he could not see the mountain, meaning that without light he cannot, but he could if there were light. Again, if the mountain and light are present to one with sight but there is something blocking sight, as when one closes his eyes, he would say that he cannot see the mountain, although if nothing blocked sight, he could without any doubt see the mountain.

S. Everyone knows these things.

T. You see, then, that the power of seeing a body is (1) in the one seeing in one sense and (2) in another sense in the thing to be seen, and in yet another sense in the medium, which is neither the seeing nor the thing to be seen; and with respect to what is in the medium, there we must distinguish between (3) what helps and (4) what does not impede, that is, when nothing that can impede does impede.

S. I plainly see.

T. Therefore these powers are four, and if one of them is lacking the other three singly or together cannot bring it off; yet when the others are absent we do not deny either that he who has sight or the means or the power of seeing can see, or that the visible can be seen to be seen, or that light can aid sight.

4. How those who do not have rectitude have the power to preserve it

The fourth power is improperly so called. That which can impede sight, is said to give the power of seeing only because by being removed it does not impede. The power to see light [properly] consists in only three things because that which is seen and that which aids are the same. Is this not known to all?

S. Indeed it is unknown to none.

T. If then the visible thing is absent, or in the dark, or if those having sight have shut or covered their eyes, so far as we are concerned we have the power to see any visible thing. What then prevents us from having the power to preserve rectitude of will for its own sake, even if that rectitude is absent, so long as reason whereby we can know it and will whereby we can hold it are in us? It is in these – reason and will – that freedom of will consists.

S. You have put my mind at rest that this power of preserving rectitude of will is always in a rational nature, and that this is the power of free will in the first man and the angel, nor could rectitude of will be taken away from them unless they willed it.

5. That no temptation forces one to sin unwillingly

S. But how can the judgement of will be free because of this power, given the fact that often and without willing it a man who has right will is deprived of his own rectitude under the force of temptation?

T. No one is deprived of this rectitude except by his own will. One who acts unwillingly is said to act against what he wills; and no one is deprived of this rectitude against his will. But a man can be bound unwillingly, because he does not wish to be bound, and is tied up unwillingly; he can be killed unwillingly, because he can will not to be killed; but he cannot will unwillingly, because one cannot will to will against his will. Every willing person wills his own willing.

S. How can one be said to lie unwillingly when he lies to avoid being killed, something he only does willingly? For just as he unwillingly lies, so he unwillingly wills to lie. And he who wills unwillingly to lie, is not willing that he wills to lie.

T. Perhaps then he is said to lie unwillingly because he so wills the truth that he will only lie to save his life, and he wills the lie for the sake of life and not for the sake of the lie itself, since he wills the truth; and thus he lies both willingly and unwillingly. For to will something for its own sake, e.g. as we will health for its own sake, is different from willing

something for the sake of something else, as when we will to drink absinthe for the sake of health. Perhaps with respect to these two kinds of willing one could be said to lie both willingly and unwillingly. He is said to lie unwillingly because he does not will it in the way he wills the truth, but that does not conflict with my view that no one unwillingly abandons rectitude of will. He wills to abandon it by lying for the sake of his life, according to which he does not unwillingly abandon it but wills to in the sense of will of which we now speak. That is, willing to lie for the sake of his life, not willing to lie for its own sake. Therefore either he certainly lies unwillingly, because he must either be killed or lie unwillingly, that is, he is not willingly in the anguish because either of these will necessarily come about. For although it is necessary that he be either killed or lie, yet it is not necessary that he be killed, because he can escape death if he lies, nor is it necessary for him to lie, because he could not lie and be killed. Neither of these is determinately necessary, because both are in his power. Therefore although he either lies or is killed unwillingly, it does not follow that he lies unwillingly or is killed unwillingly.

There is another argument frequently given to show why someone is said to do something unwillingly, against his grain and necessarily, yet does not want to. What we do not do because we can only do it with difficulty, we say we cannot do and necessarily turn away from. And what we can abandon only with difficulty we say we do unwillingly and necessarily. In this way, one who lies lest he be killed, is said to lie against his will, not willingly, and of necessity, given that he cannot avoid the falsehood without the penalty of death. He who lies in order to save his life is improperly said to lie against his will, because he willingly lies, and he is improperly said to will to lie against his will, because he wills it precisely by willing it. For just as when he lies he wills himself to lie, so when he wills to lie, he wills that willing.

