

Necessary, Fitting, or Possible: The Shape of Scholastic Christology

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ANSELM’S preface to the *Cur Deus homo* announces that the work “proves by necessary arguments that it is impossible for any human being to be saved without [Christ].”¹ Throughout his work, Anselm makes claims for the Incarnation’s necessity while arguing that this necessity involves no constraint upon God but rather flows from God’s freely creative will and that the Passion’s necessity did not compromise its voluntary character.² Anselm wanted to present the Incarnation and the Passion as reasonable, and he found arguing for their necessity the most expedient strategy. Inadequate attention to Anselm’s preface and to his

¹ *Cur Deus homo*, preface: “Quorum prior quidem infidelium Christianam fidem, quia rationi putant illam repugnare, respicientium continet obiectiones et fidelium responsiones. Ac tandem remoto Christo, quasi numquam aliud fuerit de illo, probat rationibus necessariis impossibile ullum hominem salvari sine illo.” Citations of the *Cur Deus homo* are from *Opera omnia Anselmi*, vol. 2, ed. F. S. Schmitt (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1946).

² *Cur Deus homo* I. 25: “Aut enim per Christum, aut alio aliquo, aut nullo modo poterit homo salvus esse. Quapropter si falsum est quia nullo aut alio aliquo modo potest hoc esse, necesse est fieri per Christum.” Anselm qualifies statements such as this with his repeated insistence that all necessity flows from God’s free will. *Cur Deus homo* II. 17: “Iam diximus quia deus improprie dicitur aliquid non posse aut necessitate facere. Omnis quippe necessitas et impossibilitas eius subiacet voluntati; illius autem voluntas nulli subditur necessitati aut impossibilitati. Nihil enim est necessarium aut impossibile, nisi quia ipse ita vult; ipsum vero aut velle aut nolle aliquid propter necessitatem aut impossibilitatem alienum est a veritate. Quare quoniam omnia quae vult, et non nisi quae vult facit: sicut nulla necessitas sive impossibilitas praecedit eius velle aut nolle, ita nec eius facere aut non facere, quamvis multa velit immutabiliter et faciat.”

sophisticated understanding of modal logic led some to misinterpret the role of necessity in the *Cur Deus homo*.³ Regardless of what Anselm intended, the *Cur Deus homo* raised questions for scholastic theologians about the Incarnation's necessity, fittingness, and possibility; those theologians in response shaped their presentations of Christology according to the modal categories necessity, fittingness, and possibility. Anselm's influence on scholastic Christologies was not limited to acceptance of a satisfaction theory of atonement and cannot be determined simply by frequency of citation; his shaping of Christology through modal categories influenced thirteenth-century theologians even when they modified or rejected a satisfaction theory.⁴ Many thirteenth-century theologians harbored a fear that Anselm's arguments somehow, despite the great pains

³ Roscelin, for example, in a letter to Abelard interprets the *Cur Deus homo* to constrain God: "Ait enim in libro quem *Cur Deus homo* intitulat, aliter Deum non posse homines salvare, nisi sicut fecit, id est nisi homo fieret, et omnia illa quae passus est pateretur. Ejus sententiam sanctorum doctorum, quorum doctrina fulget Ecclesia, dicta vehementer impugnant" (Ep. 15, PL 178.362). Many interpreters lacked Anselm's logical sophistication, much of which can be traced through Boethius to Aristotle. For thorough examinations of necessity in the *Cur Deus homo*, there are several articles in *Cur Deus Homo: Atti del Congresso Anselmiano Internazionale: Roma, 21–23 maggio 1998*, ed. P. Gilbert, H. Kohlenberger, and E. Salmann (Rome: Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, 1999). Of greatest interest are the following: T. Holopainen, "Necessity in Early Medieval Thought: Peter Damian and Anselm of Canterbury," 221–34; M. M. Adams, "Elegant Necessity, Prayerful Disputation: Method in *Cur Deus Homo*," 367–96; R. Campbell, "The Nature of Theological Necessity," 421–35; J. Baker, "Must the God-Man Die?" 609–20; O. Rossi, "L'Aliquid Maius e la Riparazione," 641–57; L. Peterson, "St. Anselm on Justice, Retribution and the Divine Will," 659–72; P. Gilbert, "Violence et Liberté dans le *Cur Deus Homo*," 673–95; A. Vanderjagt, "'Propter Utilitatem et Rationis Pulchritudinem Amabilis': The Aesthetics of Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*," 717–30. See also B. Leftow, "Anselm on the Necessity of the Incarnation," *Religious Studies* 31 (1995): 167–85; D. Brown, "'Necessary' and 'Fitting' Reasons in Christian Theology," in *The Rationality of Religious Belief: Essays in Honour of Basil Mitchell*, ed. W. Abraham and S. Holtzer (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 211–30; E. Serene, "Anselm's Modal Conceptions," in *Reforging the Great Chain of Being: Studies in the History of Modal Theories*, ed. S. Knuuttila (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1981), 117–62.

⁴ On Anselm's satisfaction theory and its medieval reception, see J. Patout Burns, "The Concept of Satisfaction in Medieval Redemption Theory," *Theological Studies* 36 (1975): 285–304. See also R. Cessario, *The Godly Image: Christ and Salvation in Catholic Thought from Anselm to Aquinas* (Petersham, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1990). Raymond of Lull (1232–1315/1316) even formulated a series of proofs for the Incarnation's necessity without reference to sin or human redemption. See Raymond of Lull, *Ars Mystica Theologiae et Philosophiae*, in *Opera Latina* 154–155: *Opera Parisiensia*, ed. H. Riedlinger (Palma de Maiorca, 1967).

he took to avoid it, constrained God, but still they recognized the value of describing the Incarnation and the Passion through modal categories in order to present them as reasonable.

