

Why Can't the Devil Get a Second Chance? A Hidden Contradiction in Anselm's Account of the Devil's Fall

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The story of the devil's fall poses at least three separate philosophical puzzles, only two of which Anselm addressed. The first (Puzzle A) wonders how this angel could have committed a sin in the first place since he was created with a good will and good desires. A second puzzle (Puzzle B) consists of trying to explain why the devil cannot ever be forgiven for that first sin. According to Christian teaching, the devil is unable to "repent" (i.e., express sorrow for) that first sin and thereby acquire forgiveness for it. Humans, by contrast, are portrayed as repeatedly sinning, repenting, and being forgiven. It is a mystery why no mechanism similar to that humans use for forgiveness is available to the devil. The final puzzle (Puzzle C) is slightly different. It wonders why the devil was never given a second chance. In daily life, most of us are given (and grant to others) second chances all the time. Given that the consequences of choosing incorrectly were in this case so disastrous and permanent, it seems inconceivable that a good God would permit one of His angels merely one chance to choose and thereby determine his eternal fate. And yet, despite this inconceivability, this is precisely the way the story is presented. Anselm addressed Puzzles A and B but never explicitly raised Puzzle C. I propose he failed to raise it because he conflated it with Puzzle B. In this paper, I first explain how he solved Puzzles A and B. I then go on to argue that Puzzle C does indeed constitute a separate puzzle that should not be conflated with Puzzle B. I then argue that the best (and perhaps only) way in which Anselm could solve Puzzle C is to appeal to a type of free will that conflicts with his solution to Puzzle A. As a result, I argue that there may be a latent contradiction in Anselm's treatment of the devil's sin unless an alternate solution to Puzzle C can be found.

According to classical Christian teaching, the first sin was committed by one of God's angels who had been created as wholly good. On account of that sin, this angel became the devil and was banished from God's presence. Importantly, the devil was never given a second chance. He was not allowed to try again and thereby show God that he had "learned his lesson." Moreover, he was never allowed to make amends or ever be forgiven for that one sin. Instead, his banishment was irrevocable and forever.

This story of the devil's fall poses at least three separate philosophical puzzles, only two of which have been previously addressed. The first puzzle (Puzzle A) arises because it is unclear how a creature who has been created as wholly good by God could commit a non-good, sinful act in the first place. If God created the devil with a good will and good desires (and this is indeed the way classical Christian theology presents the story), then it is unclear whence the evil impulse to sin arose. For various reasons, that sin must be either (i) somehow traced to a failure in God's initial creation of the devil (in which case God, and not the devil, would ultimately be blameworthy) or (ii) an inexplicable accident (in which case the devil could not be blameworthy for it). Neither of these options, however, seems viable. A second puzzle (Puzzle B) consists of trying to explain why the devil cannot ever be forgiven for that first sin. According to Christian

teaching, the devil is unable to “repent” that first sin and thereby acquire forgiveness for it. Humans, by contrast, are portrayed as repeatedly sinning, repenting, and being forgiven. It is thus a mystery why no mechanism similar to that humans use for forgiveness is available to the devil. A final puzzle (Puzzle C) is related to, yet different from, the second. This last puzzle wonders why the devil was never given a second chance. In daily life, most of us are given (and grant to others) second chances all the time. Given that the consequences of choosing incorrectly were in this case so disastrous and permanent, it seems unfair and inconceivable that a good God would permit one of His angels merely one chance to choose and thereby determine his eternal fate. And yet, despite this inconceivability, this is precisely the way the story is presented.

In his *De Casu Diaboli* (*DCD*), Saint Anselm claims to have solved the first two puzzles. Interestingly, he never explicitly raises Puzzle C; he never explains precisely why the devil was given only one chance to choose correctly even though the stakes for that decision (eternal damnation) were so high. Presumably, he either did not recognize the puzzle or thought that his solution to Puzzle B sufficed to solve the related, yet different, Puzzle C. This paper will demonstrate that Puzzles B and C constitute two separate puzzles that Anselm might have unintentionally conflated. I then intend to show that the best (only?) answer Anselm (and all Christian philosophers/theologians who subscribe to his principles) can give to Puzzle C is one that inadvertently contradicts his solution to Puzzle A. In other words, I intend to show that Anselm cannot consistently solve both puzzles at the same time. I will thus demonstrate that Anselm’s explanation of the devil’s sin, although very clever, is ultimately incoherent in a way not previously noted.

Anselm’s Explanation of the Devil’s Sin

I must begin by giving a brief account of Anselm’s explanation of the devil’s sin and his understanding of “will.”¹ Anselm importantly distinguishes between three senses of the term “will.” The first sense refers to the will as the faculty used for willing. A second refers to an actual use of that faculty to will – a will-use. Finally, “will” can refer to a particular inclination of the faculty of the will to will (i.e. will-use) a particular object. Anselm refers to this inclination as an *affectio*.² According to Anselm, a will that has no *affectio* would not be able to bring itself to perform an act of willing; there is no unmotivated willing.³ Since a creature could not be happy

¹ I must perforce leave out several details. For a list of Anselm’s reasons for the devil’s sin as enumerated in *De Casu Diaboli*, see Michael Barnwell, “De Casu Diaboli: An Examination of Faith and Reason Via a Discussion of the Devil’s Sin,” *The Saint Anselm Journal* 6, no. 2 (2009): 1–8. A complete discussion of Anselm’s development of his theory of the will in the context of the devil’s sin is in Michael Barnwell, *The Problem of Negligent Omissions: Medieval Action Theories to the Rescue*, vol. 1, Investigating Medieval Philosophy (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

² Anselm’s most mature account of the will is offered in his *De Concordia Praescientiae et Praedestinationis et Gratiae Dei Cum Libero Arbitrio* III, ch. 11. In *De Concordia* he is discussing a human’s will in particular. Nonetheless, it is clear that his description there is meant to apply to angels and is the culmination of his thinking on the will presented in *De Veritate*, *De Libertate Arbitrii* and *De Casu Diaboli*. Moreover, it is not until *De Concordia* that he refers to the inclinations of the will as *affectiones*; in *DCD* he calls them the wills for happiness and uprightness. It is clear that these “wills” in *DCD* are what he later terms *affectiones* of the will. Much of this paragraph’s discussion is based upon *DCD*, chs. 13-14.

³ Anselm makes this clear in *DCD*, ch. 12. See also Thomas Williams and Sandra Visser, “Anselm’s Account of

unless it willed happiness, the first inclination God gives to creatures is one for happiness—an *affectio commodi* (hereafter AC). If an angel had only an AC, however, it could will only happiness. In fact, it would will as much happiness as it could without regard for whether such willings were just or not. Not only would this result in a sort of determinism with regard to the creature's actions, but it would paradoxically prevent the creature from attaining true happiness. True happiness is attained only when one is happy as a result of being just. But an angel whose actions arise deterministically from a will that can only will happiness cannot be just. As a result, a creature equipped only with the AC could not be happy. In a similar manner, a creature with a will equipped with only an inclination for justice—an *affectio iustitiae* (hereafter AI)—could not be just since his willings would have been deterministically caused.

