

# *The Problem of a Plurality of Eternal Beings in Robert Grosseteste*

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## INTRODUCTION

The topic of this essay is what I name “Christian dualism,” the idea that God the Creator and creatures comprise an exhaustive and mutually exclusive classification of the contents of reality. I am concerned with one of the most penetrating discussions of this issue to be found in the early thirteenth century, Robert Grosseteste’s treatment of challenges to Christian dualism.

No orthodox thinker, of course, doubted the truth of Christian dualism; however, from the mid-twelfth century we find a realization that ostensibly plausible arguments could be mounted against it, arguments drawn in part from the area we should describe as philosophical logic, and in particular from reflections on the doctrine of the *enuntiabile*. Grosseteste himself discussed this issue in two works, each probably written at Oxford in the late 1220s. The first work, *De veritate*, which is largely devoted to the question whether there is a single truth, the supreme Truth, or are instead many truths, at one point confronts the suggestion that the beginningless nature of the truth of certain *enuntiabilia* suggests that there is a plurality of items that may be identified with neither God nor creatures. The second work, *De libero arbitrio*, is extant in two recensions, of which the later, designated as recension I in Baur’s edition, discusses Christian dualism in order to remove doubts posed by Grosseteste’s assertion, advanced in the earlier recension, that there is a plurality of eternal relations between God and creatures and vice versa.<sup>1</sup> The discussion in the second recension appears to be a development of material in *De veritate*, some of which it shares verbatim.

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1. Both texts were edited by L. Baur in *Die philosophischen Werke des Robert Grosseteste, Bischofs von Lincoln* (BGPM 9) (Münster, 1912). Baur’s editions, especially of *De libero arbitrio*, must be used with caution. I have reedited the first recension of *De libero arbitrio* in *Mediaeval Studies* 53 (1991): 1–88, and I am in the advanced stages of preparing a new edition of the later recension that, in addition to the manuscripts used by Baur (Worcester, Cathedral Library F. 152; Florence, Bibl. Laurenziana Plut. 18, dext. 7; and Oxford, Exeter College 28), employs Durham, Cathedral Library A.iii. 12; Florence, Bibl. Marucelliana C. 163, and London,

Grosseteste's discussion influenced a number of later writers, including Richard Rufus of Cornwall, who quotes pertinent material from *De libero arbitrio* in his commentary on the *Metaphysics*, written before ca. 1238, and William of Alnwick, who quotes extensively from parallel material in *De veritate* in his sixth disputed question on intelligible being, written ca. 1316.<sup>2</sup>

## SOME ARGUMENTS AGAINST CHRISTIAN DUALISM

We can get an idea of the problems Grosseteste is dealing with by considering some of the arguments he is concerned to rebut. The first concerns the status of certain *enuntiabilia* or *dicta*,<sup>3</sup> the primary bearers of truth value (indicated by italics in the translations below):

What is true, is true by truth, and by truth that is and that is something. But that which is purely nothing, cannot be informed by truth that is. Therefore, if it is informed by truth, it is not purely nothing. But before every creature *that no creature exists* was true. Therefore, *that no creature exists*, when it was informed by truth, was not purely nothing. Nor was it a creature, for there was not yet a creature. Nor was it God, for the following was not true: "God is *that no creature exists*." There existed, then, it seems, what was neither the Creator nor a creature.<sup>4</sup>

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British Library, Cotton Otho D.x. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations in this paper are from the later recension and use the text of my unpublished edition (I have also added references to parallel passages in Baur's edition); all italics in quotations are my own, unless otherwise noted. I have regularized the orthography of all Latin quotations in this paper in line with the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*.

2. On Rufus's commentary, see G. Gal, "Commentarius in *Metaphysicam* Aristotelis, Cod. Vat. lat. 4538, fons doctrinae Richardi Rufi," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 43 (1950): 209–42. For Alnwick, see *Fr. Guillelmi Alnwick, O.F.M., Quaestiones disputatae de esse intelligibili et de quodlibet*, ed. P. Ledoux (Florence, 1937), p. 167 f.

3. Grosseteste uses the terms "*enuntiabile*" and "*dictum*" interchangeably to refer to what is or can be stated by the assertoric utterance of an indicative sentence (a *propositio* or *enuntiatio*). For theories of the *enuntiabile*, see G. Nuchelmans, *Theories of the Proposition: Ancient and Medieval Conceptions of the Bearers of Truth and Falsity* (Amsterdam, 1973); and N. Kretzmann, "Medieval Logicians on the Meaning of the *Propositio*," *The Journal of Philosophy* 67 (1970): 767–87.

4. "Quod verum est, veritate verum est, et veritate quae est et quae aliquid est. Sed quod pure nihil est, veritate quae est non potest informari. Ergo si informatur veritate, non pure nihil est. Sed ante creaturam omnem verum fuit *nullam creaturam esse*. Ergo *nullam creaturam esse*, cum informabatur veritate, non fuit pure nihil; nec fuit creatura, quia nondum fuit creatura; nec fuit Deus, non enim fuit haec vera: 'Deus est *nullam creaturam esse*.' Fuit igitur, ut videtur, quod nec fuit Creator nec creatura" (cf. Baur, p.191.18–25). This argument is also present in William of Auvergne's *De universo* 1.3.25. I note below other doctrinal parallels between William and Grosseteste.

In this passage, the attack on Christian dualism is explicit. The negative existential *dictum* or *enuntiabile*, *that no creature exists*, being true prior to the existence of any creature, must, like God, have existed prior to any creature, and yet cannot be identified with God.

Another argument focuses on the notion of eternity. According to Grosseteste and his fellow Christian thinkers, God alone is an eternal being; no creature is eternal, not, at least, in the sense of eternity at issue, according to which eternity is radically distinct from and prior to time by some kind of non-temporal priority.<sup>5</sup> It is to this priority that the term “before” in the phrase “before every creature” in the above passage refers. It would seem to suffice to attack Christian dualism if it could be shown that something, besides God, is eternal or has existed from eternity. But once again, certain *enuntiabilia* appear to be like this:

The following *dicta*: *that Peter was going to exist*, and *that Paul was going to exist*, and so on, for every creature, *that it was going to exist*, were true from eternity. Therefore, they have existed from eternity. Is, then, God *that Paul was going to exist* and any one you please of such *dicta*, or are those *dicta* the same as one another? For if they are not the same, then several things exist from eternity.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, some arguments focus on the notion of ‘beginninglessness’. If something begins, it must exist after it did not exist. Thus, before it exists, it must have not existed. All creatures have begun to exist, even those that exist at every time or that, like angels, do not exist in time, for according to Grosseteste eternity is before all creatures, in a non-temporal sense of “before,” and no creatures exist in eternity. Thus, all creatures exist after they have not existed. God, on the other hand, does not begin, since he does not exist after not-existing, as nothing is before eternity. Christian dualism may, therefore, also be attacked, it seems, by showing that something besides God exists without beginning to exist. Not only may this be argued about various kinds of *enuntiabilia*, but also, as in the following argument, about their truths (*veritates*), these truths being construed by Grosseteste as relations of adequation between *dicta* and the eternal Word:<sup>7</sup>

The truths (*veritates*) of such *dicta* as *that something was going to exist* are without a beginning and differ from each other. For the truth of the

5. Cf. Grosseteste, *De ordine emanandi causatorum a Deo* (ed. Baur, p.148).

6. “Talia dicta *Pectrum fuisse futurum* et *Paulum fuisse futurum*, et sic de omni creatura, *illam fuisse futuram*, ab aeterno fuerunt vera. Ergo ab aeterno fuerunt. Numquid itaque Deus est *Paulum fuisse futurum* et quodlibet talium dictorum, aut ista dicta eadem sunt ad invicem? Si enim non eadem, tunc plura ab aeterno sunt” (cf. Baur, p. 189.20–25).