This presentation will examine the *Summa halensis*, Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*, and John Duns Scotus's *Lectura* and *Ordinatio*. Drawing out how Anselm's *Cur Deus homo* shaped these texts is a task best accomplished by analyzing their uses of modal categories. The texts employ modal categories to varying degrees in their assessments of the Incarnation and the Passion; each text uses (mainly) the same modal category in its treatment of both doctrines. The *Summa halensis* translates Anselm's arguments into a formalized structure, affirming a limited necessity to the Incarnation and the Passion, a necessity that leaves room for fittingness as an expression of the divine freedom governing all necessity. By construing necessity in harmony with fittingness, the *Summa halensis* remains close to the *Cur Deus homo* and funnels attention to atonement through satisfaction. For Aquinas, fittingness is the modal category best suited to presenting the Incarnation and the Passion as reasonable, because it indicates the logic, wisdom, and beauty of God's providential plan without implying any constraint, though Thomas does admit that in some sense the Incarnation and the Passion were necessary for human salvation. Aquinas's emphasis on fittingness corresponds with his treatment of satisfaction as one of the many ways Christ's Passion causes salvation. John Duns Scotus focused on possibility rather than necessity or fittingness. Granting pride of place to the Incarnation's possibility was a common scholastic practice, but Scotus's novel formulation of modal categories, highlighting contingency and divine freedom, altered that practice and ruled out any necessity for the Incarnation and the Passion. The *Summa halensis*, Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*, and Scotus's commentaries on the *Sentences* thus represent three rather different responses to Anselm's *Cur Deus homo*, but they nonetheless represent roughly equivalent responses insofar as they all frame Christological reflections through judicious use of modal categories.

A few remarks orienting us to the modal categories used in scholastic Christology will prove valuable.⁵ Scholastic theologians used various terms to indicate a distinction between two classes of necessity. I will throughout

⁵ For useful introductions to medieval reflection on modal categories, see S. Knuuttila, *Modalities in Medieval Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 1993), and idem, "Time and Modality in Scholasticism," in *Reforging the Great Chain of Being*, 163–257. For an introduction to philosophical and theological considerations of necessity, see A. Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).

refer to strong necessity and weak necessity, terms not used by the scholastics but which provide a common parlance for the basic distinction recognized by the scholastics. Strong necessity covers what could not be otherwise or what is so from an irresistible force. Weak necessity follows from something given and includes what diverse authors refer to as “conditional necessity,” “subsequent necessity,” “necessity of consequence,” or “necessity of supposition.” The necessity of immutability, which relates to the temporal unfolding of God’s eternal and unchanging will, also falls under the broad heading of weak necessity. All the authors covered here deny any coercion or compulsion to the Incarnation and to the Passion but still grant some necessity to them. This general agreement can be better captured through the terminology of strong and weak necessity. Fittingness proves much more difficult to summarize, but let it suffice for now to note that scholastic theologians generally used fittingness as a means to describe the reasonableness, wisdom, or beauty of divine actions that could have been otherwise. The vagueness of fittingness renders its modal status obscure. There were two main ways of discussing possibility in the thirteenth century, though Scotus codified the distinction by coining the expression *possibile logicum* (logical possibility).⁶ One was in terms of ability or potency, both active and passive. The other way was through logical possibility, defined mainly by the law of non-contradiction. Consider the following statement: “it is possible for a standing man to sit.” Taking possibility as ability, the statement seems true. Someone who happens to be standing is able to sit down. Taking possibility in the sense of logical possibility, the statement seems false. It is an impossibility for someone both to sit and to stand at the same time.⁷ We will see that each text offers many refinements to these basic understandings of necessity, fittingness, and possibility.

Summa halensis

The *Summa halensis* (*Summa fratris Alexandri*) reflects the contributions of several prominent theologians, most notably Alexander of Hales.⁸ Its third

⁶ See H. Deku, “‘Possibile logicum,’” *Philosophisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft* 64 (1956): 1–21.

⁷ Aristotle distinguished the composite and divided senses of such statements. The composite sense implied the actuality of predicates at the same time, while the divided sense considered the actuality of the predicates at different times. In the composite sense, it is not possible for a standing man to sit. In the divided sense, it is possible. See Knuuttila, “Time and Modality in Scholasticism,” 167–68.

⁸ The history of debate on the authorship and dating of the *Summa halensis* is presented in *Summa theologica seu sic ab origine dicta “Summa fratri Alexandri”*: *Prolegomena*, vol. 4, pt. 2 (Florence: Quaracchi, 1948). For an assessment of the process

book was completed by 1245 and provides a clear example of a scholastic Christology responding to Anselm.⁹ This response takes the form of a complex parallel structure between the treatment of the Incarnation and that of the Passion. The *Summa halensis* examines each through the category of necessity and then through the category of fittingness.¹⁰ The progression in modal categories reads as a slight and subtle corrective to any claim for the strong necessity of the Incarnation and the Passion. The *Summa halensis* advocates a satisfaction theory while shifting the operative modal category toward weak necessity and fittingness.

A cautious acceptance of Anselm's approach is evident in the *Summa halensis*'s discussion of the Incarnation itself. The modal lens is necessity, but the question frames that necessity through a consideration of human nature as fallen yet open to restoration. Anselm's influence here is clear, as a contrast with Peter Lombard's *Sentences* shows. The Lombard's initial Christological questions, beginning *in medias res*, are why the Son became incarnate rather than the Father or the Holy Spirit (*Sent.* III, d. 1, c. 1) and whether the Father or the Holy Spirit could have become incarnate (*Sent.* III, d. 1, c. 2).¹¹

followed by the Quaracchi editors, see I. Brady, "The 'Summa Theologica' of Alexander of Hales (1924–1948)," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 70 (1977): 437–47. The best treatment of the Christology of the *Summa halensis* is E. Gössmann, *Metaphysik und Heilsgeschichte: Eine theologische Untersuchung der Summa Halensis (Alexander von Hales)* (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1964).