In order for the angels to have a chance of being both happy and just, Anselm supposes that God endowed them with both *affectiones*. By possessing both *affectiones*, the angels could freely choose to will in accordance with the AC without regard for the dictates of justice as indicated by the AI. Alternatively, they could choose to moderate their desire for unbridled happiness by willing in accordance with the AI. In this way, an angel could will justly solely for the sake of being just and thereby merit true happiness so long as the two inclinations tended toward opposite choices. Doing this would count as properly “coordinating” the affections. To fail to moderate the AC by the AI would count as a failure of proper coordination.

The only problem remaining was for God to create a scenario in which the AC inclined the angels to pursue some good and the AI inclined them not to pursue it. Let's call this good the “forbidden good” (hereafter *fg*). Anselm does not specify what *fg* may have been, but he is insistent that the angels must have known that justice demanded they not choose it; otherwise, the AI would not have inclined them away from *fg*.⁴ In addition (and most importantly), the angels must not have been aware that if they willed *fg* that they would be punished by falling from God's graces into eternal damnation. If they had known this, then their AC would (like the AI) have inclined them not to will *fg* since falling from God's grace would not make them happy. They would in that case not have had a true, self-determining choice in which they could have chosen to temper their pursuit of happiness with considerations of justice. As a result, God engineered the situation so that the angels did not know that they would fall if they chose *fg*. In fact, they had several reasons for thinking that they would not fall or be punished if they chose *fg*.⁵ Among these reasons are the fact that there was no precedent of a good God having meted out punishment, the assumption that God would not permit one of his created beings to be condemned, and the fact that God had already determined the number of those who would live in his fellowship forever. Therefore, God “planned” a form of “ignorance” with regard to any punishment the angels might receive for disobedience.⁶

Freedom,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 31, no. 2 (2001): 233; and Barnwell, *The Problem of Negligent Omissions*, 78.

⁴ *DCD* chs. 4, 22.

⁵ *DCD* chs. 21, 23-24.

⁶ In person, Marilyn McCord Adams repeatedly named this notion “planned ignorance.” She refers to it as the “Necessary Ignorance Thesis” in Marilyn McCord Adams, “St. Anselm on Evil: De Casu Diaboli,” *Documenti E Studi Sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* 3 (1992): 423–51.

It was this planned ignorance that permitted the angels to make a true self-determining choice. Their ACs inclined them to choose *fg* since choosing *fg* presumably lacked repercussions and would thus apparently contribute most to their happiness. Their AIs, by contrast, inclined them not to choose *fg* since God had commanded them not to choose it. Since choosing *fg* was presumably without repercussions, an angel's choosing to abstain from it could only be due to the angel's prioritizing of justice over happiness. The angels could thereby make a true self-determining choice between happiness and justice.

Solution to Puzzle A

Puzzle A wonders how a creature who has been created as wholly good by God could commit a non-good, sinful act in the first place. If the devil's will, including its desires, were created by God, then it would appear that the devil's choice must be (i) somehow traced to a failure in God's initial creation of the devil and his will. As a result, God would ultimately be blameworthy for the devil's choice of *fg* – not the devil. To avoid this conclusion, one might (ii) want to insist that the devil's choice did not result from his desires and dispositions. But to say this is tantamount to stating that the devil's choice simply happened for no reason. It would thus be an inexplicable accident for which the devil could not be blameworthy.

Anselm believes his appeal to the dual *affectiones* and planned ignorance solves this puzzle. In response to (ii), the devil's choice is not an accident that simply happened to the devil independently of his desires and dispositions. Instead, the choice of *fg* arose from the devil's own internal AC; his *affectio commodi* inclined him to choose the *fg* without regard for considerations of justice. In response to (i), God cannot be blamed for any failure in the devil's will. The devil received both an AC and an AI. Moreover, the devil's AC was good in and of itself. The problem arose not because the devil had some insufficiency in his will; rather, the problem arose because the devil failed to coordinate properly the inclinations of the two *affectiones*.⁷

Underlying Anselm's solution to Puzzle A is a commitment to the claim that the angels possessed a type of libertarian freedom between alternative possibilities (these two possibilities being following the dictates of the AC by choosing *fg* or following the dictates of the AI by abstaining from *fg*). Speaking of freedom in this context is a bit complicated since Anselm is known for holding a distinctive definition of freedom which does not contain the ability to sin.⁸

⁷ In a recent paper, William Wood calls this the "hard problem" and argues convincingly that Anselm took himself to have solved this problem in *DCD*. My presentation of puzzle A is largely dependent on his description of the "hard problem." See William Wood, "Anselm of Canterbury on the Fall of the Devil: The Hard Problem, the Harder Problem, and a New Formal Model of the First Sin," *Religious Studies* 52, no. 2 (2016): 223–245. Wood correctly notes that despite Anselm's claim to have solved the "hard problem," there is a latent "harder problem" concerning the devil's subjective rationality for choosing *fg* that he proposes to solve. I argue in response to Wood that his solution does not solve the harder problem and reinstates the hard problem. See Michael Barnwell, "The 'Harder Problem' of the Devil's Fall Is Still a Problem: A Reply to Wood," *Religious Studies* 53, no. 4 (2017): 521–543.

⁸ In the first chapter of *De Libertate Arbitrii* (hereafter *DLA*), Anselm specifically denies that freedom of choice "is the power to sin and not to sin" (*Libertatem arbitrii non puto esse potentiam peccandi et non peccandi*). Instead, he defines freedom of choice as "the ability of preserving uprightness of will for its own sake" (*illa libertas arbitrii est*

When discussing the angels' decision of whether to uphold justice by properly coordinating the two affections or not, Anselm often couches the discussion more in terms of the angels' ability to act "spontaneously" (*sponte*) so that they can be self-determined creatures.⁹ But it nonetheless seems clear that he had in mind some notion according to which the angels' choice was undetermined by any prior causes, ascribable to the angels, and free in something like a libertarian sense.¹⁰ If Anselm did not subscribe to some form of undetermined, libertarian free will, his solution to Puzzle A would have floundered on horn (i); the devil's sin could have been traced back to failure in God's initial creation of the devil and his will.¹¹ Indeed, Anselm stresses this libertarian understanding of the angels' choice when he concludes *DCD* by stating that even the angels who did not sin could have failed to properly coordinate their *affectiones* and emphasizing that the devil willed sinfully "only because he wills. For this will has no other causes . . . it was its own efficient cause."¹² The solution to Puzzle A, therefore, rests upon a libertarian understanding of the devil's choice.¹³

Solution to Puzzle B

Aside from the dilemma posed by Puzzle A, a second puzzle consists in trying to explain why the devil cannot ever be forgiven for that first sin. Humans are afforded the chance for forgiveness by repenting for their sins. Why would an angel who had fallen not be afforded the same opportunity for forgiveness? Anselm's answer to Puzzle B is multi-faceted in that it appeals

potestas servandi rectitudinem voluntatis propter ipsam rectitudinem (De Libertate Arbitrii, ch. 3)). All Latin quotations are from the standard *S. Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia*, Ad fidem codicum recensuit Franciscus Selesius Schmitt (Stuttgart - Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1968). Unless otherwise noted, translations are mine.