7. This view of truth bears similarities to the account we find in William of Auvergne; see S. Marrone, *William of Auvergne and Robert Grosseteste, New Ideas of Truth in the Early Thirteenth Century* (Princeton, 1983), p. 217.

*dictum that something was going to exist* is not the same as the truth of *that seven and three are ten*. For the conformity of the latter to its utterance in the eternal Word is one thing, and the conformity of the former is another. There are, then, several—indeed, countless—things without a beginning, and they will be without an end.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to these arguments, Grosseteste presents many others, all variations on the above themes. His primary concern is to provide a careful analysis of arguments of the second kind, which try to show that there is a plurality of eternal items, and I focus on such arguments below. It will be clear enough from this account how Grosseteste would extend his remarks to arguments of the other kinds.

## TO WHAT IS CHRISTIAN DUALISM COMMITTED?

Central to Grosseteste's defense of Christian dualism is his conception of just what Christian dualism claims. This is far from a straightforward matter. Everything is either God or a creature, but exactly what does the term "everything" cover in this context? Appeals to credal formulae, which we might expect to help clarify the doctrine, provide no clarity on this point. The Nicene Creed, for example, states: "We believe in one God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible."<sup>9</sup> And *John* 1:3 states that "all things were made by Him." But what does the expression "all things" stand for in such passages? It turns out that defenders of Christian dualism had quite definite views on what counts as a "thing" for the purposes of this debate.

It is not clear when challenges to Christian dualism first arose, but they are certainly an issue of interest and concern by the mid-twelfth century. In his *Metalogicon*, written in the 1150s, John of Salisbury indicates that developments in logic had led to doubts over, and, it would seem, outright attacks on Christian dualism. He mentions, for example, "those forms that the logicians imagine are not dependent on the Creator," and thus are not creatures, and he discusses the view that certain *vera* (that is, certain *enuntiabilia* signified by true propositions), are neither the Creator nor creatures.<sup>10</sup> Clearly some thinkers must have been proposing such views or must

8. "Similiter veritates talium dictorum *aliquid fuisse futurum* sine initio sunt; et alterae ab invicem sunt. Non enim est eadem veritas huius dicti *aliquid fuisse futurum* et huiusmodi *septem et tria esse decem*. Altera est enim conformitas huius ad suam dictionem in aeterno Verbo et altera illius. Sunt igitur plura, immo innumerabilia, sine initio et erunt sine fine" (*De veritate*, ed. Baur, p. 140).

9. See H. Bettenson, ed., *Documents of the Christian Church* (Oxford, 1963), p. 26.

10. *Metalogicon*, ed. J.B. Hall (CCCM 98) (Turnhout, 1991), pp. 93–94, p. 176.

have been taken to have been doing so. We have no idea who they were, however.<sup>11</sup>

This issue is also discussed at some length in Robert of Melun, under whom John of Salisbury had studied. Robert's *Sententiae*, written ca. 1152–1260,<sup>12</sup> contain an extended discussion of the question whether there is something that is neither the Creator nor a creature. Robert's focus is on arguments that certain true *enuntiabilia*, those concerning the Godhead, are neither the Creator nor creatures. Robert's response to such arguments attempts to clarify what Christian dualism is committed to. He thinks that we need not fear such arguments, for "it is possible for there to be many truths (*vera*), even though no things (*rebus*) at all exist."<sup>13</sup> This, and similar passages, indicate that Robert takes the notion of a *res* or an *essentia rei* to be crucial to the formulation of Christian dualism. Robert explains the notion of a *res* or *essentia rei* as that of what is or, at least, can be signified by a non-complex expression. That which can be signified only by means of complex expressions is not a *res* or *essentia rei*. *Enuntiabilia*, Robert claims, no doubt under Abelard's influence, are precisely of this sort, for they can be signified only through the use of *quod*-clauses or accusative-plus-infinitive constructions.<sup>14</sup> According to Robert, Christian dualism's division of the contents of reality into Creator and creatures is to be construed as a division among *res* or *essentiae rerum*. The fact that certain *enuntiabilia* may be identified with neither Creator nor creature does not, therefore, serve to undermine the claims made by Christian dualism, since *enuntiabilia* are neither *res* nor *essentiae*

11. It is perhaps tempting to see some such views in certain twelfth-century works that posit unusual modes of being for items such as predicables, *enuntiabilia*, and so forth (see for example, the *Ars Burana* in *Logica Modernorum* 2:2, ed. L. M. de Rijk (Assen, 1967), p. 208; and the *Ars Meliduna*, in *ibid.* 2:1, p. 308). But we must be wary of construing such doctrines as attacks on Christian dualism. John of Salisbury himself, for example, thought that *enuntiabilia* had their own peculiar mode of being, but quite emphatically held that this did not undermine Christian dualism.

12. See *Sententiae* 1.5.57–58, in *Ouvres de Robert de Melun*, vol. 3:2, ed. R.-M. Martin and R. M. Gallet (Louvain, 1952).

13. Robert writes: "Ait enim Aristoteles in libro *Interpretationum circa compositionem et divisionem esse veritatem et falsitatem*. Quare vero hoc diceret, nulla alia videtur ratio, nisi quia veritatis vocabulum ac veri ipsam rerum cohaerentiam ac discohaerentiam solas suscipere voluit, quae quasi quidam modi sunt et nullae rerum essentiae. Unde et ipse Aristoteles in eodem volumine verum inter modos enumerat quos nullas res esse certissimum est, *eo quod nullis rebus existentibus esse possunt*" (ed. Martin and Gallet, p. 278; eds.' italics).

14. Although he uses the language of *substantiae*, not of *res* or *essentiae*, John of Salisbury follows Robert on this point. He writes: "Quod autem omnis res aut creator dicitur aut creatura, ad substantias et ad ea quae substantiis insunt quocumque modo, ex auctoritate Patrum, universitatis complexio revocatur. Nam enuntiationum significata non contingit, urgente aliqua ratione sermonis. Qui enim sic partiti sunt, respexerunt ad incomplexorum significationes. Non nihil ergo sunt vera quae in mente Dei consistunt, sed nec creaturae sunt, eo quod ab aeterno extiterunt" (ed. Hill, p. 176).