S. I cannot deny what you say.

T. Why then not say that free will is that which another power cannot overcome without its assent?

S. Can we not for a similar reason say that the will of a horse is free because he only serves his appetite willingly?

T. It is not the same. For in the horse there is not the will to subject himself, but naturally, always and of necessity he is the slave of sense appetite, whereas in man, as long as his will is right, he does not serve nor is he subject to what he ought not to do, nor can he be diverted from that rectitude by any other force, unless he willingly consents to what he ought not to do, which consent does not come about naturally or of necessity as in the horse, but is clearly seen to be from itself.

S. You have taken care of my objection about the horse; let us go back to where we were.

T. Would you deny that every free being is such that it can only be moved or prevented willingly?

S. I do not see how I could.

T. Tell me how right will prevails and how it is conquered.

S. To will the preservation of rectitude for its own sake is for it to prevail, but to will what it ought not is for it to be conquered.

T. I think that temptation can only stop right will or force it to what it ought not to will willingly, such that it wills the one and not the other.

S. I do not see any way in which that could be false.

T. Who then can say that the will is not free to preserve rectitude, and free from temptation and sin, if no temptation can divert it save willingly from rectitude to sin, that is, to

willing what it ought not? Therefore when it is conquered, it is not conquered by another power but by itself.

S. That demonstrates what has been said.

T. Do you see that from this it follows that no temptation can conquer right will? For if it could, it would have the power to conquer and would conquer by its own power. But this cannot be, since the will can only be conquered by itself. Wherefore temptation can in no way conquer right will, and it is only improperly said to conquer it. For it only means that the will can subject itself to temptation, just as conversely when the weak is said to be able to be conquered by the strong, he is said to be *able*, not by his own power but by another's, since it only means that the strong has the power to conquer the weak.

6. How our will, although it seems powerless, is powerful against temptations

S. Although you were to make subject to our will all the forces fighting against it and contend that no temptation can dominate it in such a way that I cannot counter your assertions, none the less I cannot agree that there is no impotence in the will, something nearly all experience when they are overcome by violent temptation. Therefore, unless you can reconcile the power that you prove and the impotence that we feel, my mind will not be at rest on this matter.

T. In what does the impotence of which you speak consist?

S. In the fact that I cannot adhere to rectitude with perseverance.

T. If you do not adhere because of impotence, you are turned away from rectitude by an alien force.

S. I admit it.

T. And what is this force?

S. The force of temptation.

T. This force does not turn the will from rectitude unless it wills what the temptation suggests.

S. That is so. But by its very force temptation prompts it to will what it suggests.

T. But how can it force willing? Because it can will only with great trouble or because it can in no way not will?

S. Although I have to admit that sometimes we are so oppressed by temptations that we cannot without difficulty manage not to will what they suggest, still I cannot say that they ever so oppress us that we can in no way not will what they inspire.

T. I do not see how that could be said. For if a man wills to lie in order that he not suffer death and live a little longer, who would say that to will not to lie is impossible for him in order that he might avoid eternal death and live eternally? So you should not doubt that the impotence in preserving rectitude, which you say is in our will when we consent to temptation, is a matter of difficulty rather than impossibility. We often say that we cannot do something, not because it is impossible for us, but because we can do it only with difficulty. This difficulty does not destroy freedom of will. Temptation can fight against a will that does not give in but cannot conquer it against its will. In this way I think we can see how the power of the will as established by true arguments is compatible with the impotence our humanity experiences. For just as difficulty does not in any way destroy the freedom of will, so that impotence, which we assign to will because it can retain its rectitude only with difficulty, does not take away from the power to persevere in rectitude.