⁹ E.g. *Et per potestatem peccandi et sponte et per liberum arbitrium et non ex necessitate nostra et angelica natura primitus peccavit et servire potuit peccato (DLA, ch. 2)* and *Sponte dimisit voluntatem quam habebat (DCD, ch. 3)*.

¹⁰ See especially *DCD*, ch. 27 and Barnwell, "De Casu Diaboli."

¹¹ It has been argued that despite ostensibly espousing a view of libertarian free will, the details of Anselm's own explication of his action theory commit him otherwise. See chapter 3 of Barnwell, *The Problem of Negligent Omissions*. Anselm's distinctive definition of freedom and how it should be interpreted has been subjected to an array of analyses. A sampling includes the following: Williams and Visser, "Anselm's Account of Freedom"; Sandra Visser and Thomas Williams, *Anselm* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Katherin A. Rogers, *Anselm on Freedom* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Katherin A. Rogers, *Freedom and Self Creation: Anselmian Libertarianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Stan R. Tyvoll, "Anselm's Definition of Free Will: A Hierarchical Interpretation," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 80, no. 2 (2006): 155–71; Tomas Ekenberg, "Voluntary Action and Rational Sin in Anselm of Canterbury," *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 24, no. 2 (March 3, 2016): 215–30, doi:10.1080/09608788.2015.1057687. Finally, I should note that there is a debate as to how "libertarianism" is to be understood in the first place. See David Widerker and Michael McKenna, eds., *Moral Responsibility and Alternative Possibilities: Essays on the Importance of Alternative Possibilities* (Aldershot: Ashgate Press, 2003); Randolph Clarke, *Libertarian Accounts of Free Will* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), doi:10.1093/019515987X.001.0001.

¹² *Non nisi quia voluit. Nam haec voluntas nullam aliam habuit causam qua impelleretur aliquatenus aut attraheretur, sed ipsa sibi efficiens causa fuit, si dici potest, et effectum (DCD ch. 27)*. The translation is Ralph McInerny's in: Anselm, *De Casu Diaboli*, trans. Ralph McInerny in *The Major Works*, ed. Brian Davies and G.R. Evans (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998)

¹³ Peter King goes so far as to say Anselm agreed with Augustine in asserting a "radical freedom." See Peter King, "Augustine and Anselm on Angelic Sin," in *A Companion to Angels in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Tobias Hoffmann (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 261–82.

to both his theories of atonement and action. I will discuss them in order. Doing so will set the stage to show that Puzzle C constitutes a separate concern.

In *Cur Deus Homo*, Anselm presents his renowned “satisfaction theory” of atonement.¹⁴ According to this theory, the sin of Adam and each of his descendants constitutes an offense to God. Since God is of infinite value, one would only “satisfy” God for that sin if one made a repayment to God of an infinite value—plus a little more for all the trouble.¹⁵ Since descendants of Adam are only finite, they have nothing of infinite value to offer as repayment. Nonetheless, it must be a member of Adam’s “family” that offers the repayment; otherwise, humans would not be reconciled directly to God but would rather be beholden to the intermediary who made payment.

It is here that the incarnation of Jesus as the “God-Man” comes in. God is the only one of infinite value, so God must Godself make the repayment. But since “man” (i.e. humans of Adam’s lineage) owes the repayment, this God must also be a man (i.e. human). Since Jesus is God, his crucifixion constituted an infinite offense committed against him. It was only fair that God grant Jesus an infinite favor in return. Since Jesus is himself God, however, he needed nothing of this favor. Instead, he makes the infinite value of this favor he is owed available to the rest of his “family” so that they can make repayment for their own sins.

Likewise, the devil owes an infinite debt to God due to his sin. But since the devil is not infinite, he would have nothing with which to repay his debt. For his debt to be paid, there would need to be a “God-angel.” Not only is there no God-angel, but the existence of one would not help anyway. Since angels are not related to each other in a familial way, any God-angel that purportedly offered satisfaction would not be of the same “family” as the devil. The devil would not be directly reconciled to God since this God-angel would be an intermediary of a different family. There is thus no atonement available to the devil to make forgiveness possible.¹⁶

Even if atonement were available, there would still be no way for the devil to repent of his sin. In order to repent, the devil would have had to have willed justly. But after he sinned, his punishment was to lose the AI; he now has only the AC.¹⁷ But as was pointed out above, it is impossible to will justice for justice’s sake with only the AC. As a result, the devil cannot will justly; he has no inclination which would allow him to will justice, and he lacks dual inclinations to allow him to will justice for justice’s sake.¹⁸ He can thus not repent for his prior sin, since repentance would be a just act.

¹⁴ For an analysis of *Cur Deus Homo*, see Marilyn McCord Adams, “Satisfying Mercy: St. Anselm’s ‘Cur Deus Homo,’ Reconsidered,” *The Modern Schoolman* 72, no. 2/3 (1995): 91–108, doi:10.5840/schoolman1995722/39.

¹⁵ Technically, as Adams points out, Anselm couches this value in terms of “countless worlds” instead of infinity per se. The point remains the same.

¹⁶ *Cur Deus Homo* II, 21. In that chapter, Anselm offers yet another reason a God-angel would be ineffective. Since the devil fell without any other being helping to cause his fall, it is only fitting that he should raise himself without help from any other being. This is contrasted with the case of Adam and Eve whose fall was purportedly instigated by the devil’s (or serpent’s) temptation.

¹⁷ *DCD* 16-17. The reasoning here may be partly due to the fact that Anselm may believe the AI is justice itself. See *De Concordia* III, 13, and ch. 3 of Barnwell, *The Problem of Negligent Omissions*.

¹⁸ It would theoretically be possible for the devil to will to obey God now, but such a willing would not count as just.

Anselm can thus offer a two-fold reason for believing the devil cannot be forgiven his initial sin. There is no means of atonement available for the devil. And even if there were a mechanism by which the devil's sin could be atoned, the devil would not be able to bring himself to repent and will justly.