⁹ Robson traces the influence of Anselm's *Cur Deus homo* on Alexander of Hales, who elevated the *Cur Deus homo* above Augustine's *De Trinitate* in questions of soteriology. This elevation is equally clear in the *Summa halensis*. "Alexander's concentration on Anselm's teaching regarding satisfaction paves the way for a similar, if not greater, concentration on the part of subsequent masters of the Franciscan school. For instance, Anselm dominates the *Summa Theologica*'s examination of the question *Utrum humana natura possit reparari sine satisfactione peccati per quod lapsa est*; where the hand of John de la Rochelle, the second master of the Franciscan school in Paris, is visible" (M. Robson, "Anselm's Influence on the Soteriology of Alexander of Hales: The *Cur Deus Homo* in the *Commentary on the Sentences*," in *Cur Deus Homo: Atti del Congresso Anselmiano Internazionale*, 191–219, quoted from 206).

¹⁰ On the Incarnation's necessity and fittingness in the *Summa halensis*, see Gössmann, *Metaphysik und Heilsgeschichte*, 70–79. On the Passion's necessity and fittingness, see Gössmann, *Metaphysik und Heilsgeschichte*, 149–51. Gössmann attends to Anselm's deep and broad influence without neglecting other influences.

¹¹ See Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV libris distinctae*, Tomus II (Rome: Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1981). William of Auxerre's Christology in the *Summa aurea* similarly begins with the question "*quare potius fuit Filius incarnatus quam Pater vel Spiritus Sanctus*" (III, c. 1) and then turns to the mode of union. See William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea*, vol. 3, pt. 1 (Rome: Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1986).

The *Summa halensis* follows Anselm in framing the Incarnation through a specification of humanity as fallen from its original state yet reparable through satisfaction; humanity's fallenness establishes the conditions for the Incarnation's necessity.

The *Summa halensis* affirms the necessity of humanity's restoration but quickly stipulates that it is not necessary in any strong sense, either on the part of God or on the part of humanity. The only necessity applicable to God as cause is the weak necessity of immutability, which depends upon the inevitable unfolding of God's constant will. The response also allows a necessity of need (*necessitas indigentiae*), according to which restoration "was rightly (*bene*) necessary from the part of fallen but reparable human nature."¹² This might seem like a form of strong necessity, but that appearance is a trick of perspective. One manner of determining strong necessity is to examine the possibility of alternatives, and the *Summa halensis* does so by considering possibility in terms of ability. It permits the statement "human nature could not be restored without satisfaction" because fallen human nature had no active potency for restoration by other means.¹³ The necessity of need can only be a weak necessity determined by the inability of human beings to cause restoration otherwise. The case is rather different with the statement "God cannot restore human nature without satisfaction." The *Summa* appeals to the distinction between God's absolute power (*potentia absoluta*) and ordained/ordered power (*potentia ordinata*).¹⁴ God's *potentia ordinata* can be ordered accord-

¹² *Summa halensis* lib. 3, inq. 1, tr. 1, q. 1, c. 3: "Quando ergo quaeritur utrum necesse sit humanam naturam reparari, dicendum quod, si loquamur ex parte causae, quae Deus est, quod ibi est necessitas immutabilitatis solum, licet non proprie dicatur necessitas. Si vero loquamur ex parte causati, creaturae scilicet humanae, neutra necessitas est ibi. Posset tamen dici quod sit tertia necessitas, scilicet indigentiae, et sic bene fuit necessitas ex parte naturae humanae lapsae et reparabilis." Citations are from *Summa theologica seu sic ab origine dicta* "Summa fratri Alexandri," vol. 4, pt. 1.

¹³ *Summa halensis* lib. 3, inq. 1, tr. 1, q. 1, c. 4: "Ad hoc est intelligendum quod indistincte potest concedi passiva, scilicet 'humana natura non potest reparari sine satisfactione.'"

¹⁴ See W. Courtenay, *Capacity and Volition: A History of the Distinction of Absolute and Ordained Power* (Bergamo: Pierluigi Lubrina, 1990). Medieval considerations of modality and divine power perhaps find their origin in Peter Damian's *De divina omnipotentia*. For a discussion of Damian's thought on divine power, see I. R. Resnick, *Divine Power and Possibility in St. Peter Damian's De Divina Omnipotentia* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992). For an analysis of the distinction between absolute and ordained power in high scholasticism, see L. Moonan, *Divine Power: The Medieval Power Distinction up to Its Adoption by Albert, Bonaventure, and Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994). Of particular interest here is Moonan's discussion of

ing to justice and according to mercy. God's absolute power can restore humanity without satisfaction, and so the Incarnation is not necessary in any strong sense and the necessity of need cannot be a strong necessity.¹⁵ If justice is taken as identical with the divine essence, then God's ability according to justice (*posse de iustitia*) is identical with God's ability according to power (*posse de potentia*).¹⁶ God's power can accomplish restoration of human nature otherwise, so satisfaction is not necessary. Justice can also be taken retributively according to merit, in which case God's ability according to justice (*posse de iustitia*) is defined as God's ability to act consistently or fittingly with merit (*posse secundum congruentiam meritum*).¹⁷ Justice is not simply what God wills but what it is fitting for God to will, given divinely established conditions for merit. As God's ability is ordered by divinely established conditions for merit, satisfaction is the only possible means of human restoration and so is necessary for that restoration.