7. How it is stronger than temptation even when it succumbs to it

S. I am unable to deny what you prove but at the same time I cannot absolutely say that will is stronger than temptation when it is conquered by it. For if the will to preserve rectitude were stronger than the impetus of temptation, the will in willing what it keeps would be stronger as temptation is more insistent. For I do not otherwise know myself to have a more or less strong will except insofar as I more or less strongly will. Wherefore when I will less strongly than I ought because of the temptation to do what I ought not, I do not see how temptation is not stronger than my will.

T. I see that the equivocation of 'will' misleads you.

S. I would like to know this equivocation.

T. 'Will' is said equivocally much as 'sight' is. For we say that sight is an instrument of seeing, that is, a ray proceeding from the eyes whereby we sense light and the things that are in the light; and we also call sight the work of this instrument when we use it, that is, vision. In the same way the will means both the instrument of willing which is in the soul and our turning will to this or that as we turn sight to see different things. And this use of the will, which is the instrument of willing, is also called will, just as sight means both the use of sight and that which is the instrument of seeing. We have sight which is the instrument of seeing, even when we do not see, but the sight which is its work is only had when we see. So too will, namely the instrument of willing, is always in the soul even when it does not will something, as when it sleeps, but we only have the will that is the work of this instrument when we will something. Therefore what I call the instrument of willing is always one and the same whatever we will; but that which is its work is as many as the many things that we will. In this way sight is always the same whatever we see, or even in the dark or with closed eyes, but the sight which is its work and which is named vision is as numerous as are the things seen.

S. I see clearly and I love this distinction with respect to will, and I can see how I fell into error through deception. But do continue what you began.

T. Now that you see that there are two wills, namely the instrument of willing and its work, in which of the two do you find the strength of willing?

S. In that which is the instrument of willing.

T. If therefore you know a man to be strong, when he is holding a bull that was unable to escape and you saw the same man holding a ram who was able to free itself from his grasp, would you think him less strong in holding the ram than in holding the bull?

S. I would indeed judge him to be equally strong in both but that he did not use his strength equally in the two cases. For he acted more strongly with the bull than with the ram. But he is strong because he has strength and his act is called strong because it comes about strongly.

T. Understand that the will that I am calling the instrument of willing has an inalienable strength that cannot be overcome by any other force, but which it uses sometimes more and sometimes less when it wills. Hence it in no way abandons what it wills more strongly when what it wills less strongly is offered, and when what it wills with greater force offers itself it immediately drops what it does not will equally. And then the will, which we can call the action of this instrument, since it performs its act when it wills something, is said to be more or less strong in its action since it more or less strongly occurs.

S. I must admit that what you have explained is now clear to me.

T. Therefore you see that when a man, under the assault of temptation, abandons the rectitude of will that he has, he is not drawn away from it by any alien force, but he turns himself to that which he more strongly wills.

8. That not even God can take away the rectitude of will

S. Can even God take away rectitude from the will?

T. This cannot happen. God can reduce to nothing the whole substance that he made from nothing, but he cannot separate rectitude from a will that has it.

S. I am eager to have the reason for an assertion I have never before heard.

T. We are speaking of that rectitude of will thanks to which the will is called just, that is, which is preserved for its own sake. But no will is just unless it wills what God wants it to will.

S. One who does not will that is plainly unjust.

T. Therefore to preserve rectitude of will for its own sake is, for everyone who does so, to will what God wants him to will.

S. That must be said.

T. Should God remove this rectitude from anyone's will, he does this either willingly or unwillingly.

S. He could not do so unwillingly.

T. If then he removes this rectitude from someone's will he wills to do what he does.

S. Without any doubt.

T. But then he does not want the one from whom he removes this rectitude to preserve the rectitude of will for its own sake.

S. That follows.

T. But we already said that to preserve in this way the rectitude of will is for one to will what God wants him to will.

S. Even if we had not said it, it is so.

T. Hence if God were to take from something that rectitude of which we have so often spoken, he does not will one to will what he wants him to will.

S. An inevitable and impossible consequence.

T. Therefore nothing is more impossible than that God should take away the rectitude of will. Yet he is said to do this when he does not impede the abandonment of this rectitude. On the other hand, the devil and temptation are said to do this or to conquer the will and to remove from it the rectitude it has when they offer something or threaten to take away something that the will wants more than rectitude, but there is no way they can deprive it of that rectitude as long as the will wants it.