Separating Puzzle C from Puzzle B

Recall that Puzzle C is concerned with why the devil was never given a second chance to choose rightly. One might think that this puzzle is ultimately not a separate puzzle from Puzzle B. As we have just seen, the solution to Puzzle B rules out the possibility of forgiveness for the initial sin of the devil. Even if the devil did get a second chance and chose justly in that second chance, he would nonetheless presumably be unable to be forgiven for his sinful choice in his "first chance." And since that first chance would remain unforgiven, the devil would nonetheless suffer eternal damnation on account of that wrong choice despite what he did in any second chance. Offering the devil a second chance would thereby be irrelevant. It would thus seem that ultimately Puzzle C does not constitute a second puzzle; its solution is implicit in the solution to Puzzle B. Given this, it would be easy to conflate Puzzles B and C.

It can be presumed that Anselm never explicitly raised Puzzle C as a separate puzzle for precisely this reason. In response, I want to suggest that the considerations Anselm offered to solve Puzzle B do not theoretically rule out the ultimate possibility of forgiveness for the devil. And if the devil could ultimately be forgiven for his first sin, Puzzle C's question of why the devil was not given a second chance stands as its own independent conundrum. This will then allow me to accomplish my primary goal: to show that the best (only?) way in which Anselm could solve Puzzle C would be to contradict his solution to Puzzle A.

In pursuing this part of my task, one might reasonably presume that I am objecting to Anselm's solution to Puzzle B since I claim that it does not necessarily rule out the ultimate possibility of forgiveness. And to an extent that is true, but I call attention to the qualifiers "necessarily" and "ultimate." I do think that Anselm's solution to Puzzle B does explain why the devil cannot receive forgiveness *given the conditions under which the devil ex hypothesi exists now*. Given the presumed condition that there is no God-angel from Satan's family available to offer atonement on behalf of the devil, there is no atonement available to him. And given the presumption that the devil lacks an AI, the devil is currently unable to perform a just act such as repenting. But the proffered rationales are no reason to think that forgiveness is *in principle* impossible for the devil.

Let us take the issue of atonement first. In theory, God could make atonement available to the devil in accordance with Anselm's understanding of the requirements for atonement. Even

Since he has only an AC, the AC would incline him to will to obey God since he is no longer ignorant of the fact that God will punish. But such a willing would deterministically arise from the AC; it would not be for justice's sake alone as is required for it to be a just willing.

though the angels are not related in a familial way, there is no *a priori* reason why each angel could not generate its own family. Just as God was able to create “Adam’s family” by generating Eve out of Adam’s rib and granting them a means of generating descendants, God should be able to create some process of generating descendants for the devil. *A priori*, nothing seems to preclude an omnipotent God from creating a ‘partner’ of sorts from the being of the devil and granting them jointly a means of reproduction as he presumably did with Adam and Eve. In fact, a separate partner does not even seem necessary, since God could grant the devil some form of spiritual reproduction and descendant generation analogous to asexual reproduction in some embodied organisms.¹⁹ Given that the creation of so-called “Devil descendants” is in theory possible, there is no reason to assume that there cannot be a “Satan’s family” from which a God-angel could emerge through a process analogous to “incarnation.” Let’s call this “inspiration.”

There is no need to specify the precise process through which inspiration could happen. The important point is that an omnipotent God could surely find a way to so join divinity to angelic nature. As a result, there could in theory emerge a God-angel who could suitably offer atonement for all the angels in “Satan’s family” including Satan himself. Of course, it would remain the case that this instance of atonement would not be available to any of the other angels who fell along with Satan. This, however, poses no objection. There is nothing in theory preventing God from engineering a similar situation with each of those angels so that each is the progenitor of his own “family” into which God could become “inspired.” Granted, it would require a lot of effort on the part of the Divine to be inspired so many times, but that fact is no objection to its theoretical possibility. And insofar as we are here concerned only with the devil, the only relevant fact is that there could occur an inspiration within the Devil’s family. Assuming such inspiration into Satan’s family has not occurred, Anselm is correct when he states in response to Puzzle B that there is no atonement *currently* available to the devil. But as we have just seen, atonement in theory *could* be made available to the devil. And since it could, Puzzle C’s question of why the devil gets only one chance is not automatically rendered irrelevant.

The devil’s putative inability to repent due to a lack of AI is even less of a problem for separating Puzzle C from Puzzle B since the devil’s case in this regard need be no different from that of humans. According to Anselm, Adam lost his AI on account of his sin and all his descendants are accordingly born without an AI.²⁰ Nonetheless, humans are able to engage in acts of repentance and receive forgiveness for their actions and for their lack of justice.²¹ Given that there is a means by which humans who lack an AI are able to engage in repentance and even earn some of their AI back, there is no reason why the same process could not be made available to the devil. It might be thought that such a process is unavailable to the devil due to the lack of atonement available for the devil. But as the previous paragraph just pointed out, there is no *a priori* reason

¹⁹ Note that it will not suffice to object to this claim by arguing that spiritual beings are not able to reproduce. There is no *a priori* reason for asserting spiritual reproduction is impossible. It only seems so because we embodied creatures never witness it. Moreover, it bears noting that many classical explanations of the trinity ultimately rely upon claiming the feasibility of some sort of spiritual, non-embodied generation.

²⁰ See Anselm’s *De Conceptu Virginali et de Originali Peccato*, ch. 2. For a discussion, see Adams, “Satisfying Mercy,” 97-101.

²¹ Cf. for example, hints in *DC III*, chs. 13-14.

why the devil must necessarily be precluded from access to a means of atonement. As a result, there seems to be no problem with the devil repenting, regaining his AI incrementally in a manner analogous to that of humans, and thereby being forgiven.²²

To summarize this section, Anselm's solution to Puzzle B explains why the devil cannot obtain forgiveness *under the circumstances that currently obtain*. There has presumably been no atonement offered on behalf of the devil, and the devil has no means by which to perform the just act of repentance in order to gain forgiveness. This solution, however, does not entail that the devil could not ever be forgiven for his initial sin. As I have just argued, it would in theory be possible for a means of atonement and repentance to be made available to the devil. If God were to make these means available (as an omnipotent God could), then the devil could *in theory* be forgiven his initial fall.²³ And if that is the case, then there is no reason to conflate Puzzle B and Puzzle C. If

²² Note that there is a bit of a "chicken and the egg problem" here. It seems that an AI is required in order to repent, since repentance is itself a just act. But in order to regain an AI, even incrementally, one must seemingly first repent. This problem need not concern us in the present matter, for if it exists, it applies equally to the devil's and humanity's cases. My point in the text is that, regardless of the precise means through which humans lacking an AI are able to repent and get forgiveness, there is no apparent reason to presume the same means could not equally be applicable to a devil for whom atonement through a God-angel would have been made.