The *Summa halensis* further argues that this satisfaction can be made only by the *Deus-homo*, and it does so by demonstrating the impossibility of alternatives based upon possibility as ability. No angel or mere creature could make satisfaction, given the infinite debt of sin. The *Summa halensis* actually extends and fills out Anselm's argument, when it addresses three ways to consider the quantity of Adam's sin: (1) in respect to the

Philip the Chancellor's reflections on the Incarnation and modality when considering the necessity of propositions relating to the statement: "Christ's going to be made incarnate" (Moonan, *Divine Power*, 76–86).

¹⁵ *Summa halensis* lib. 3, inq. 1, tr. 1, q. 1, c. 4: "Considerando divinam potentiam absolute, cogitamus quamdam virtutem infinitam, et secundum hunc modum non est determinare divinam potentiam, et conceditur hoc modo quod potest reparare humanam naturam sine peccati satisfactione."

¹⁶ Moonan discusses the *de potentia/de iustitia* distinction and its relation to the distinction between *potentia absoluta* and *potentia ordinata* in William of Auxerre's *Summa aurea*. See Moonan, *Divine Power*, 66–76. Moonan's remarks on William are largely applicable to the *Summa halensis* as well.

¹⁷ *Summa halensis* lib. 3, inq. 1, tr. 1, q. 1, c. 4: "Si autem loquamur de Dei potentia, ut intelligitur ordinata secundum iustitiam et misericordiam, secundum quod dicitur quod Deus potest de iustitia, distinguendum est, quia iustitia Dei idem est quod divina essentia, et cum hoc per iustitiam, quae dicit respectum ad creaturam, connotatur retributio unicuique secundum meritum. Quando ergo quaeritur utrum Deus de iustitia possit dimittere peccatum impunitum, potest referri 'posse de iustitia' ad principale significatum, quod est divina essentia, et tunc idem est posse de iustitia quod posse de potentia, et hoc modo potest. Si autem referatur ad connotatum, dicit Anselmus quod tunc 'posse de iustitia' est posse secundum congruentiam meritum, et hoc modo dicit idem Anselmus: 'Non potest Deus peccatum impunitum sine satisfactione dimittere nec peccator ad beatitudinem, qualem habiturus erat ante peccatum, poterit pervenire.'"

one sinning; (2) in respect to the disorder of sin; and (3) in respect to the one against whom one sins. In the first respect, Adam's sin was necessarily finite, because a finite cause cannot produce an infinite effect. The second respect admits a possible infinity, since sin disorders and renders guilty humanity as a whole, which is possibly infinite. Greater weight rests on the third respect, for which the following explanation is given: "The quantity of sin ought to be counted through comparison to the one against whom one sins. If someone offends a king and a soldier, he offends more by offending the king than by offending the soldier, and so the quantity of that offense is counted from the part of him against whom one sins."¹⁸ Adam sinned against the infinite good, rendering the sin an infinite offense. It is worth quoting the *Summa halensis* at length:

Therefore, according to those two modes [respects 2 and 3] at least Adam's sin is infinite and transcends every human creature. If God ought to exact in punishment something as great as the commission is in fault, then [God] ought to exact an infinite punishment for Adam's sin. If God were to permit satisfaction, satisfaction ought to be made by a person in whom there is an infinite good and from whom there is an ordering of human nature as a whole. There is no such mere creature, and so it did not accord with justice that such satisfaction could be made through a mere creature.¹⁹

We notice several important points here. The *Summa halensis* makes explicit the infinity of Adam's sin and the need for infinite restitution based upon the necessity of justice under God's ordained power. The necessity of justice drives the final conclusion of the question, that satisfaction must be made "through God united to human nature."²⁰ This weak necessity does not limit possibility but is determined by possibility understood as an ordered ability or potency.

¹⁸ *Summa halensis* lib. 3, inq. 1, tr. 1, q. 1, c. 6, a. 2, ad 1: "Et quod quantitas peccati debeat attendi per comparisonem ad illum in quem peccatur, patet, quoniam, si aliquis offenderet regem et militem, plus offenderet offendendo regem quam offendendo militem, et ita quantitas istius offensae attenditur ex parte in quem peccatur."

¹⁹ *Summa halensis* lib. 3, inq. 1, tr. 1, q. 1, c. 6, a. 2, ad 1: "ergo secundum istos duos modos ad minus est peccatum Adae infinitum et transcendens omnem humanam creaturam. Si ergo Deus debet exigere in poena quantum commissum est in culpa, patet quod debet exigere poenam infinitam pro peccato Adae; aut si admitat satisfactionem, debet fieri satisfactio a tali persona, in qua sit infinitum bonum et a qua sit ordinatio totius humanae naturae; sed nulla pura creatura est huiusmodi; et propter hoc de iustitia non fuit ut per puram creaturam fieret huiusmodi satisfactio."

²⁰ *Summa halensis* lib. 3, inq. 1, tr. 1, q. 1, c. 7: "Quod concedendum est, quod hanc satisfactionem requirit necessitas iustitiae, ut fiat per Deum unitum humanae naturae."

Up to this point, the *Summa halensis* has followed Anselm's argument while constantly whittling away at any strong necessity of the Incarnation. By ruling out strong necessity and by specifying that Anselm's satisfaction theory operates with weak necessity, the *Summa halensis* carves out space for fittingness. That is, whatever the modal status of fittingness, it does not seem to be a modal category compatible with strong necessity; strong necessity must be eliminated to allow for fittingness. The *Summa* complicates the matter by examining the fittingness of the Incarnation granting the fall and assuming (counter-factually) that humanity had not fallen. Hypothetical or counter-factual questions are a hallmark of the debt scholastic Christologies bear to Anselm and serve to clarify the modal categories applicable to various aspects of the Incarnation.