*rerum*. Although one way to construe this view is as holding that the Christian dualist is only making a division of a sub-class of the contents of reality, I think that Robert intends something rather different. His view seems rather to be that any items, such as *enuntiabilia*, that appear to fall outside the division of *res* into Creator and creature are not really items in our ontology. Some kind of account must be given that shows that ostensible references to such items are misleading. Robert's point that *enuntiabilia* may be signified only by the use of complex expressions is, I would suggest, a way of making this point that they are not really proper items of reference at all.<sup>15</sup>

We find what may be a trace of this twelfth-century discussion in Grosseteste. Although he does not explain the concept of a *res* or *essentia rei* in terms of the notion of signification, he does, like Robert, insist that the arguments mounted against Christian dualism fail to prove the existence of a plurality of items of a kind that would serve to undermine Christian dualism, and, echoing Robert, he thinks that only a plurality of eternal *essentiae* would do so. Thus, noting his claim earlier in *De libero arbitrio* that "there are countless eternal relations of the Creator to creatures and vice versa," Grosseteste writes:

From this it seems to some that several things (*plura*) are eternal and that something other than God is eternal, although we have frequently added and confirmed that only a single thing, the triune God, is eternal, and that no such relations at all give rise to a *multitude of eternal essences*. Firmly and faithfully, therefore, we have supposed only one eternal thing, God, and not that *any essence other than or divided from him is eternal*.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, according to Grosseteste, only a plurality of eternal essences other than or divided from God would serve to undermine Christian dualism.<sup>17</sup> This claim requires us to examine the notion of an essence that is "other

15. "Manifestum est . . . verum nullum eorum esse quae sub rerum universitate continentur. Nam si omnia quae sub rerum universitate continentur incomplexo significantur, verum autem incomplexo significari non potest, verum proculdubio nullum eorum est quae sub rerum universitate concluduntur. Ex quo profecto patet nihil esse oportere quod aliqua rerum sit vel aliqua non sit, quia verum est. Multo ergo minus necessarium est aliquid esse quod Deus sit vel quod Deus non sit, quia verum est" (ed. Martin and Gallet, p. 279).

16. "Ex hoc videtur aliquibus plura esse aeterna et aliud quam Deum esse aeternum, licet nos frequenter addiderimus et confirmaverimus unicum solum, scilicet Deum trinitarem, esse aeternum, et tales relationes nullas penitus facere aeternarum essentiarum multitudinem. Firmiter igitur et fideliter supposuimus unum solum aeternum, scilicet Deum, nec essentiam aliquam ab ipso aliam vel divisam esse aeternam" (cf. Baur, p. 188.11–17).

17. Of course, Grosseteste follows the orthodox view that the Trinity, while a trinity of persons, is not a trinity of *essences*; thus Christian dualism is quite compatible with the doctrine of the Trinity. He writes, for example, in the sermon *Ex rerum initiarum*: "Quia ergo necessario alter est qui gignit, et alter qui gignitur, et qui

than” or “divided” from God. I shall return to these two features shortly. For the present, however, let me consider briefly Grosseteste’s conception of essence.

The term “*essentia*” occurs frequently in Grosseteste’s writings, perhaps most frequently in epistemological contexts. Someone with higher grades of cognition is said to have cognition of the essences of things (*essentiae rerum*), essences stripped of material conditions. There is no reason to think that Grosseteste is not using the concept in the same sense in the present context. But what exactly is this sense?

Grosseteste’s use of the term “*essentia*” has received little attention, and my remarks here shall be very provisional. Steven Marrone argues that “Grosseteste held to the view also found in the works of William of Auvergne that the essence, substance, and being of existing things were identical.”<sup>18</sup> According to this interpretation, Grosseteste employs the term “*essentia*” interchangeably with “*esse*” and “*substantia*” and does not, as does, for example, Aquinas, contrast essence with being. Grosseteste is probably following St. Augustine here, and especially book 5.2.10 of Augustine’s *De Trinitate*, in which *essentia* and *substantia* are equated, and *essentia* is related to *esse* as *scientia* to *scire*. Such an Augustinian influence is of course hardly surprising, given both the esteem in which Grosseteste held Augustine and his deep knowledge of the Augustinian corpus.

There is, however, an interesting peculiarity in Grosseteste’s use of *essentia*. Augustine treats “*essentia*” and “*substantia*” as coextensive, and, as Marrone sees, this is very often true of Grosseteste too, but this is not always so. In fact, Grosseteste takes the notion of essence to be broader than that of substance. Essence encompasses not just substance, but also quality and quantity. It does not, however, encompass relations. Although Grosseteste states this quite clearly, he says little to explain it.<sup>19</sup> Yet it suggests a hypothesis that throws light, I suggest, on his conception of Christian dualism.

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procedit alter ab eo vel ab his a quo vel a quibus procedit, necessarium est aeternam esse in Deo personarum trinitatem et, propter essentiae summam, immo supersummam simplicitatem, essentiae et substantiae unitatem in tribus personis omnino indivisam et impartitam et immultiplicatam” (ed. S. Gieben, in “Robert Grosseteste on Preaching. With the Edition of the Sermon *Ex Rerum Initiatarum* on Redemption,” *Collectanea Franciscana* 37 (1967): p. 121).

18. Marrone, *William of Auvergne*, p. 159.

19. He speaks, for example, of an “alietatem formarum quae essent in se essentiae et multiplicarent essentias (*ut faciunt qualitates et quantitates*)” (cf. Baur, p. 192.16–17), and notes that “non habent . . . relationes essentiam aliam et divisam ab essentiis extremitatum relatarum et comparatarum (*sicut habent qualitates et quantitates essentias alias quam sint essentiae subiectorum*)” (cf. Baur, p. 195.19–22). This talk of qualities and quantities as multiplying essence is also implied in Grosseteste’s opusculum on subsistence: “Res in se ipsis sunt ita quod substantia sua et quantitas et qualitas secundum essentiam seiuncte sunt, existunt tamen coniunctae; in sensu vero hominis et imaginatione sunt substantia et quantitas et qualitas per modum unius, nec percipitur ibi quae est secundum essentiam seiunctio” (ed. P. O. Lewry, *Mediaeval Studies* 45 (1983): p. 20.)

## SUPERVENIENCE

The hypothesis is that the concept of an essence plays a role in Grosseteste's thought akin to the role played in some recent metaphysical discussions by the notion of a non-supervening item.<sup>20</sup> This is suggested by some general remarks Grosseteste makes about the nature of relations.

In the course of his discussion of the eternal relations of God to creatures and vice versa, Grosseteste claims that relations do not multiply essence beyond that of their extremities or, as we should say, *relata*. By this he means that to posit a plurality of relations is not as such to posit a plurality of essences over and above the essences of the relations' *relata*. A plurality of relations holding between the same two subjects, for example, does not posit more than the two essences of those subjects. In contrast, to posit a plurality of substances, qualities or quantities is to posit a corresponding number of essences.

Grosseteste uses two thought experiments to motivate his claim about relations. Suppose that everything remains as it is, and that a single thing—for example, a fly—is created. Together with the fly there will arise relations of it to each of the other things, and vice versa, and even relations of those relations, and so on *ad infinitum*. If, therefore, relations multiplied essence over and above those of their extremities or *relata*, the creation of a single fly would mean that “an infinity of essences would be produced,” which, Grosseteste thinks, is absurd. In the same way, suppose God has only created the heaven and the earth. Then, Grosseteste claims, it is plausible to think that there are only the three essences—of God, the heaven, and the earth—and yet there are various relations holding between God and the heaven and earth and vice versa.<sup>21</sup>

20. For an outline of the notion of supervenience, from which I have drawn, and its application to the mind-body problem, including important subtleties ignored in my subsequent remarks, see D. Braddon-Mitchell and F. Jackson, *Philosophy of Mind and Cognition* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 14–28.