²³ I should acknowledge that in addition to a lack of atonement and a lack of a means of repentance, a third reason for the devil's inability to be forgiven can be found in Anselm's work. In *Cur Deus Homo* II, ch. 21, he notes that unlike humans (whose fall was abetted by the devil's—or serpent's—temptation), the devil fell on his own without external instigation. In order to regain his proper place, the devil would thus have to raise himself back up without the help of another (i.e. without a God-angel). If this does indeed constitute an independent reason for denying the possibility of forgiveness to the devil for his initial fall, then it is possible that Puzzle C's concern over a second chance becomes irrelevant.

In contrast, I do not take this consideration as decisive for ruling out Puzzle C as a separate puzzle. First, this consideration does not seem to be as important as the others used for ruling out the possibility of the devil's forgiveness. It seems, in a sense, 'tacked on' to the end of his primary considerations. But even if it is not a simple 'add-on,' the fact that Anselm's other two reasons for denying forgiveness to the devil do not rule out Puzzle C as a separate puzzle encourages us to take Puzzle C seriously. In addition, one may not necessarily believe that Anselm's explanation here is persuasive. Why, after all, must it be paramount (to the point of making it a condition for forgiveness!) that a being who fell on his own raise himself on his own? A case could also be made that the devil did indeed fall on account of being subject to some sort of instigation in a way similar to that of Adam and Eve. As we noted above, the angels' ACs inclined them to choose the *fg* and God moreover instituted a "planned ignorance" with regard to the consequences of disobedience so that they were adequately tempted. While the angels' ACs were internal to them as opposed to external, their temptation does not seem formally different from that encountered by Adam and Eve who believed the forbidden fruit was good and would make them wise. A case could thus be made that the devil's sin is no less amenable to atonement from a God-angel than Adam and Eve's is from a God-man. It is furthermore not obvious that redemption through a God-angel from Satan's own hypothetical 'angel family' would count as external (as opposed to internal) help.

To develop all of these lines of thought is outside the scope of the present paper. The main point is that Anselm's claim that the devil must raise himself without external help is not decisive against considering Puzzle C as a puzzle independent from Puzzle B. And even if it were, there is a sense in which Puzzle C as an independent consideration would remain. One would then wonder why an omnibenevolent God would have initially engineered the devil's choice in a way such that a failure would constitute a failure from a non-external instigation that precluded the possibility of a second chance. If the angels did indeed need to be tempted so as to achieve a degree of self-determination, it would seem better (and thus more fitting) for an omnibenevolent God to have arranged their temptation to come from an external source (similar to that of Adam and Eve). In that case, they could not be any worse off than Adam and Eve are with regard to the possibility of gaining forgiveness were they to fail. The core of Puzzle C's concern over why a second chance is not available for the devil would thus persist in a slightly different manner.

forgiveness could in theory be granted for the devil's initial fall, then Puzzle C's question as to why the devil did not get a second chance emerges as its own challenge. Indeed, one might think Puzzle C constitutes one of the major questions concerning God's goodness related to the devil's fall.

Given the importance of Puzzle C, it is a bit disappointing the Anselm never directly addressed it. I noted above that he probably failed to do so because he inadvertently conflated it with Puzzle B. This conflation was unwittingly self-serving with regard to the coherence of his explanation, for I am about to argue that the best (only?) only solution possible for Puzzle C is one that would contradict his solution to Puzzle A. Had he noticed Puzzle C and raised it, the coherence of his explanation for the devil's fall would have been called into question.

Solution to Puzzle C

If what I have argued so far is correct, then forgiveness could in theory be made available for the devil's initial fall. If so, then it seems only reasonable that a good God would take steps to make that forgiveness available and give the devil a second chance to choose correctly. *A fortiori* a good God would make a second chance to choose correctly available when the consequences for not choosing correctly are eternal damnation! Nonetheless, the story we are presented with is one in which the devil received only one chance to choose and thereby determine his eternal fate. Why would God not grant the devil a second chance?

The close reader of Anselm's description of the angels' choice might think the answer to this question is obvious for a couple of reasons. First (i), recall that the angels were only able to sin because of their "planned ignorance" of the fact that God would actually punish their sins. As a result of this ignorance, their ACs inclined them toward disobedience while their AIs inclined them toward obedience, thus permitting a self-determining choice. Given this setup, a second chance might seem impossible. Once the devil has sinned and thereby come to understand that God would indeed punish disobedience, his "planned ignorance" is removed; he now realizes God does indeed punish disobedience. If he were subsequently offered a second chance to choose, his AC would thus incline him toward obedience (since enduring punishment—especially eternal punishment—is not conducive to one's happiness). Since the AI also inclines him toward obedience, the devil would not truly have a "choice" in a second chance. Both of his *affectiones* would incline him toward obedience and would thus preclude his choice of obedience from being self-determining. Given that the initial choice removes the ignorance planned by God, a second chance to determine oneself may seem theoretically impossible in the devil's case.

Despite its initial plausibility, the solution just offered is insufficient. Before I explain why, let us call the state in which the devil makes his original choice while being ignorant of the fact that God would punish the "Initial Condition₁" (hereafter IC₁). If God could make the devil ignorant of the fact that He would punish in IC₁, there is no reason God could not make the devil ignorant again of the fact that He would punish after IC₁. In other words, after the devil has chosen in IC₁ and realized that God punishes, an omnipotent God could make the devil completely forget

that God does indeed punish. He could wipe the devil's memory clean and reinstitute the original planned ignorance. With planned ignorance thus reinstated, the devil could be placed in the initial condition once again (call it IC₂). IC₂ would thus represent a true second chance for the devil to determine himself since his AC would once again incline toward disobedience while the AI would incline toward obedience. Indeed, the conditions in IC₂ would be identical to those in IC₁. If IC₁ allowed self-determination, so should IC₂. Given that God could thus reinstitute the devil's planned ignorance, Puzzle C cannot be solved by appeal to (i) the claim that after the first choice (IC₁) the possibility for true self-determination between options disappears.²⁴

A second (ii) apparent solution to Puzzle C lies in the claim that after the devil sinned in IC₁ he lost his AI. Since Anselm claims that the AI is itself justice,²⁵ the unjust act of choosing sinfully in IC₁ should entail that the devil no longer possesses an AI. Giving the devil a second chance would consequently seem pointless. In IC₂, the devil would presumably not have an AI. Lacking this affection would not only preclude the possibility of a self-determining choice (since as I discussed above two *affectiones* are needed for self-determination), but it would also prevent the devil from being able to choose the just act of obedience in the first place. Without an AI, the devil would have no inclination through which to choose the just act of forgoing *fg* and obeying God. As a result, it seems as if offering a second chance to a being who has abandoned justice once is futile.