The *Summa halensis*'s investigation of fittingness begins with the very possibility of a union between divine nature and human nature. The possibility of union establishes the conditions for the union's fittingness and depends upon a non-reciprocal and asymmetrical similitude of order between human nature and divine nature.²¹ When the question shifts to whether the divine nature can be united to human nature, the operative category of possibility shifts from the logical possibility of similitude to possibility as ability or potency. Divine perfection and simplicity rule out any passive potency but do not rule out an active potency for union.²² The *Summa halensis* offers no justification for God's active potency for union and delays giving express defenses of the Incarnation's fittingness to the hypothetical consideration of the Incarnation apart from sin. Hypothetical considerations help establish fittingness by showing that the actual Incarnation, though possible, is not necessary. Showing that it could have been otherwise magnifies God's freedom. Hypothetical considerations also clarify what is possible logically and what is possible according to ability. These questions eliminate any strong necessity in the

²¹ *Summa halensis* lib. 3, inq. 1, tr. 1, q. 2, d. 1: "alio modo attenditur haec similitudo comparando unum ad alterum, ut si dicam 'Deus est bonus, creatura est bona', bonitas increata est bonitas per essentiam, scilicet ipse Deus, et ad hanc ordinatur bonitas creata. Hoc ergo quod dico 'ordinari ad illam', facit convenientiam et similitudinem bonitatis creatae ad increatam. Non est tamen dicendum quod bonitas increata sit similis bonitati creatae, sed e converso, quia nunquam determinatur similitudo respectu alicuius deterioris, sed respectu maioris vel aequalis."

²² *Summa halensis* lib. 3, inq. 1, tr. 1, q. 2, d. 2, m. 1, c. 1: "Si autem loquamur de potentia activa, sic natura divina est unibilis humanae, quia in Deo est potentia activa, ut sibi uniat naturam humanam. Unibile ergo dicitur de natura divina secundum potentiam activam, scilicet quod possit sibi unire naturam creatam; de natura vero humana dicitur secundum potentiam passivam, eo quod possit uniri."

actual form of the Incarnation. The possibility and non-necessity of the Incarnation prompts an investigation of its fittingness.

Reflecting on the Incarnation of the Son instead of the Father or Holy Spirit exercised the greatest of medieval minds. Recall that Peter Lombard began his third book of the *Sentences* with just this topic. The details of the *Summa halensis*'s reflections need not delay us here, but a few remarks are in order. The *Summa halensis* argues that the Incarnation was fitting to the Son both according to divine appropriations (according to which the Son is associated with wisdom) and according to the filiation proper to the Son.²³ Having determined the fittingness of the Son's Incarnation, the *Summa halensis* inquires about the possibility of the Father or Spirit being incarnate. The response hinges on a distinction between absolute ability (*posse absoluta*) and ability according to fittingness (*posse de congruentia*), which amounts to an interesting formulation of the distinction between *potentia absoluta* and *potentia ordinata*. When Peter Lombard affirms the possibility of any divine person becoming incarnate (*Sent.* III, d. 2, c. 2), he does so according to God's *posse absoluta*. When one considers God's *posse de congruentia*, and Anselm is clearly in mind here, becoming incarnate befits the Son alone.²⁴ Here we see the *Summa halensis* grappling with competing authorities and different understandings of possibility and the relationship of possibility to fittingness. The *Summa halensis* affirms the essentials of Anselm's argument and explicitly limits the argument to the category of weak necessity. Weak necessity admits alternate possibilities and so is compatible with fittingness. Fittingness arguments confirm the distinction between strong and weak necessity while providing some account for the reasonableness of the divine decision to actualize one possibility rather than others.

The *Summa halensis*'s treatment of fittingness ends with two arguments for the fittingness of the Incarnation had there been no fall. The first argument, from Bernard of Clairvaux, holds that the devil foresaw God's assumption of human nature and fell out of jealousy. The devil then tempted humanity and promoted the fall so that sin might be a barrier to

²³ *Summa halensis* lib. 3, inq. 1, tr. 1, q. 2, d. 2, m. 1, c. 4, a. 1, ad 1–2: "Et ita, cum sapientia approprietur Filio, magis adhuc secundum hanc comparisonem convenit Filio incarnari. Faciendo vero comparisonem secundum propria, magis convenit ipsi Filio incarnatio; nam Filio magis convenit esse Filium quam aliis."

²⁴ *Summa halensis* lib. 3, inq. 1, tr. 1, q. 2, d. 2, m. 1, c. 4, a. 2: "Dicendum quod est 'posse divinum' dupliciter, scilicet posse absolute, et hoc modo dicitur, III *Sententiarum*, quod quaelibet persona potuit incarnari; et est posse de congruentia, et hoc modo soli Filio convenit incarnari."

humanity's aptitude for assumption and union.²⁵ The argument highlights the Incarnation as divinely willed prior to the fall and as equally fitting had there been no sin, but it offers no justification for its fittingness in the first place. A second argument, from the *De anima et spiritu*, fills this gap. It presents the Incarnation as a fitting means for the whole human being, body and soul, to achieve beatitude. The intellect finds nourishment in contemplating God and the senses find nourishment in Christ's flesh.²⁶ This fittingness stands quite separate from sin and its disordering effects. These arguments work together to present the Incarnation as a fitting means, even apart from the fall, for human beings to achieve their end in God. The Incarnation's fittingness does not depend on the fall, but its (weak) necessity does. The *Summa halensis* leaves no doubt that the Incarnation would have been fitting apart from sin but does not use this principle of fittingness to affirm that God would have become incarnate apart from sin.