21. “Quod autem tales relationes essentiam non multiplicant, patet. Ponatur enim nunc unicum solum aliquid, subito creatum ceteris omnibus manentibus. Manifestum est quod illius ad singula ceterorum multae conascuntur relationes, et singulorum ad ipsum multae relationes. Ergo si relationes istae habent essentias praeter essentias extremitatum, unico nato et unico addito numero rerum, duplabitur vel triplabitur vel forte milletriplabitur numerus rerum. Immo et in infinitum augmentabitur numerus earum, quia cuiuslibet relationis essentia conata ad singulas rerum habebit multas relationes et e contrario; et similiter relationes illarum relationum, et sic in infinitum. Sed hoc est inconueniens, essentias scilicet infinitas nasci si unum quid solum creetur vel si musca nascatur. Item, loquamur pro statu quo Deus creavit caelum et terram, et intelligamus nondum egressa in esse opera sex dierum. Numquid tunc erant plura quam tria, scilicet Deus, caelum et terra? Et tamen tunc erant necessario creatio, dominatio <et> superpositio Dei ad has duas creaturas, et utriusque harum duarum erant correlationes his correspondentes. Illae relationes correspondentes nec erant Deus nec erant hae creaturae, quia



One way to understand these remarks is, as I suggested above, in terms of supervenience. Roughly speaking, we may say that facts of a certain kind supervene on those of another kind, provided that any two possible worlds exactly alike in respect of facts of the latter kind, are exactly alike in respect of facts of the former kind. Facts about baldness, for example, appear to supervene on facts about hair distribution, for any two possible worlds exactly alike in respect of the facts pertaining to hair distribution would be exactly alike in respect of the facts pertaining to baldness. Likewise, it might be held that any two possible worlds exactly alike in respect of physical facts would be exactly alike in respect of mental facts. The truth of such claims, it is sometimes held, would justify certain ontological claims: baldness amounts to nothing over and above facts about hair distribution; mental phenomena amount to nothing over and above physical phenomena. I am suggesting that Grosseteste's claim that relations do not multiply essence, taken together with his claim that 'essence' encompasses substances, qualities, and quantities, may profitably be viewed as a kind of supervenience thesis, to the effect that facts about relations supervene on facts about substances, qualities, and quantities (or some subset of such facts), whereas facts of this latter kind are not supervenient. For this reason, we need not take relations to introduce any items into our ontology over and above substances, qualities, and quantities. According to this interpretation, the concept of an essence is precisely the concept of a non-supervening item. If this is right, Grosseteste is committed to the view that facts about qualities and quantities do not supervene on facts about substances. (He may also be committed to the highly contentious view that all relations are so-called internal relations—that is, that there are no relations whose holding between their relata is not determined by the intrinsic properties of the relata.) Christian dualism, on this construal of Grosseteste's remarks, is the claim that the class of *non-supervening* items may be exhaustively and mutually exclusively divided into Creator and creatures.

## THE NATURE OF ARGUMENTS AGAINST CHRISTIAN DUALISM

Earlier in this essay I quoted a number of arguments typical of those raised against Christian dualism. Grosseteste focuses, as I noted above, on the arguments that try to establish a plurality of *eternal* items. He believes that

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subiectio caeli et terrae ad Deum nec est Deus, nec caelum, nec terra. Haec itaque suppositio est, et non nihil sed aliquid est, et tamen nec est caelum, nec terra, nec Deus. Et tamen non sunt nisi haec sola tria, scilicet Deus, caelum et terra, quia suppositio haec essentiam nullam habet, nec multiplicant extra has extremitates" (cf. Baur, pp. 192.22–193.10).

if such arguments are to refute Christian dualism, they must establish that there is at least one eternal essence other than or divided from God. Grosseteste does not discuss the import of this requirement that such an essence would have to be “other than” or “divided” from God. Why, one might ask, would it not suffice to refute Christian dualism simply to show that there is something eternal that is not God?

The answer, it seems, stems from Grosseteste’s Trinitarian commitments.<sup>22</sup> The persons of the Trinity are eternal. Moreover, it is true that the Father, for example, is not the Son. But it does not follow from this that there is a plurality of eternal essences, for the persons of the Trinity are one in essence. Thus things can be non-identical with each other, and yet may entail no plurality of essences. So if one accepts the doctrine of the Trinity, one must hold that the mere fact (if there were such) that there was something that was eternal and was not God, would not as such entail that there was a plurality of eternal *essences*. Part of what would be required for such an entailment to go through, Grosseteste intimates, is that the item in question be *other than or divided from* God. We may turn again to the doctrine of the Trinity to see the point of this requirement, or at least of the first disjunct. The Son is not the Father, but he nonetheless is not something other than (*aliud*) the Father, although he is someone other (*alius*).<sup>23</sup> The failure of otherness (*alietas*) appears to be important for blocking the conclusion, drawn from the fact that there are the three eternal persons, that there is a plurality of eternal essences. But Grosseteste wishes to go further and hold that even to establish that there is something eternal that is not God and that is other than God would not necessarily suffice to show that there is a plurality of eternal *essences*. Only a plurality of eternally coexistent essences would undermine Christian dualism, and, Grosseteste will argue, the truth of statements of the form “A is eternal,” “A is not God,” and “A is other than God,” does not entail that there is a plurality of eternally *coexistent essences*. For Grosseteste thinks that he can provide an account of the truth-conditions of such statements, such that the facts required to render them true presuppose the existence of only one eternal

22. Grosseteste’s appeal to Trinitarian doctrine must raise doubt over the force of his defense of Christian dualism. Surely someone who seriously rejects Christian dualism is not likely to find persuasive a defense founded on the doctrine of the Trinity? This point, I think, requires us to reconsider what Grosseteste is up to. I would suggest that he and his fellows are best viewed as aiming to establish the consistency of Christian dualism with the claim that there are eternal truths and relations. To show consistency in a set of beliefs one may appeal to beliefs in that set. Looked at in this way, the arguments against Christian dualism may be viewed as claiming that a Christian thinker cannot consistently adopt Christian dualism *and* the view that certain *enuntiabilia* and relations are eternal. Grosseteste’s task is to show that one can.

23. “ipseque Filius alius est a Patre, licet non aliud sit a Patre” (cf. Baur, p. 186.30–31).

essence, God.<sup>24</sup> To make this case, as we should expect, logical analysis of the sense of such premises is required; not surprisingly, much of Grosseteste's discussion is concerned to provide such logical analyses.

## ITEMS POSING A CHALLENGE TO CHRISTIAN DUALISM

It is now time to consider in detail the challenges against Christian dualism that Grosseteste raises. Grosseteste focuses his attention on two problematic classes of items: *enuntiabilia* and relations, although he also mentions notions, reasons, ideas, and laws, presumably expecting his remarks on the former items to carry over to these.

The classes of the *enuntiabilia* and relations in question may each be subdivided into two classes, as set out in the following chart:

### ITEMS THAT SEEM TO IMPLY A PLURALITY OF ETERNAL ESSENCES

#### Enuntiabilia

#### Relations

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>(A) <i>Enuntiabilia</i> about creatures<br/>—negative existential<br/>(e.g. <i>that Paul does not exist</i>)<br/>—future-tensed<br/>(e.g. <i>that the Antichrist will exist</i>)<br/>—mathematical<br/>(e.g. <i>that 7 + 3 = 10</i>)<br/>—conditional<br/>(e.g. <i>that if it is a man it is an animal</i>)</p> | <p>(C) Relations of God to creatures<br/>(e.g. knowing)</p>     |
| <p>(B) <i>Enuntiabilia</i> solely about the Godhead<br/>(e.g. <i>that the Father begets the Son</i>)</p>   | <p>(D) Relations of creatures to God<br/>(e.g. being known)</p> |

24. These remarks do not address Grosseteste's reference to a "division of essences." It is unclear what Grosseteste means by this. He appears to be using a technical notion in this context, but he does not discuss its meaning anywhere to my knowledge. It is possible that he is using "*vel*" to indicate a specification of the sense of otherness, and that the requirement of the coexistence of the essences that are other is precisely the force of talk of a division. In any event, when Grosseteste discusses in more detail the requirements for a successful attack on Christian dualism (at least one based on arguments using the notion of eternity), they are those I have discussed in the text above.