This solution is also not decisive. First, there is no *a priori* reason to assume God could not endow anew an angel with an AI in IC₂ even if that same angel had lost his initial AI in IC₁. There seems to be no more of a theoretical problem with a devil lacking justice after IC₁ and receiving an AI before IC₂ than there is a problem with the devil lacking justice immediately after creation and receiving an AI before IC₁. If an omnipotent being could cause an angel to have an inclination toward justice upon initial creation before the angel had done anything whatsoever, the same omnipotent being could cause an angel to have an inclination toward justice in IC₂.

One might think Anselm's discussion in *DCD*, ch. 17, disputes this claim and thereby preserves solution (ii) by drawing a relevant distinction between the devil's state before IC₁ and after IC₁. That chapter points out that before being granted an AI prior to IC₁, the devil lacked an AI due to his nature; his lack at that point was not due to himself. After having been given an AI and losing it in IC₁, however, the devil's lack of AI is due to himself. Presumably, the devil would not be eligible to receive the AI if his lack is due to his own choices. This would then explain why he cannot possess an AI again after having lost it in IC₁.

²⁴ Under the possible scenario I describe above, it could even be argued that no punishment would occur after IC₁ (since the devil is being offered a second chance), and thus the devil would not even need to be made to forget that God punishes. In such a case, all God would need to do to place the devil in the initial position again (i.e. IC₂) would be to make the devil forget he had already been faced with this choice before; the devil would not need also to forget that God does indeed punish. The point is that the initial condition for the devil, IC₁, could easily be replicated in IC₂. Any knowledge presumably gained by the devil as a result of IC₁ need not rule out a second chance.

²⁵ For this claim, see *De Concordia* III, ch. 13.

A closer examination of Anselm's explanation, however, fails to support this attempt to salvage solution (ii). In *DCD*, ch. 17, Anselm is focused on why the devil cannot regain the AI *of himself* and why he "ought" not to have it again.²⁶ There is nothing in *DCD*, ch. 17, that entails it is impossible for an omnipotent God to refurbish a being with an AI in order to grant a second chance. More significantly, we already have examples of God permitting beings to have AIs again after having lost them initially: humans! The fact that Adam and Eve (and their descendants through them) lost their AIs does not prevent them from regaining those *affectiones*. No more theoretical difficulty attaches to the devil being granted an AI again than attaches to humans being able to possess their AIs again.²⁷ Since humans having lost their AIs initially did not prevent them from receiving a second chance, there is no reason why the devil's loss of an AI in IC₁ should prevent a second chance. As a result, both (i) and (ii) fall short of being compelling resolutions to Puzzle C.

Given that there are no theoretical problems with God granting the devil a second chance, I wish to propose that the only legitimate reason²⁸ for denying it must be that any subsequent chance would have yielded the same result. In other words, the only justification for the devil not receiving a second (or third, or fourth, etc.) chance is that the devil would have chosen *fg* in every iteration. To offer a second chance would thus be futile.

In order to support this claim, let me offer two related arguments: Arg 1 and Arg 2. **Arg 1:** consider a putative second chance IC₂. IC₂ is identical in every respect to IC₁. If the devil chose to fall in IC₁, there is no reason to expect the result in an identical situation IC₂ (or IC₃ and so on) would be any different. So far as the devil is concerned, IC₂ is IC₁. One would thus expect that the choice in IC₂ would be the same choice as that in IC₁. As a result, the choice in IC₁ is an "eternal choice" of sorts. It is the choice that would always be made by the devil in that situation. As a result, there is no need to offer the devil a second chance; his second chance would be identical to his first. In choosing *fg* in IC₁, the devil revealed his "true colors," so to speak. And these true colors would show themselves every time IC₁ was repeated.

Further support for this claim can be provided with Arg 2 which takes the form of a *reductio*. **Arg 2:** Suppose that the devil did indeed choose differently in IC₂.²⁹ Given that IC₂ is

²⁶ This is clear from the emphasis on the fact that the devil cannot have justice "*a se*" (*D. Sed modo multo minus. Tunc enim conditione naturae non poterat habere, nunc vero merito quoque culpae non debet habere. M. Nullo igitur modo potest a se habere iustitiam cum non habet iustitiam, quia nec antequam eam accipiat nec postquam deserit. D. Non debet aliquid habere a se (DCD ch. 17)*).

²⁷ Note that I have already addressed the presumed disanalogies between the situation of humans and angels in this regard. Please see my discussion of atonement for humans and angels in the section "Separating Puzzle C from Puzzle B" and my discussion in n.23.

²⁸ Of course, there are several reasons one may think of for why God would not grant the devil a second chance. For example, God might just be so mad that he does not want to give the devil a second chance (even though He could). Or, God might not want to go through the rigmarole of replenishing the devil's AI or causing God-angels to be 'inspiritated.' But given that God is all-good and omnipotent, to contribute such blatant vengeful or lazy characteristics to God who theoretically could give the devil a second chance would be, in my opinion, illegitimate.

²⁹ The *reductio* does not rely upon the supposition that the devil would choose rightly in IC₂ *per se*. We could suppose

identical to IC₁, how could the difference between these two choices be explained? What would account for the difference? It could not be the situation, for the situation in IC₂ is *ex hypothesi* identical to IC₁. Likewise, it could not be the devil, for the devil's state, desires, inclinations, etc., in IC₂ are also *ex hypothesi* identical to those in IC₁. As a result, there seems to be no explanation for the difference. In a sense, the difference between the two iterations "just happened." But to say this is dangerously close to admitting that the difference can be explained solely by appeal to an element of arbitrariness or chance. And it just so happened that chance turned out badly for the devil in IC₁.³⁰ For God to determine the devil's eternal fate based upon a decision that ultimately boiled down to mere chance, however, would be absurd.

Let me elaborate on this *reductio* by modifying a famous argument proposed by Peter van Inwagen.³¹ Assume that God decides He will give the devil a thousand chances in the initial condition. After witnessing several iterations, the ratio of the number of times the devil chooses *fg* to those he does not would begin "settling down to, converging on, some value."³² Let us further suppose that that value is approximately one to one: after seven hundred twenty-six iterations, the devil has chosen *fg* 365 times and has not chosen it 361 times. Given this scenario, what might we expect the devil to do in the next iteration, IC₇₂₇? It is obvious that there is about a fifty percent chance the devil will choose *fg* and a fifty percent chance he will not. But to say this is tantamount to saying it is a matter of chance which choice the devil will make in IC₇₂₇ and every subsequent IC_{n>727}. But as van Inwagen points out, "obviously, what holds for the seven-hundred-and-twenty-seventh replay holds for all of them, including the one that wasn't strictly a *replay*."³³ In other words, the choice ultimately being due to chance would characterize the devil's choice in IC₁ if the devil would have made varying choices in a contrary-to-fact scenario of God granting the devil multiple second chances. By the same token, the devil making a correct choice in IC₂ would ultimately be due to chance.