S. What you say is clear to me and I think nothing can be said against it.

9. That nothing is more free than right will

T. You can see that there is nothing freer than a right will since no alien power can take away its rectitude. To be sure, if we say that, when it wills to lie lest it lose life or safety, it is forced by the fear of death or torment to desert the truth, this is not true. It is not forced to will life rather than truth, but since an external force prevents it from preserving both at the same time, it chooses what it wants more – of itself that is and not unwillingly, although it would not of itself and willingly be placed in the necessity of abandoning both. It is not

less able to will truth than safety, but it more strongly wills safety. For if it now should see the eternal glory which would immediately follow after preserving the truth, and the torments of hell to which it would be delivered over without delay after lying, without any doubt it would be seen to have a sufficiency for preserving the truth.

S. This is clear since it shows greater strength in willing eternal salvation for its own sake and truth for the sake of reward than for preserving temporal safety.

10. How one who sins is a slave of sin, and that it is a greater miracle when God restores rectitude to one who has abandoned it than when he restores life to the dead

T. The rational nature always has free will because it always has the power of preserving rectitude of will for the sake of rectitude itself, although sometimes with difficulty. But when free will abandons rectitude because of the difficulty of preserving it, it is afterward the slave of sin because of the impossibility of recovering it by itself. Thus it becomes 'a breath that goes forth and returns not' [Ps. 77: 39], since 'everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin' [John 8: 34]. Just as no will, before it has rectitude, can have it unless God gives it, so when it abandons what it has received, it cannot regain it unless God restores it. And I think it is a greater miracle when God restores rectitude to the will that has abandoned it than when he restores life to a dead man. For a body dying out of necessity does not sin such that it might never receive life, but the will which of itself abandons rectitude deserves that it should always lack it. And if one gave himself over to death voluntarily, he does not take from himself what he was destined never to lose, but he who abandons the rectitude of will casts aside what he has an obligation to preserve always.

S. I do indeed see what you mean by slavery, whereby he who commits sin becomes the slave of sin, and of the impossibility of recovering abandoned rectitude unless it be restored by him who first gave it, and I see that all those to whom it has been given ought to battle ceaselessly to preserve it always.

11. That this slavery does not take away freedom of will

S. But this opinion does much to depress me because I had thought myself to be a man sure to have free will always. So I ask that you explain to me how this slavery is compatible with what we said earlier. For it seems the opposite of liberty. For both freedom and slavery are in the will, thanks to which a man is called free or a slave. But if he is a slave, how can he be free, and if free, how can he be a slave?

T. If you think about it carefully you will see that when the will does not have the rectitude of which we speak, it is without contradiction both slave and free. For it is never within its power to acquire the rectitude it does not have, although it is always in its power to preserve what it once had. Because it cannot return from sin, it is a slave; because it cannot be robbed of rectitude, it is free. But from its sin and slavery it can return only by the help of another, although it can depart from rectitude only by itself. But neither by another or by itself can it be deprived of its freedom. For it is always naturally free to preserve rectitude if it has it, even when it does not have what it might preserve.

S. This suffices to show me that freedom and slavery can be in one and the same man without contradiction.

12. Why a man who does not have rectitude is called free because if he had it no one could take it from him, and yet when he has rectitude he is not called a slave because if he loses it he cannot regain it by himself

S. I very much want to know why one who has not rectitude is called free because when he has it no one can take it from him, and yet when he has rectitude he is not called a slave because he cannot regain it by himself if he lose it. In fact, because he cannot by himself come back from sin, he is a slave; because he cannot be robbed of rectitude he is called free, and just as no one can take it from him if he has it, so he can never himself regain it if he does not have it. Wherefore, just as he always has this freedom, it seems that he should always have this slavery.