We shall see that the treatment of items in class (A) will require treatment of those in (C) and (D).

## Enuntiabilia

**Class (A)** An *enuntiabile* is the primary bearer of truth-value; it is what can be stated by the utterance of an indicative sentence (known as an *enuntiatio* or *propositio*). Not all *enuntiabilia* threaten a plurality of eternal essences.<sup>25</sup> Only those that are eternal truths (*vera*) do so, and these, as the above division indicates, fall into two classes. The first kind, those in class (A), which shall be our present concern, concern creatures. They include, according to Grosseteste, negative existential *enuntiabilia*, mathematical *enuntiabilia* (*disciplinabilia*), those concerning the future, and conditional *enuntiabilia*. Obviously there is an important sense in which not all of such *enuntiabilia* are necessary. An *enuntiabile* can be eternally true and yet not necessary; the notion of eternal truth is not that of necessity. Grosseteste treats eternity as akin to an instant of time in the sense that just as an *enuntiabile* may be true or false relative to an instant of time, so it may be true or false relative to eternity, which in this regard is treated as akin to a time before all times. Thus, the negative existential *enuntiabile*, *that Paul does not exist*, is true in eternity, as is *that the Antichrist will exist*, even though each *enuntiabile* might have been false.<sup>26</sup> And of course, also true in eternity are mathematical truths,<sup>27</sup> which Grosseteste takes to be absolutely necessary in that they could not have been false, and conditionals, about which Grosseteste has little comment. But whether or not they are necessary or contingent, since these *enuntiabilia* are eternally true, it seems that they must exist from eternity in order to provide a subject for truth, and if we grant that they are other than and not identical with God or with each other, it might seem that we have posited a plurality of eternal essences.

25. Occasionally Grosseteste speaks of *propositiones* or *enuntiationes* in place of *enuntiabilia*. It is not clear what importance, if any, to attach to such remarks. There appears to be a general laxity in his use of these terms, but there is little doubt that in other writers of the period who deal with these issues, it is *enuntiabilia*, not *enuntiationes*, that are thought to be problematic, since *enuntiationes* in a strict sense are clearly events in time and thus hardly eternal entities.

26. The latter kind of *enuntiabile* is, however, necessary, Grosseteste claims, in the sense that it is immutably true, but it is contingent in that God from eternity has a power never to have known or willed its truth. Grosseteste develops this distinction in *De libero arbitrio*, chap. 6 (or 7 of the earlier recension).

27. Grosseteste notes that someone might hold that mathematical propositions “non esse veras antequam res essent creatae.” But then, he replies, “saltem concederet tales habuisse veritatem sine initio: ‘Diameter *ducenda* per medium circuli *erit* omnium maxima.’ Item, si dicatur quod ‘Diameter ducta et cetera’ coepit esse verum, ergo eius oppositum ante fuit verum. Et numquid illud verum Deus?” (cf. Baur, p. 190.13–17).

To undercut this conclusion Grosseteste aims to show that the conditions required to refute Christian dualism are, despite appearances to the contrary, not met. He is prepared to grant in the case of *enuntiabilia* in class (A), that it may truly be said that they are eternal, non-identical with, and even other than each other and God. But he claims in effect that the facts that render these claims true do not require the coexistence of a plurality of essences that literally are eternal or coexistent. The only eternal essence such facts require is God. This being so, this attack on Christian dualism based on *enuntiabilia* in class (A) must fail. The bulk of Grosseteste's discussion of these cases consists in explaining how the truth of the predications in question does not require the existence of any eternal essence besides God.

Grosseteste does this indirectly by considering some examples he takes to be analogous to cases of *enuntiabilia* in class (A). Consider, for example, the statement "Socrates known by God is eternal." This, Grosseteste claims, is true. And if we define the term "A" to mean "Socrates known by God," we may truly say "A is eternal"; indeed, Grosseteste claims, this will be a *per se*, not a *per accidens* predication. But in the predication of eternity of such a subject as A a non-eternal item, Socrates, is referred to, or, to use the language of terminist logic employed by Grosseteste, *supposed* under eternal relations.<sup>28</sup> It is Socrates *as known by God* that is eternal, not Socrates as such. According to Grosseteste, the statement "A is eternal," in which "A" means "Socrates known by God," is true on the basis of the form, that is, the relation, on the basis of which the name "A" is introduced, that is, the relation of *being known by* in which Socrates stands to God. This relation is an eternal relation, and for this reason we may say that A is eternal. Moreover, this relation in which Socrates stands to God is itself eternal because of "God's eternal knowledge." Thus the predication of eternity of A is ultimately based on the eternity of God's knowledge. Ultimately, the only fact required for the truth of "A is eternal" is the fact that God eternally knows Socrates.<sup>29</sup>

28. Grosseteste also speaks of a non-eternal item as being denominated by an eternal relation.

29. "Praeter positionem ante factam, exemplum bonum est ad hoc, scilicet quod Deus scit omnia ab aeterno. Quapropter, si scit A, cuius definitio sit 'Socrates scitus a Deo,' et B, cuius definitio sit 'Plato scitus a Deo,' per se loquendo verum erit quod A aeternaliter est et B aeternaliter est, et A non est B nec e contrario, et neutrum horum est Deus. Et tamen solus Deus aeternaliter est, quia cum dicitur 'A non est B et B non est A et neutrum horum est Deus,' redditur praedicatio pro subjectis corruptibilibus. Cum vero dicitur 'A vel B aeternaliter sunt,' redditur praedicatio per se gratia formae a qua haec nomina imponuntur, quae scilicet aeterna dicitur propter scientiam Dei aeternam. Nec exigit veritas talis sermonis alicuius extra Deum existentiam aut coaeternitatem" (cf. Baur, p.191.12-24). Grosseteste had preceded this with another example, in this case a thought experiment: "Ponatur quod ab aeterno fuisset laudans Caesarem et similiter laudans Socratem. Secundum hanc positionem verum est ab aeterno quod Caesar laudatus est et Socrates laudatus est, quia si est laudans Caesarem, Caesar laudatus est. Sit

Grosseteste employs a similar strategy with the predications of non-identity and otherness of Socrates-as-known-by-God and God. What renders true “A (that is, Socrates known by God) is other than God” or “A is non-identical with God” is simply the fact that Socrates *in himself* is other than God and is not God. In this case, the truth value of the statements of otherness or non-identity is based on the “corruptible subject,” that is, on the fact that Socrates himself is not identical with and is other than God. In general, in assessing the truth-value of a statement of otherness or of non-identity in which an object X is referred to “under an eternal relation R” and is said to be other than or non-identical with an object Y, it is sufficient that X in itself be other than Y. Thus, the truth of the statements “Socrates known by God is other than God” and “Socrates known by God is not God” requires only the facts that Socrates himself be other than God and be non-identical with God. Moreover, Grosseteste holds that such statements of otherness and non-identity can be true although the items that are other and are non-identical are not coexistent, as is the case in this example, since, at least from the perspective of eternity, Socrates and God are not coexistent. So no plurality of *eternally coexistent* essences is needed to explain the truth of the claims “A is eternal,” “God is eternal,” “A is other than God,” and “A is not God.”<sup>30</sup>

However, *if* the facts that rendered true such claims concerning otherness and non-identity did require a plurality of eternally coexistent essences, Christian dualism would be false. Thus, Grosseteste notes that if two items supposed under eternal relations, say B and C,

were called other or another from God or from each other because of an otherness of existing subjects from each other, or because of an

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igitur hoc nomen A, cuius definitio sit ‘Caesar laudatus,’ et hoc nomen B, cuius definitio sit ‘Socrates laudatus.’ Igitur verum erit A esse aeternum et B esse aeternum, ut sit praedicatio per se et non per accidens (sicut per se verum est quod album non potest esse nigrum). Nec tamen sequitur Caesarem aut Socratem esse aeternos aut aliquid esse aeternum praeter laudantem. Quia non redditur aeternitas cum dicitur A aeternum, nisi propter laudationem quae in laudante est aeterna, propter cuius aeternitatem suscipit aeternitatis praedictionem eius correlatam laudatio. Tales autem correlationes ut laudatio-passio non exigunt subiectum aeternum aut ens aut aliquam alicuius existentiam extra laudantem” (cf. Baur, pp. 190.29–191.11); this and the preceding passage are also found in *De veritate* (ed. Baur, pp. 140–41).