It is important to note that this conclusion does not arise only under the supposition that the devil's ratio of choosing to not choosing *fg* converges to 1:1. Assume, by contrast, the ratio settles to 7:3. In that case, there would be a seventy percent chance the devil would choose *fg* in IC₇₂₇ and a thirty percent chance he would not. What *actually* happens in IC₇₂₇ would be a consequence of which percentage "wins out," so to speak, in that particular iteration. And the same would apply to the devil's original choice in IC₁. What the devil *actually* chooses in IC₁ would, in that case, ultimately be due to whichever percentage "wins out." It would be hard to escape the conclusion that the devil's choice in IC₁ is ultimately due to chance (even if that chance is seventy as opposed to fifty). The same would apply to a putative IC₂ in which the devil made a correct choice.

that the devil chose rightly in *any* subsequent iteration of the initial condition (say IC₂₀) and the same point I am making would apply.

³⁰ *Mutatis mutandis*, the same could be said for the angels who chose rightly. Presumably, they would have always chosen to abstain from *fg*. If they might have chosen differently in IC₂, then their choosing correctly in IC₁ would ultimately have been due to chance.

³¹ Peter van Inwagen, "Free Will Remains a Mystery," *Philosophical Perspectives* 14 (2000): 1–20.

³² *Ibid.*, 14.

³³ *Ibid.*, 15.

Let me make clear that the point of positing God giving the devil a thousand chances is not to claim that He did. He did not. Similarly, the illustration should not be misunderstood as claiming that the devil's "real" choice is the one that he would have made the most over a thousand chances. That is irrelevant. Instead, the point has been to establish the fact that if the devil's choice would have been different (i.e. if he would have abstained from *fg*) in any putative subsequent iteration of IC, then what he actually chooses in the original IC₁ would ultimately be due to whichever possibility happens to be manifested, or "percolate up" so to speak, in that particular choice IC₁. In such a scenario, it would be hard to avoid the conclusion that the devil's choice in IC₁ (or any subsequent iteration for that matter) would be the result of anything other than chance. The actual result would ultimately be due to whichever possibility happened to "percolate up" in that particular choice.³⁴ But it would not be fitting for an omnibenevolent God to decide a being's eternal destiny based upon which actuality happens to percolate up by chance in that particular iteration. By the same token, the devil's correct choice in any putative second chance would likewise be due to chance. It would similarly be difficult to think God should reward a being based upon which actuality happened to percolate up in such a second chance. As a result, whether the devil chooses *fg* or not in any particular choice would merit neither punishment nor reward given the assumption that his choices would vary in different iterations. But to assume that the devil's choice had no merit one way or other would be absurd. Therefore, it must be the case that the devil's choice in any subsequent chance would have been the same choice as in IC₁.

For the sake of simplicity, Arg 2 can be expressed as the following *reductio*:

- (1) Suppose the devil would have chosen differently in any subsequent opportunity IC_{n>1}.
- (2) In such a scenario, the devil's choice in any IC_{n>1} would ultimately be attributable to an element of chance.
- (3) Given that the choice in any subsequent IC_{n>1} would ultimately be attributable to chance, then the choice in IC₁ itself would be attributable to an element of chance.
- (4) It would be unfitting for God to have condemned the devil based upon his choice in IC₁ if that choice were attributable to an element of chance.
- (5) Likewise, if the devil chose correctly in a second opportunity IC₂ (or some other opportunity IC_{n>2}), that choice would ultimately be attributable to an element of chance.
- (6) It would be unfitting for God to reward the devil for choosing correctly in a second (or later) opportunity since such a choice would ultimately be attributable to an element of chance.
- (7) It thus seems that if the devil's choice in any subsequent opportunity IC_{n>1} were different from his choice in IC₁, the devil could not be rewarded or punished for any choice whatsoever.
- (8) It is absurd to suppose the devil could not be held morally responsible for either choosing or refraining from choosing *fg*.

³⁴ Note again that this would be true regardless of what the percentages would be so long as they are not 100% to 0% (as they cannot be if in some subsequent chance the devil would choose differently).

(9) Therefore, it cannot be the case that the devil would have chosen differently in any subsequent chance $IC_{n>1}$.

The upshot to both Arg 1 and Arg 2 is that the devil did not get a second chance because he would not have chosen any differently had one been granted. There is no reason to assume a second chance would turn out any differently (Arg 1). And even if a second chance would have turned out differently, this would imply that the devil's choice in any iteration could ultimately be reduced to an element of arbitrary chance—a conclusion that would lead to the absurdity that the devil could not be held morally responsible for either choosing or refraining from choosing *fg* (Arg 2).³⁵ The solution to Puzzle C thus rests in the claim that offering the devil a second chance would be futile since his decision in any subsequent chance would always be the same.

The Problem with Puzzle C's Solution

At first glance, this solution to Puzzle C is persuasive and perhaps even obvious. A closer look, however, reveals a serious problem. Given that both Arg 1 and Arg 2 indicate that the devil's choice in any subsequent iteration of the initial condition would have been the same, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the devil's choice in IC_1 is, in some sense, necessary. If the devil would have made the same choice one thousand times if offered a thousand identical second chances (or a billion times if offered a billion chances and so on), it is unclear what it would mean to say there existed a true alternative possibility for the devil at IC_1 . For each possible iteration in which the devil makes his choice in that particular situation, he chooses *fg*. To state that the devil chooses *fg* in each possible iteration, however, is dangerously close to asserting that the devil's choice of *fg* in that particular situation is, in some sense, necessary. But if his choice is necessary, then we are faced with the problem of explaining how the devil can be held morally responsible for this decision.

It might seem that the best way to maintain responsibility for the devil's choice of *fg* given our solution to Puzzle C would be to appeal to some sort of compatibilist understanding of free will according to which the devil's choice could be free and morally imputable even though necessary. But if this is indeed the best (only?) way to maintain the devil's moral responsibility in light of Puzzle C, then the solution to Puzzle C threatens Anselm's solution to Puzzle A. Recall that his solution to Puzzle A rested upon the claim that the devil's choice between choosing *fg* (as a result of following the dictates of his AC) and not choosing *fg* (as a result of moderating the dictates of the AC with those of the AI) was a choice between two real alternatives; it had to be a choice characterized by a type of libertarian freedom in order to avoid the conclusion that God was somehow responsible for the devil's choice. If, by contrast, Puzzle C's solution demands a compatibilist (i.e. non-libertarian) understanding of the devil's choice, then his solution to Puzzle A is imperiled. As a result, it appears that Puzzles A and C cannot both be solved at the same time since their solutions appeal to contradictory understandings of free will. If so, this might explain

³⁵ The absurdity obtains only if one assumes the devil must be held morally responsible. Hard determinists, of course, would dispute this notion. I call it "absurd" here since Anselm and others who believe in an eternally-condemned devil would consider it absurd that the devil could have lacked moral responsibility.