Discussions of the Passion involve the extra complication of balancing any sense of necessity with Christ's suffering as voluntary. The *Summa halensis* practices this balancing act with a scheme for thinking about necessity normally found in medieval discussions of possibility. The scheme examines possibility in terms of inferior and superior causes. Possibilities *secundum causam inferiorem* were possibilities according to natural motion (*secundum cursum naturae*); possibilities *secundum causam superiorem* were possibilities of the divine nature or of God's providential plan for creation.²⁷ Necessity according to the inferior cause means

²⁵ *Summa halensis* lib. 3, inq. 1, tr. 1, q. 2, tit. 2: "Sine praeiudicio concedendum est quod, etiamsi non fuisset humana natura lapsa, adhuc est convenientia ad incarnationem, secundum quod dicit B. Bernardus, super Ionam 1, 12: *Propter me orta est tempestas*, exponens illud verbum de Filio Dei, dicens quod Lucifer praevidit rationalem creaturam assumendam in unitatem personae Filii Dei, 'vidit et invidit'. Unde invidia fuit causa casus diaboli et movens ipsum ad tentandum hominem, cuius felicitati invidebat, ut per peccatum demereretur humana natura assumptionem et unibilitatem ad Deum. Ex quo patet quod Lucifer intellexit unionem ut impeditivum unionis, propter quod procuravit lapsum. Ex hoc ergo reliquitur quod, circumscripto lapsu, adhuc est ponere convenientiam incarnationis."

²⁶ *Summa halensis* lib. 3, inq. 1, tr. 1, q. 2, tit. 2: "Praeterea, ad hoc idem est quod dicit B. Augustinus, in libro *De anima et spiritu*: 'Propterea Deus factus est homo, ut totum hominem in se beatificaret, ut sive homo ingrederetur intus per intellectum, sive egrederetur extra per sensum, in Creatore suo pascua inveniret, pascua intus in cognitione deitatis, pascua foris in carne Salvatoris'. Haec autem ratio manet, etiam circumscripto lapsu humanae naturae."

²⁷ See Alain of Lille, *Theologiae Regulae* 56–58 (PL 210.648–49). Alain discusses the logical relationship of possibility and impossibility according to the inferior and superior causes, focusing upon questions of divine omnipotence but briefly touching upon Christology.

necessity according to one of the four Aristotelian causes. The *Summa halensis* rules out any necessity in the efficient, formal, or material cause and only admits the Passion's necessity according to the final cause. The logic recalls Anselm: "there could not be redemption except through satisfaction, and there could not be satisfaction except through the Passion. So, it was necessary for Christ to suffer according to the necessity of the final cause."²⁸ Even this necessity of final causality is constrained by affirmation that whereas the Passion was necessary for satisfaction and redemption, it was not logically necessary for liberation.²⁹ The Passion was necessary only within the context of God's ordained power, and even within that context it was necessary only in a weak sense.

The *Summa halensis* insists that the necessity of final causality does not hinder the Passion's voluntary character. Only the necessity of coercion and compulsion removes freedom. Necessity in the material, formal, or efficient causes implies coercion and compulsion, but final causality does not. An end cannot coerce or compel its means. The *Summa halensis* also rules out coercion in the superior cause, God. The Passion's necessity respecting the superior cause is only the necessity of immutability, a weak necessity wholly dependent on God's free will. Whatever God eternally wills to happen inevitably happens (according to weak necessity) just as God wills it. God eternally wills the Passion as a voluntary act, and its inevitable unfolding does not remove its freedom.³⁰

The *Summa halensis* questions the fittingness of the Passion as far as God is concerned and as far as we are concerned. As far as God is concerned, the Passion fit with divine justice, which never forgives sin without restoring order through punishment. The echoes of Anselm are loud and only grow louder. Divine justice alone would demand an eternal punishment for sin, but justice together with mercy only punishes sin

²⁸ *Summa halensis* lib. 3, inq. 1, tr. 5, m. 3, c. 1: "Sed ista redemptio non potuit esse nisi per satisfactionem, nec satisfactio nisi per passionem; ideo secundum necessitatem causae finalis fuit necessitas patiendi in Christo." See Gössmann, *Metaphysik und Heilsgeschichte*, 149–50.

²⁹ *Summa halensis* lib. 3, inq. 1, tr. 5, m. 3, c. 2: "Dicendum secundum Anselmum quod de necessitate redemptionis passus est Christus. Tamen distinguendum est inter liberationem et redemptionem. Redimere enim est rem suam iusto pretio recuperare, et nisi esset passio, non esset per iustum pretium recuperatum quod erat amissum; tamen si alio modo liberasset quam per passionem, esset liberatio, non redemptio."

³⁰ *Summa halensis* lib. 3, inq. 1, tr. 5, m. 3, c. 3: "Secundum Anselmum, est necessitas communiter dicta, sicut necessitas immutabilitatis, et est necessitas proprie dicta, sicut coactionis vel prohibitionis. Prima est in Deo, secunda numquam. Si ergo referatur necessitas passionis Christi ad coactionem vel prohibitionem, sic non necessitate aliqua passus est."

temporally. The Passion satisfies this temporal punishment in a way that no mere human being could. The *Summa halensis* paraphrases Anselm: "Man could not make restitution but is obligated to; God could but is not obligated. So, it is proper that the God-man pay the debt: man who is obligated, God who could."³¹ The *Summa* wants to preserve Anselm's conclusion without any risk of constraining God.