30. “Pono itaque A Deum, B et C duo dicta disciplinabilia vel duas res suppositas sub aeternis relationibus. Dico itaque A esse aeternum et B esse aeternum et C esse aeternum, et nullum eorum esse alterum, et tamen unicum solum, scilicet A, esse aeternum; nec aliquam essentiam, nec aliquid aeternum praeter A unicum et solum. Dicuntur haec tria esse altera ab invicem propter res alteras suppositas. Sed res suppositas per B et C non sunt, posito quod sit sermo noster secundum statum ante creationem. Propter autem ipsas relationes attribuitur esse B et C, quae relationes nullam habent essentiam vel existentiam extra suas extremitates et quarum multiplicatio nullam facit multiplicationem vel numerositatem essentiae. Propter talem igitur alteritatem non sequitur quod multa sint, quia dicuntur altera propter res alteras, quae nihil sunt” (cf. Baur, pp. 191.31–192.11).

otherness of forms that were in themselves essences and multiplied essences (as do qualities and quantities), it would indeed follow that several things are eternal.<sup>31</sup>

But this, he thinks, does not hold in the cases at issue.

These remarks may be applied directly to the *enuntiabilia* in class (A). Grosseteste holds that in statements of the form “This *enuntiabile* is eternal,” “This *enuntiabile* is not God,” and “This *enuntiabile* is other than God,” the expression “this *enuntiabile*” is, like the expression “A” in the above example (that is, where A means “Socrates known by God”) a designation of some non-eternal item under an eternal relation.<sup>32</sup> This of course raises the questions, which Grosseteste does not address, of what such an item is and what the pertinent relation is.

Whatever the item in question is, it is clear that Grosseteste takes it not to be an eternal item. It belongs in some manner to the created, and hence non-eternal order, although its precise nature is left obscure.<sup>33</sup> It is plausible to think that it is a state of affairs involving creatures, subject to the proviso that such states of affairs involving creatures are not literally eternally existing entities.<sup>34</sup> Grosseteste’s point then would be that in statements such as “This *enuntiabile* is eternal” in which “this *enuntiabile*” refers to states of affairs involving creatures, the expression “This *enuntiabile*” refers to such a state of affairs under an eternal relation. That is, where “S” stands for the state of affairs itself, “this *enuntiabile*” is to be expanded to mean something like “S Rd by Y.” But what is this relation of being Rd and what is Y? If we are to adopt the strategy outlined above, to explain the truth of statements of the form “This *enuntiabile* is eternal,” Y must be a literally eternal entity, and being Rd must be a relation S eternally stands in to Y. Grosseteste himself expressly states that Y is the eternal Word (who of course, is one in essence with God).<sup>35</sup> And it is reasonable to assume that the relation in

31. “Si autem B et C dicerentur alia vel altera ab A vel ab invicem propter alietatem existentium subiectorum ab invicem, vel propter alietatem formarum quae essent in se essentiae et multiplicarent essentias (ut faciunt qualitates et quantitates), bene sequeretur plura esse aeterna” (cf. Baur, p. 192.14–18).

32. “Similiter igitur, cum dicitur ‘Hoc verum aeternum aut enuntiabile aeternum est,’ suscipitur praedicatio haec propter formam correlativam dictioni in Verbo aeterno, propter quam tamen correlationem nihil exigitur extra Deum esse” (cf. Baur, p. 191.24–28).

33. Thus, Grosseteste clearly wishes to avoid a conception of such *enuntiabilia* concerning creatures according to which they are the eternal reasons of things in the divine mind: “Hoc itaque modo respondebitur ad supradictas oppositiones, aut cogemur fateri enuntiabilia nihil aliud esse quam rationes aeternas rerum in mente divina” (cf. Baur, p. 191.29–31).

34. I have argued that a conception of *enuntiabilia* as non-eternal entities is found in William of Auvergne and underlies his solution to the problem posed by the eternal truths. See my “William of Auvergne’s Account of the *Enuntiabile*: its Relations to Nominalism and the Doctrine of the Eternal Truths,” *Vivarium* 33 (1995): 113–36.

35. See above n. 32.

question is implied by the term “*enuntiabile*” and is the relation of being stated (or perhaps statable). Thus “This *enuntiabile* is eternal” may be expanded to “This state of affairs *as stated by the eternal Word* is eternal.” Likewise, in a statement such as “This truth (*hoc verum*) is eternal,” the expression “this truth” refers to a state of affairs as adequated to the eternal Word, since Grosseteste adopts the rather unusual view that the truth of an *enuntiabile* is precisely a relation of adequation to the eternal Word.<sup>36</sup>

In the same way, we may apply the strategy outlined above to the question of the non-identity and otherness from God of such *enuntiabilia* concerning creatures. Grosseteste is prepared to say that it is true that such *enuntiabilia* are not God and are other than God, but what renders such claims true is simply the non-identity and otherness from God of the items supposed under an eternal relation in expressions such as “this *enuntiabile*” and “this truth,” and these items—states of affairs, if my surmise is correct—do not eternally coexist with God, but are in themselves non-eternal. So in the case of the *enuntiabilia* in class (A), the facts that render true statements to the effect that *enuntiabilia* are eternal, other than, and non-identical with God, do not include facts to the effect that some essence coexists eternally with God. And for this reason no plurality of eternal essences is implied.

**Class (B)** But if the states of affairs concerning creatures referred to by such expressions as “this *enuntiabile*” or “this truth” are not themselves eternal or coexistent with God, this is far less obvious in the case of those states of affairs that solely concern God, those “in whose terms nothing of the creature is signified,” as Grosseteste puts it; that is, those in class (B) above. The problem is as follows. The proposition “The *enuntiabile*, that the Father begets the Son, is eternal” may be true, and indeed, the subject expression may refer to a state of affairs under an eternal relation. But that state of affairs itself, being solely about the Godhead, seems *literally* to be eternal and coexistent with God, and not just insofar as it is related to God. If we grant these points, as Grosseteste seems to do, then to avoid a plurality of eternal essences it seems we must either deny that such *enuntiabilia* are non-identical with God, or else we must deny that they are other than God. Grosseteste sees this very clearly:

Either we must grant about any one of them that it is God (for example, that *that God exists* is God and *that the Father begets the Son* is God), or else we must say about any such one of them that it neither is God nor is

36. The term “*verum*,” it may be noted, refers to a true *enuntiabile*. One problem, we may note, with Grosseteste’s treatment of *enuntiabilia* in class A is that Grosseteste himself makes, and seems to treat as true, statements of the form “*Paulum esse futurum est aeternum*,” in which the *enuntiabile* does *not* seem to be referred to under eternal relations. I am not sure how he would respond to this point. Perhaps he would hold that such statements are always shorthand for “The *enuntiabile*, that Paul is going to exist, is eternal.”



other than God, just as we say about the Father and the Son that the Father is not the Son, nor is other than the Son.<sup>37</sup>

In other words, we must either identify them with God, or else treat their relations to God as akin to the relations the persons of the Trinity have to one another, the relations of being neither the same as nor something other than the other person. Grosseteste does not specify which approach he would prefer to adopt.