T. This slavery is nothing other than the powerlessness not to sin. For whether we say this is powerlessness to return to rectitude or powerlessness of regaining or again having rectitude, man is not the slave of sin for any other reason than that, because he cannot return to rectitude or regain and have it, he cannot not sin. For when he has that same rectitude, he does not lack the power not to sin. Wherefore when he has that rectitude, he is not the slave of sin. He always has the power to preserve rectitude, both when he has rectitude and when he does not, and therefore he is always free.

As for your question why he is called free when he does not have rectitude, since it cannot be taken from him by another when he has it, and not called slave when he has rectitude because he cannot regain it by himself when he does not have it, this is as if you were to ask why a man when the sun is absent is said to have the power to see the sun because he can see it when it is present and when the sun is present is said to be powerless to see the sun because when it is absent he cannot make it present. For just as, even when the sun is absent, we have in us the sight whereby we see it when it is present, so too when the rectitude of will is lacking to us, we still have in us the aptitude to understand and will whereby we can preserve it for its own sake when we have it. And just as when nothing is lacking in us for seeing the sun except its presence, we only lack the power to make it present to us, so only when rectitude is lacking to us, do we have that powerlessness which its absence from us brings about.

S. If I ponder carefully what was said above when you distributed the power of seeing into four powers, I cannot doubt this now. So I confess the fault of doubting it.

T. I will pardon you now only if in what follows you have present to mind as needed what we have said before, so that there is no necessity for me to repeat it.

S. I am grateful for your indulgence, but you will not wonder that after having heard only once things of which I am not in the habit of thinking, they are not all always present in my heart to be inspected.

T. Tell me now if you have any doubt about the definition of free will we have given.

13. That the power of preserving the rectitude of will for its own sake is a perfect definition of free will

S. There is still something that troubles me. For we often have the power of preserving something which yet is not free because it can be impeded by another power. Therefore when you say that freedom of will is the power of preserving rectitude of will for the sake

of rectitude itself, consider whether perhaps it should be added that this power is free in such a way that it can be overwhelmed by no other power.

T. If the power of preserving the rectitude of will for the sake of rectitude itself could sometimes be found without that liberty that we have succeeded in seeing clearly, your proposed addition would be fitting. But since the foregoing definition is perfected by genus and difference such that it can contain neither more nor less than what we call freedom, nothing should be added or subtracted from it. For 'power' is the genus of liberty. When 'of preserving' is added it separates it from every power which is not one of preserving, such as the power to laugh or walk. By adding 'rectitude' we separate it from the power of preserving gold and whatever else is not rectitude. By the addition of 'will' it is separated from the power of preserving the rectitude of other things, such as a stick or an opinion.

By saying that it is 'for the sake of rectitude itself' it is distinguished from the power of preserving rectitude for some other reason, for example for money, or just naturally. A dog preserves rectitude of will naturally when it loves its young or the master who cares for it. Therefore since there is nothing in this definition that is not necessary to embrace the free judgement of a rational creature and exclude the rest it sufficiently includes the one and excludes the other, nor is our definition too much or lacking anything. Does it not seem so to you?

S. It seems perfect to me.

T. Tell me then if you wish to know anything else of this freedom which is imputed to one having it whether he uses it well or badly. For our discourse is concerned only with that.

14. The division of this freedom

S. It now remains to divide this freedom. For although this definition is common to every rational nature, there is a good deal of difference between God and rational creatures and many differences among the latter.

T. There is a free will that is from itself, which is neither made nor received from another, which is of God alone; there is another made and received from God, which is found in angels and in men. That which is made or received is different in one having the rectitude which he preserves than in one lacking it. Those having it are on the one hand those who hold it separably and those who hold it inseparably. The former was the case with all the angels before the good were confirmed and the evil fell, and with all men prior to death who have this rectitude.

What is held inseparably is true of the chosen angels and men, but of angels after the ruin of the reprobate angels and of men after their death. Those who lack rectitude either lack it irrecoverably or recoverably. He who recoverably lacks it is one of the men in this life who lack it although many of them do not recover it.

Those who lack it irrecoverably are reprobate angels and men, angels after their ruin and men after this life.

S. You have satisfied me with God's help on the definition of liberty such that I can think of nothing to ask concerning such matters.