The separation of necessity and fittingness allows the *Summa halensis* to follow Anselm's basic logic but without the dangers of misinterpretation lurking in the *Cur Deus homo*. The *Summa halensis* affirms the Passion's necessity but restricts it to the weak types of final causality and immutability, types meant to emphasize that the Passion's necessity depends upon God's prior creative will. Restricting the Passion's necessity creates space to elaborate its fittingness. Once the strong necessity of the Passion is eliminated, the *Summa halensis* presents the fittingness of bringing about human salvation through the Passion. This fittingness depends upon divine justice, divine mercy, and Christ's free will to undergo the Passion for human salvation. The *Summa halensis* thus adopts Anselm's satisfaction theory but complicates and guards it through the careful use of modal categories. Necessity and fittingness function as the organizing modal categories. Possibility, in its various senses, helps explain the differences between strong and weak necessity and sets the conditions for the fittingness of the Incarnation and of the Passion. The *Summa halensis* takes its basic modal shape from Anselm and represents a sophisticated interpretation of Anselm's use of modal categories in the *Cur Deus homo*.

Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*

Thomas Aquinas's Christology in the *Summa theologiae* owes much to the *Summa halensis* but relies less on a satisfaction theory of atonement and on the modal category of necessity.³² Instead of prioritizing the Incarnation's

³¹ *Summa halensis* lib. 3, inq. 1, tr. 5, q. 1, m. 4, c. 1, a. 1: "Homo enim non poterat reddere, sed debebat; Deus poterat, sed non debebat; oportuit ergo quod solveret homo Deus: homo qui deberet, Deus qui posset."

³² The Christological sections of the *Summa theologiae*'s *Tertia pars* were written in 1272. For discussions of the date and circumstances of the *Summa theologiae*, see L. Boyle, "The Setting of the *Summa Theologiae* of Saint Thomas," in *Aquinas's Summa theologiae: Critical Essays*, ed. B. Davies (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006), 1–24; J.-P. Torrell, *Aquinas's Summa: Background, Structure, and Reception*, trans. B. Guevin (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005); *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Vol. I, The Person and His Work*, trans. R. Royal (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996); J. Weisheipl, *Friar Thomas d'Aquino: His Life, Thought and Works* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1974).

necessity, Aquinas examines the Incarnation primarily through the lens of fittingness, following his teacher Albertus Magnus.³³ Fittingness largely defines Aquinas's Christology and his use of other modal categories, which are more sharply parsed than in the *Summa halensis*. Thomas distinguishes internal and external senses of necessity, fittingness, and possibility, and this distinction informs his two definitions of fittingness.³⁴

Fittingness is the operative modal category throughout the *Summa theologiae*'s Christology, so it is hardly surprising that its treatise on Christ begins with a question on the Incarnation's fittingness. Whatever corre-

³³ See Albertus Magnus, *Commentarii in III Sententiarum, Opera Omnia*, vol. 28 (Paris: Borgnet, 1894). Albert begins his commentary on *Sentences* III by questioning whether it was fitting for God to become incarnate (*an conveniebat Deum incarnari*) (*Commentarii in III Sententiarum* d. 1, q. 1, a. 1).

³⁴ The most extensive treatment of fittingness in Aquinas is G. Narcisse, *Les raisons de Dieu: Argument de convenance et esthétique selon saint Thomas d'Aquin et Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1997). Narcisse occasionally approaches fittingness as reconciling necessity and contingency, arguing that something fitting is a "realized possible" (Narcisse, *Les raisons de Dieu*, 137). This definition builds upon the notion that contingent realities are necessary in so far as they are actual. Narcisse stresses very different aspects of fittingness arguments when investigating Aquinas's Christology, including notions of ontological fittingness, fittingness according to image, instrumental fittingness, and fittingness as a necessity respecting an appropriate end. This final type of fittingness is most important for the present analysis, as Aquinas makes much of it in *ST* III, q. 1, a. 2 and q. 46, a. 1. Narcisse also provides the general characterization of fittingness as a "theological necessity" wisely suited to the human mind in relation to God (Narcisse, *Les raisons de Dieu*, 146–47, 281, 292n.581, 318). See also J. Wawrykow, "Wisdom in the Christology of Thomas Aquinas," in *Christ among the Medieval Dominicans*, ed. K. Emery and J. Wawrykow (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 175–96. Gelber discusses internal and external senses of necessity in Aquinas, defining necessity as what must be either by an intrinsic principle or by an extrinsic principle. Necessity according to an intrinsic principle is further divided into what is materially and naturally necessary and what is formally or abstractly necessary. Necessity according to an extrinsic principle covers what is necessary by reason of an end and what is necessary by reason of an agent. See H. Gelber, *It Could Have Been Otherwise: Contingency and Necessity in Dominican Theology at Oxford, 1300–1350* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2004), 115–16. See also E. Stump, *Aquinas* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 104–5, 122–27; S. Knuuttila, "Nomic Necessities in Late Medieval Thought," in *Knowledge and the Sciences in Medieval Philosophy: Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Medieval Philosophy*, vol. 2, ed. S. Knuuttila, R. Työriöja, and S. Ebbesen (Helsinki: Publication of Luther-Agricola Society Series B 19, 1990), 222–30. On the modal categories of necessity and contingency in Aquinas's metaphysics, see G. Jalbert, *Nécessité et Contingence chez saint Thomas d'Aquin et chez ses Prédecesseurs* (Ottawa: Éditions de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1961).

sponds or agrees with the very nature of a thing is fitting to it.³⁵ This is Thomas's definition of internal fittingness. The divine nature is the supreme good, and it corresponds with the nature of the good to communicate itself. More specifically, it befits the supreme good to communicate itself maximally. Aquinas infers from this that it corresponds with the divine nature to communicate itself maximally to creatures and that the Incarnation is thus fitting as God's maximal self-communication to creation.³⁶ This argument appears straightforward enough, but it is worth noting its curious twists and turns. Aquinas uses a purely internal definition of fittingness to explain the fittingness of God's actions *ad extra*. More specifically, Aquinas presents the divine nature itself as the cause of the Incarnation's fittingness, but this assumes the existence of created reality to receive God's self-communication. The *Summa theologiae* can here build upon earlier presentations of creation, of humanity and its fall, and of grace and the virtues to frame this internal fittingness *ad extra*.