## Relations

In the above account, Grosseteste accounted for the truth of predications of eternity of *enuntiabilia* concerning creatures—those in class A—by reference to the fact that in such predications the subject term involves a reference to an item—a state of affairs, it would seem—as standing in an *eternal relation*. Now this might suffice to show that the *enuntiabile* itself, that is, the state of affairs in question, does not itself introduce any eternal essence other than or divided from God into the picture, but it raises the distinct and troubling question of the status of the eternal relations themselves. The worry arises that Grosseteste's solution to the problems posed by *enuntiabilia* in class (A) avoids positing one kind of plurality of eternal essences only at the cost of introducing another kind. Moreover, the class of eternal relations of God to creatures, and of creatures to God, is much broader than just the class of the relations between God and states of affairs. Grosseteste therefore devotes much of his discussion in the second recension of *De libero arbitrio* to showing how such eternal relations do not themselves pose a problem for Christian dualism.<sup>38</sup>

37. "De his autem dictis quae de Deo solummodo sunt, in quorum terminis nihil creaturae significatur, patet quod penitus nullam habent essentiam extra divinam essentiam. Et aut concedendum de quolibet illorum quod ipsum est Deus (ut, quod *Deum esse* est Deus et *Patrem gignere Filium* est Deus), aut dicendum de quolibet tali quod nec est Deus nec aliud est a Deo, sicut dicimus de Patre et Filio quod Pater non est Filius, nec aliud a Filio. Et sicut non sequitur: 'Pater vel paternitas est et Filius vel filiatio est, et Pater non est Filius, nec paternitas filiatio; ergo plura sunt,' sic non sequitur: 'Deus est et *Patrem gignere Filium* est, et *Patrem gignere Filium* non est Deus; ergo plura sunt.' Quia non valet haec argumentatio nisi quando inter ea quorum unum abnegatur a reliquo est essentiarum divisio et alietas et multitudo, quod non est in his. Ad hoc enim, quod talis argumentatio esset necessaria, oporteret sic addere: 'A non est B, et A est et B est, et utrumque est aliud a reliquo, et utrumque secundum id quod ipsum est, aliud a reliquo praesentialiter est. Tunc enim bene sequeretur plura esse. In dictis autem illis quorum termini nihil significant extra divinitatem vel personas aeternas, non est essentia divisa ab essentia divina' (cf. Baur, pp. 193.22–194.8).

38. The issue of the eternal relations is not tackled in *De veritate*, which includes verbatim much of the solution to the problem of *enuntiabilia* in class A. This suggests that the later recension of *De libero arbitrio* was written after *De veritate*, and that the earlier recension, which only briefly touches on these problems, was written a little before.

Now it is important to realize that only certain relations holding between God and creatures are eternal relations. Grosseteste distinguishes between two kinds of relations between God and creatures.<sup>39</sup> Some relations are such that God may, from standing in such a relation, come to be not standing in it. He may, for example, come from being non-lord to being lord, or from being non-Creator to being Creator. Thus it may truly be said of God that God became Creator from being non-Creator. Grosseteste emphasizes that this does not mean that there is any change or alteration in God. The truth of such statements is *ex parte creaturae*, they express no real change in God himself. Now since God *comes* to stand in such relations of God to creatures as “having lordship over,” “creating,” “governing,” and the like, these are not eternal relations of God to creatures, for it is incorrect to say that from eternity God stands in them. And similarly, the correlative relations of creatures to God (for example, “being created by,” “being governed by”) also are not eternal.

This is not true of all relations between God and creatures, however. In particular, Grosseteste thinks that the relation of knowing is not like this. According to Grosseteste, a statement of the form “God came to know X after not-knowing X” could not be rendered true solely *ex parte creaturae*. Its truth would require some real change in God, which is impossible. Thus, such relations hold between God and creatures from eternity; there is no sense to saying that God begins to stand in them. Likewise, the correlative relations of creatures to God, say, of being known by, also hold eternally, and do not begin to hold.<sup>40</sup>

Grosseteste’s use of the notion of knowing as an example of the second kind of relation is significant. He is getting us to focus on the kind of relational notions according to which something may stand in a relation to

39. Here Grosseteste is drawing from Augustine’s *De Trinitate*, 5.4.

40. “De verbis itaque, ut dictum est, minus dilucide intellectis, hoc fuit unum: quod res eadem ens et non ens non est indifferens ad relationem quae est creatio, sed eadem res, cum est et cum non est, indifferens est ad relationem in verbo sciendi connotatam. Non est indifferens cum est et cum non est ad dominari et creare, sed est indifferens cum est et cum non est ad Dei scire. Ideo non sequitur quod si fit de creante non creans vel e contrario, vel de non domino dominans vel e contrario, quod alteretur Deus. Et tamen sequitur quod si fieret de sciente non sciens vel e contrario, quod alteretur Deus. Istud itaque verbum non sic intelligendum quod res, si numquam fuerit futura, uno eodemque modo se habet ad scire Dei, quomodo se haberet eadem res ad scire Dei si esset futura; vel e contrario, <quod> res quae fuit futura, quomodo se habet ad scire Dei, eodem modo se haberet si numquam fuisset futura. Sed sic est intelligendum: quod res quae aliquando habitura fuit esse, tunc cum habet esse, et priusquam habuerit esse, et, si desinit, postquam desierit esse, uno modo penitus se habet ad Dei scire; quem intellectum esse verissimum ex auctoritatibus sanctorum alias a nobis enumeratis irrefragabiliter constat” (cf. Baur, p. 185.1–20). For this doctrine in Grosseteste and Richard Rufus’s discussion of Grosseteste’s views, see T. Noone, “Richard Rufus on Creation, Divine Immutability, and Future Contingency in the *Scriptum super Metaphysicam*,” *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 4 (1993): 1–23.

something else that does not coexist with it. The obvious examples of such relations are relations involved in intentional states—knowing, praising, seeking, and the like. Grosseteste will also want to include such relations as “stating” and “being adequated to.” I shall refer to all such relations as “intentional” relations in what follows.

Now such eternal intentional relations might be thought to require a plurality of eternal essences for one of two reasons: (1) because they require the eternal coexistence of the essences of the items they relate; or (2) because the relations, considered in themselves, apart from their relata, introduce essences over and above their relata. We have already noted, however, that Grosseteste denies (2) in general for all relations. In itself a relation adds nothing to the number of essences, over and above what its relata add. Thus, the eternal relations of creatures to God and of God to creatures will introduce a multitude of eternal essences only if their relata do. But their relata do not. Intentional relations generally come in what we might call active-passive voice pairs. Grosseteste thinks that only the subject of the active-voice relation need exist for both the active-voice and passive-voice relations to hold, and this seems plausible enough.<sup>41</sup> Consider the following pair:

Priscilla loves Elvis      Elvis is loved by Priscilla

Elvis does not exist and Priscilla does. We have here the active-voice relation *loves* and the passive-voice relation *loved by*. It is quite possible that Priscilla stands in the active-voice relation of loving to Elvis, even though Elvis does not exist, and that Elvis, *as a result of Priscilla's standing in the active voice relation to him*, may also stand in the passive-voice relation of being loved to Priscilla, even though he does not exist. In order for such relations to hold, it is necessary only that one of the relata, the subject of the active-voice relation—in this case, Priscilla—exists.

