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B L O O M S B U R Y

of Christ's self-consciousness" (Schleiermacher, *The Life of Jesus*, 423). The implication that the "Christ-like" response to suffering would be to refuse to accept the evil one faces as a hindrance to God-consciousness can seem profoundly unsatisfying given the horrific events that have taken place since Schleiermacher's death in 1834 (Blackwell, 64–75). The traditional Christian belief in some kind of divine solidarity with the human condition (whether or not this implies anything like divine passibility) must likely be addressed if Schleiermacher's doctrine of redemption is to gain purchase in the modern theological imagination.

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John Duns Scotus

Thomas M. Ward

The two most important concepts in Duns Scotus's (1265/6-1308) theology of the Atonement are satisfaction and merit. Just what these amount to and how they function in his theory are heavily conditioned by two more general commitments: voluntarism, which includes the claim that nearly all of God's relations with the created order are contingent; and his formulation of the Franciscan Thesis, which holds that fixing the sin problem is not the primary purpose of God's Incarnation in Christ and that if Adam hadn't sinned God would have become incarnate anyway.

Voluntarism is usually taken to imply that God could have issued or could issue alternative commandments. Since a commandment essentially involves an act of will, if God could not command otherwise than He has commanded, his willing would have been determined by something (in some sense) "outside" his will, such as a realm of objective moral facts together with God's understanding of these facts. Duns Scotus is undoubtedly a voluntarist, but the degree and range of his voluntarism is still a matter of scholarly debate (Wolter, 1–30; Williams, 162–181; Ingham, 173–216).

Voluntarism is relevant to the theology of the Atonement due to its implications for those aspects of the Atonement that bear on God himself as a moral agent. Two examples of these aspects are: whether God is obligated to provide a means for saving sinners and, given that he did decide to do so, whether he could have saved sinners in some other way. Voluntarists maintain that all of God's dealings with the world of creatures are contingent: he doesn't have to create, he doesn't have to sustain, he doesn't have to save, and if he does save, he could do it in a variety of ways. The precise modal character of these claims is well-captured by the familiar distinction between God's *absolute* and *ordained* power. God's absolute power extends to whatever is logically possible, whereas his ordained

power ranges over those actions that are consistent with the general plan God has ordained for the world (Scotus, *Ordinatio* I.44, in Wolter, 254–261). Given God's plan to save sinners through Christ's death, Christ must die for sinners; but the *must* is completely conditioned by God's prior, free, decision to save sinners through Christ's death. Each and every one of God's plans is up to God in the sense that he could have justly planned otherwise (Scotus, *Ordinatio* I.44, in Wolter, 254–261). God has just one moral obligation: to love himself above all things. God couldn't establish a law inconsistent with this first practical truth, either for himself or for any creature, even with respect to his absolute power. So the preservation of divine justice depends on his continually loving himself above all things, and continually willing whatever this *logically entails* (Scotus *Ordinatio* IV.46, in Wolter, 238–254).

Scotus offers the most forceful (but not the first) medieval expression of the so-called Franciscan Thesis (Horan, 374–391). Scotus held that the Incarnation was not part of the divine response to sin. Rather, it was predestined, logically prior to God's foreknowledge of Adam's sin, as the crowning achievement of creation itself, that the Son should be united with human nature and rule the cosmos as its native King. God intends Incarnation, therefore, primarily as the way to *glorify* Christ and his subjects and only secondarily to *redeem* Christ's subjects (Scotus, *Ordinatio* III.7.3 [Vatican ed. IX:284–291]; Adams, 174–187).

As Adams has put it, "Not only is sin not a *sine qua non* of Incarnation; for Scotus, Incarnation is not a *sine qua non* for solving the sin-problem, either" (Adams, 183). Scotus furnishes a long list of alternative possible ways in which God could have taken care of the sin problem, including: not requiring satisfaction for sins at all, allowing an angel or a mere human to make satisfaction, or allowing Christ to make satisfaction in some way other than the cross (Scotus, *Lectura* III.20.un [Vatican ed. XXI:39–55]). Some have thought Scotus's position entails that *any* finite good could be accepted as meritorious for redemption. (Grensted, 161; von Harnack, 459). The list of alternatives is not idle scholastic speculation; it's meant to emphasize the logical independence of Incarnation and redemption (Adams, 184).

Arguably, Scotus agrees with his tradition that Christ makes satisfaction for sins and earns merit (Patout Burns, 285–304; Langston, 227–241; Cross, 129–132; Rosato, 411–441). Satisfaction is the voluntary return of equivalent for equivalent, whereas merit is the assignation of a reward to an act (Scotus, *Ordinatio* IV.15.1 [Vatican ed. XIII:59–75]; Cross, 129–132).