Anselm's fortuitous neglect of Puzzle C. More significantly, it calls into question the overall coherency of his account of the devil's sin.

Defending Anselm: Objections to my Analysis of Puzzle C

The reader favorably inclined toward both Anselm and libertarian free will may be somewhat exasperated with my treatment of Puzzle C above and the claim that its solution requires a compatibilist understanding of free will. And this exasperation may rest upon several considerations the reader may think I have overlooked. Let me conclude by addressing some of these considerations.

First, the defender of Anselm may object to my solution to Puzzle C by claiming that Anselm is definitely *not* a compatibilist. Since Anselm is clearly committed to a libertarian understanding of freedom and does not espouse a form of compatibilism, it is disingenuous for me to claim that his solution to Puzzle C rests upon compatibilism. In response, I fully agree with the objector that Anselm claims the devil's choice is characterized by a type of libertarian freedom. Indeed, my analysis of his solution to Puzzle A asserts as much. I simply go on to show that he is able to persist in this commitment by neglecting to address Puzzle C. My point is that if he had addressed Puzzle C, the best (only?) way he could have solved it would have been to appeal to a form of compatibilism. He did not address Puzzle C and, as a result, never explicitly faced this problem. I am simply claiming that his commitment to libertarian freedom would have made it difficult, if not impossible, for him to solve Puzzle C.

A second objection could be made to my analysis of Arg 1. I conclude Arg 1 by stating that, in choosing *fg* in IC₁, the devil revealed his "true colors" and these true colors would show themselves every time IC₁ was repeated. An objector may state that there cannot be any such thing as true colors in the angels' case. To appeal to some sort of true colors is to appeal to character. But since the devil and all other angels received their characters from God prior to that initial choice, the angels could not yet have possessed any true colors. Or if they had, the devil's true colors would have been identical to those of the good angels who abstained from *fg* since God would have created them all equally. As a result, an appeal to true colors cannot explain their choices. And if an appeal to true colors cannot explain the devil's choice, then my analysis of Arg 1 fails.

In response, "true colors" need not refer to any previously formed character. All that is meant by "true colors" is an appeal to what the devil would freely choose in that situation. Let's call it the devil's "true colors of freedom." Indeed, even libertarians would presumably concede that there is just "something" about the devil and his will that led him freely to choose *fg* while there is just "something" about the good angels and their wills that led them freely to choose otherwise. This "something" is their "true colors of freedom." What this "something" might be (if not character) is a mystery. But an appeal to mystery should not (as we will see shortly) be objectionable to libertarians. It need not be problematic, therefore, that Arg 1 makes appeal to the devil's true colors.

The final and most important objection to my analysis of Puzzle C targets my claim that Arg 1 and Arg 2 entail that the devil's choice is necessary (from which I went on to show the devil's freedom would have to be understood in a compatibilist sense). Even if the devil's choice would have been the same in every subsequent iteration, this does not mean his choice was necessary. To claim it is (so the objection goes) betrays a misunderstanding of libertarian free will. The fact that the devil would choose *fg* every time does not mean that abstaining from *fg* would not exist as an alternative possibility in IC₁ or any putative subsequent iteration. According to libertarians, the devil still *really could have* chosen to abstain from *fg* in IC₁ and *really could* freely choose to abstain from *fg* in any subsequent chance were he offered one. The fact that he did not and would not abstain does nothing to show that he lacked the possibility to so choose. The say otherwise is to misunderstand freedom. The devil chose *fg* not because it was in any sense necessary that he choose it, but rather simply because he chose it freely. As Anselm himself says, the devil willed it "only because he will[ed]. For this will has no other causes . . . it was its own efficient cause."³⁶

Let me make a couple of points in response. First, it is unclear (to me at least) what it can mean to say the devil *could* have willed differently if he would in fact have willed the same way every time even if given an infinite number of trials in the same exact situation. If he *could*, it stands to reason that in at least one trial out of an infinity he *would*. I presume, however, that the problem of whether any sense can be made of the claim that he "*could have willed differently*" boils down in part to differing base intuitions between libertarians and compatibilists. As a result, I do not want to stake my entire response to the objection on this point.

More significantly, it is important to realize that if the present objection is correct, then Puzzle C has not yet been solved and God offering a second chance would not be futile. If the devil really *could* will differently in a subsequent iteration, it seems incumbent upon a good God to at least give the devil a second (if not a third, fourth, and so on) chance to see if he *would*! In other words, if the devil really could will differently in a second chance (as the objection claims), we have no answer as to why God would not offer one. The objector might reply by asserting that even though the devil *could* will differently in a second chance (and thus his choice is not necessary), he would not. As a result, a second chance is still futile. But for the objector to reply in this way is to appeal to a real mystery. To claim that the devil *could* freely will differently than he would even though he in fact *would not and never would* is to claim a mystery. Of course, appeals to mystery are nothing new to many libertarians. Peter van Inwagen, one of the foremost defenders of libertarianism, famously claims free will is a mystery.³⁷ But my point is this: the objector to my analysis of Puzzle C is ultimately burdened with two related problems: she is left appealing to mystery while at the same time being unable to explain fully why God would not give the devil a second chance. Perhaps the objector considers these problems to be less serious than

³⁶ *DCD*, ch. 27; see n.12, above.

³⁷ Indeed, note that the name of his article we have referenced in this paper is entitled "Free Will Remains a Mystery."

the problems of Puzzle A's and C's solutions conflicting (as I have argued). They are problems nonetheless, and whether they are more serious or not is open to debate.

Conclusion

I have shown that that there are three puzzles (A, B, and C) surrounding Anselm's account of the devil's fall and that he only addressed two of them (A and B). After arguing that Puzzle C is indeed distinct from Puzzle B, I went on to claim that his solution to Puzzle C would have to be inconsistent with his stated solution to Puzzle A since they entail contradictory understandings of free will. As a result, I have claimed there is a latent incoherency in Anselm's treatment of the devil's fall.

The close reader will notice that I repeatedly referred to my solution of Puzzle C, a solution that entails compatibilism, as the "best (only?)" way Puzzle C could be solved. I characterized it thus because at the present moment it seems to be the best way to solve the problem. Given the fact that the only other solution I can think of at the moment is the one I just dismissed in the paragraph above as unsatisfactory, it also seems (to me at least) to be the only solution. But perhaps I am wrong. I thus welcome the reader to offer a solution to Puzzle C that I have not considered—a solution that absolves Anselm from inconsistency. And if such a solution is offered, my present argument will still be valuable in that it has brought to light an important question that has rarely been asked, namely: Why can't the devil get a second chance?