In the case of the eternal relations between God and creatures (those of class [C] above), the active-voice relations are intentional relations of

41. Grosseteste probably derived this doctrine from William of Auvergne, who presents it and explicitly extends it to semantic relations such as signification and adequation. He writes, for example, in his *De Trinitate* (written ca. 1223): “Nullum enim relativorum, quae aut apprehensionem aut affectionem praedicant, aliquid addunt aut minuunt aut dicunt in subiecto, cui velut passive assignantur, ut amatum et apprehensum nihil in amato vel apprehenso dicunt. Et hoc est, quoniam aequae de entibus ut de non entibus dicuntur. Nihil enim prohibet et amari eum, qui non est, et apprehendi, et amatum nihil pati ab amante aut apprehensum ab apprehedente, immo, e contrario, nisi caecus non dubitat intellectus. Eodem modo se habet et in his relativis, quae velut radicem suam habent apprehensiones aut affectiones, quales sunt locutiones, laudationes, praedicationes, subiectiones et id genus. Ei quippe, qui laudatur, nihil advenit ex eo, quod laudatur, nihil recipit a laudante omnino. Et ad modum istum se habet de aliis” (ed. B. Switalski [Toronto, 1976], p. 173).

God to creatures; the passive-voice relations (those of class [D]) are of creatures to God.<sup>42</sup> God, for example, knows Socrates from eternity, and Socrates as a result is known by God from eternity. For these relations to hold from eternity, it is necessary only that God exist eternally.<sup>43</sup>

In sum, then, the only essences introduced by relations are those of their relata. In the case of the eternal active-voice intentional relations of God to creatures and the correlative passive-voice relations of creatures to God, it is necessary only that the subject of the active voice relations, God, exist for such relations to hold. Such eternal relations therefore introduce no plurality of eternal essences.

These remarks suffice to indicate that eternal intentional relations do not as such require a plurality of eternal essences, and hence do not undermine Christian dualism. Grosseteste feels it worth showing, however, how we may treat the various predications of eternity, non-identity, and otherness made about such relations as denominative in nature, and I shall very briefly outline his account.

Grosseteste first notes that we may treat the active-voice relations of God to creatures in either of two ways. On the one hand, we may simply identify them with God, their subject. If we do so, we shall of course take them to be literally eternal, but we shall not take them to be non-identical with God or other than God. Alternatively, we may view such a relation as a *tertium quid* in addition to its relata, as “the very ordering of one thing to another.” If we take this course, then when such a relation is said to exist eternally, the predication of existence and eternity is denominative in nature. The relation considered in itself is said to exist and be eternal in an extended sense because its subject, God, literally exists and is eternal. Also, if we construe the relation as a *tertium quid*, we may say that it is not God, but we cannot proceed to say that it is something other than God. It instead will have to be taken to stand to God in the way that one person of the Trinity stands to another, as being neither the same nor something other.<sup>44</sup>

42. Active-voice relations of creatures to God—say, the relation of knowing that Socrates has to God—are not eternal, precisely because this relation only holds when Socrates exists, and Socrates does not exist in eternity.

43. The passage quoted in n.40 suggests that Grosseteste thinks such relations hold between God and creatures that exist at some time or other. But creatures do not *eternally coexist* with God, so the eternal existence of one relatum does not require the eternal existence of the other.

44. “De relationibus aeternis Dei ad creaturas dicendum quod ipsae sunt Deus aut quod nec idem nec aliud a Deo. Potest enim relatio uno modo dici illa essentia supra quam praecise fundatur ipsa relatio et a cuius essentiae esse suscipit ipsa relatio denominationem essendi, qua praedicatur de relatione quod ipsa est. Si itaque per nomen relationis subiciatur essentia a cuius essentiae esse et ipsa relatio denominatur quod est, vere dicitur quod haec relatio est haec essentia. Si autem per nomen relationis subiciatur ipsa ordinatio unius ad aliud, tunc ipsa relatio nec est ipsa essentia nec aliud ab ipsa. Et propter hoc nulla sequitur ex talium relationum multitudine essentiarum multitudo vel multiplicatio” (cf. Baur, p. 194.19–29).

Different remarks apply to the passive-voice relations of creatures to God, however. Grosseteste holds that such relations may be said to be eternal, but they cannot be identified with their subjects, presumably because their subjects (creatures) do not exist in eternity. Nor, Grosseteste thinks, can they be identified with their object, God (I suspect because Grosseteste thinks no relation can be identified with its object). The predication of eternity of such relations is denominative. The ascription of eternal existence to them is based on the eternal existence of their active-voice correlative relation. Socrates, for example, is loved by God precisely because God loves Socrates, and because God exists and loves Socrates eternally, Socrates's being loved by God is eternal, and thus the relation of being loved that holds between Socrates and God may be said to be eternal. Grosseteste is also prepared to grant that such passive-voice eternal relations of creatures to God are other than God (unlike their active-voice correlatives).<sup>45</sup> But their otherness from God is based entirely on the fact that the creature that is their subject is other than God, and this creature, of course, is not eternally coexistent with God.<sup>46</sup> So like eternally true *enuntiabilia* concerning creatures, such passive-voice relations may truly be said to be eternal, not God, and other than God, but these facts do not imply a plurality of eternal essences, because these facts can all be accounted for in terms of facts that involve only one eternal essence, God.

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Whether Grosseteste's responses to attacks on Christian dualism succeed depends in large degree on the adequacy of his claims about the truth conditions of various claims of eternity, non-identity, and otherness made

45. "De ipsis autem relationibus creaturarum ad Deum, non videtur concedendum quod ipsae sint Deus vel quod sint ipsae creaturae, et tamen sunt, sicut supra dictum est. Et ex parte extremitatis quae est creatura, super cuius essentiam fundatur relatio illa, est illa relatio aliud a Deo, sed secundum illud aliud non coest aeternaliter cum Deo. Nec ab ipsius creaturae esse quae nondum est ante creationem, denominatur ipsa relatio quod est, sed, ut dictum est, ab aeterno esse. Et ideo non sequitur ex his aliqua pluralitas essentialium aeternarum, cum tamen de qualibet tali relatione dicatur quod sit aeterna, et de rebus secundum quod a talibus relationibus denominantur" (cf. Baur, pp. 194.30–195.6).

46. Grosseteste considers the quibbler who proposes that "non esse alietatem nisi simul existentia." He holds that such a person must grant the view, adopted in the case of the active-voice relations of God to creatures considered as the "very ordering itself," that "tales relationes non sunt idem cum Deo nec aliud ab ipso, et semper erit verum quod non valet supradicta argumentatio quae pluralitatem existentiarum plurium aeternorum videtur inferre." Grosseteste himself, however, thinks that it is "magis concessibile Deum esse aliud a creatura quae nondum est, quam nec idem nec aliud, et esse aliud ab Antichristo, qui nondum est, quam <nec> idem nec aliud" (cf. Baur, p. 195.6–13).

in the course of such attacks. If, as we have seen Grosseteste argue, such claims can be accounted for without positing any eternal essence besides God, Christian dualism as Grosseteste understands it remains standing. In any event, Grosseteste's discussion of this issue is, as I hope I have shown, sophisticated and penetrating and makes him one of the most important of early commentators on this problem.