Rosato has argued that Scotus adopts two Bonaventurian concepts of satisfaction. Bonaventure had distinguished between satisfaction *pro iniuria*,

which involves offering some good equivalent to the injury God suffers through Adam's sin, and satisfaction *pro damno*, which involves offering some good equivalent to the loss God suffers through Adam's sin (Bonaventure, III Sent. 20.1.3 [Quaracchi ed 3:423a]). Christ makes satisfaction *pro iniuria* inasmuch as God's injury was dishonor and Christ's sacrifice honors God more than Adam's sin dishonors Him. Christ makes satisfaction *pro damno* inasmuch as God's loss was humanity itself and Christ's sacrifice restores humanity to God. Christ's sacrifice restores humanity to God precisely by meriting the graces we need to return to God. Rosato nevertheless makes a good case for the presence of each of these concepts in Scotus's texts, and for the dominance in his texts of satisfaction *pro damno* over satisfaction *pro iniuria*. Scotus endorses satisfaction *pro iniuria* inasmuch as his argument against Anselm's thesis that satisfaction requires returning to God something greater than the whole of creation *presupposes* that satisfaction involves paying a debt owed to God (Scotus, *Lectura* III.20.un.31 [Vatican ed. XXI:49]). The difference between Anselm and Scotus on this issue is simply that the former thinks the debt is infinite and therefore its payment must be infinite, while the latter thinks the debt is finite and therefore its payment can be merely finite (ibid.; Rosato, 442). Christ makes satisfaction *pro damno* inasmuch as his motivation for his sacrifice involved providing the means by which humans could escape from their sin and be united with God (Scotus, *Lectura* III.20.un.37–38 [Vatican ed. XXI:51]; Rosato, 441–442). But making satisfaction in this way is accomplished precisely by meriting the graces we need to escape from sin and be united with God (Scotus, *Lectura* III.20.un.24–26 [Vatican ed. XXI:34–35]; Rosato, 442).

Scotus's concept of merit has two well-known features: first, all merit is conventional; second, Christ's merit is intrinsically finite. The conventionality of merit follows from Scotus's voluntarism. If merit were not conventional then some creature's being what it is (meritorious by nature) would compel God to accept it as such on pain of misvaluing things (which He cannot do because he is infinitely good and infinitely intelligent). Instead, Scotus thinks that it is up to God to decide what to count as meritorious (Scotus, *Lectura* III.19.un [Vatican ed. XXI:25–38]). The argument for the finitude of Christ's merit is straightforward: God cannot merit anything, since by his nature he has necessarily every perfection He is capable of having; so Christ with respect to his divine nature cannot merit anything. Humans can earn merit, but merit follows and is proportionate to an act, any human act is finite, and therefore any merit following on a human act is finite. So Christ with respect to his human nature can (and does) earn merit, but this merit is finite (Scotus, *Lectura* III. . . . in [Vatican

ed. XXI:25–38]). Some have labeled this aspect of Scotus's theory Nestorian (Grensted, 159; Aspenson, 144).

Yang has argued compellingly that Scotus thinks that Christ's merits are both infinitely sufficient and intrinsically finite. Like his predecessors and peers, Scotus thinks only the elect will benefit from Christ's merit (and therefore it has only finite efficacy), despite the fact that it is sufficient to benefit all (Yang, 421–440). For Scotus, any act of sin is intrinsically finite and therefore, with respect to any one sin, the merit that wins remission of that sin need only be merely finite. Scotus raises an objection to his own view, namely, that if the universe were sempiternal such that there were an infinitely growing number of sinners, then while each act of sin would be intrinsically finite, the sum of the infinite sins committed by an infinite number of people would be intrinsically infinite by addition. He considers the hypothetical scenario valid for the sake of argument, so he is compelled to offer an account of how Christ's finite merit can overcome an intrinsically infinite evil. Scotus reasons that even though Christ's merits are intrinsically finite because they are merited on account of Christ's human nature, it is open to God to count them as of intrinsically infinite value because they are actions of an infinitely lovable *person*—the Second Person of the Trinity—subsisting in divine and human natures (Scotus, *Ordinatio* III.19.un.7 [Wadding ed. VII.1:417–418]). Thus, while any number of creatures might have earned finite merit to the same degree as Christ, Christ merits can be counted as of infinite value because they are merits accruing to a divine person.

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