The *Summa halensis* based fittingness on possibility. Aquinas takes a more guarded approach, answering objections to the Incarnation's possibility rather than attempting to demonstrate that possibility. He also introduces a note of final causality in arguing that it befits God's infinite excellence to cause human salvation by becoming incarnate.³⁷ Aquinas certainly assumes humanity's fallenness and need for redemption, but he does not discuss the problem of sin and human impotence at the beginning of his Christology. The decision to begin with fittingness is not simply the preference for one modal category over another; it signals a reserved engagement with Anselm's satisfaction theory and a transformation of the strategies of the *Summa halensis*.

Aquinas asks a general question about fittingness and provides a general answer to which he adds specifications. This process continues when he

³⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *ST* III, q. 1, a. 1: "Dicendum quod unicuique rei conveniens est illud quod competit sibi secundum rationem propriae naturae; sicut homini conveniens est ratiocinari, quia hoc convenit sibi inquantum est rationalis secundum naturam suam." Citations are from *Summa theologiae*, vol. 4 (Ottawa: Commissio Piana, 1941). Gössman presents a similar notion of fittingness in the *Summa halensis*: "Soweit bis jetzt ersichtlich wurde, ist das Konveniente das mit dem Gottesbegriff Vereinbare, wie er in seiner breiten inhaltlichen Fülle theologisch vorgegeben ist, und das Inkonveniente ist das mit ihm Unvereinbare" (Gössmann, *Metaphysik und Heilsgeschichte*, 76).

³⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *ST* III, q. 1, a. 1: "Ipsa autem natura Dei est essentia bonitatis. . . . Unde quidquid pertinet ad rationem boni, conveniens est Deo.—Pertinet autem ad rationem boni ut se aliis communicet. . . . Unde ad rationem summi boni pertinet quod summo modo se creaturae comminice.".

³⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *ST* III, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2: "Conveniens tamen fuit Deo secundum infinitam excellentiam bonitatis eius, ut sibi eam uniret pro salute humana."

turns to the necessity of the Incarnation for the restoration of human nature. Here we see a shift from internal modal categories to external. The Incarnation's necessity is questioned solely in terms of the external necessity of final causality. Aquinas notes there are two ways something can be necessary for an end: (1) as a *sine qua non* for the end and (2) as a better and more fitting means for achieving the end.³⁸ He employs the same division later in the *Summa* when discussing the necessity of the Passion (ST III, q. 46, a. 1). The first type represents strong necessity, the second, weak necessity. Both represent external necessity, in which the necessity depends not upon something's nature but on its relation to an external reality. Divine omnipotence rules out the first and strong necessity, because God could restore humanity apart from the Incarnation.³⁹ When viewed according to the second and weak necessity of fittingness, Thomas affirms the necessity of the Incarnation for the restoration of the human race and illustrates the point by presenting five ways the Incarnation promotes the good and five ways it removes evil.⁴⁰ In discussing the Passion, Aquinas characterizes the most fitting mode as the one in which more things expedient to the end concur (ST III, q. 46, a. 3), a definition anticipated by his consideration of the Incarnation's fittingness. Thomas thus presents external necessity in terms of final causality, defines weak external necessity in terms of fittingness, and explains fittingness as the fullest or richest way to accomplish an end. It could have been otherwise, but the actual dispensation is best. Aquinas shares Anselm's desire to trumpet the Incarnation's reasonableness but has found a different modal lens for doing so, preferring fittingness to necessity.

The hypothetical or counter-factual question, whether God would have become incarnate had humanity not sinned, brings together aspects of

³⁸ Thomas Aquinas, ST III, q. 1, a. 2: "Dicendum quod ad finem aliquem dicitur aliquid esse necessarium dupliciter: uno modo, sine quo aliquid esse non potest, sicut cibus est necessarius ad conservationem humanae vitae; alio modo, per quod melius et convenientius pervenitur ad finem, sicut equus necessarius est ad iter." He employs the same division later in the *Summa* when discussing the necessity of the Passion (ST III, q. 46, a. 1). On fittingness and final causality, see Narcisse, *Les raisons de Dieu*, 78, 108, 194, and E. Persson, "Le plan de la Somme théologique et la rapport 'Ratio-Revelatio'," *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* 56 (1958): 542–72. Persson focuses on the role of final causality in the *Prima pars*.

³⁹ "The possible coincides with God's *potentia absoluta*. Contingent and necessary being arise within the sphere of God's *potentia ordinata*" (Gelber, *It Could Have Been Otherwise*, 120).

⁴⁰ Thomas Aquinas, ST III, q. 1, a. 2: "Primo modo Deum incarnari non fuit necessarium ad reparationem humanae naturae; Deus enim per suam omnipotentem virtutem poterat humanam naturam multis aliis modis reparare. Secundo autem modo necessarium fuit Deum incarnari ad humanae naturae reparationem."

internal and external necessity. Some answer yes; others answer no. Aquinas argues that, since Scripture presents the Incarnation as a remedy for sin, it is better to answer in the negative.⁴¹ This foreshadows Aquinas's discussion of the Passion and the possibility of human liberation through other means; other means for human salvation are possible absolutely or simply but impossible given God's decision to save humanity through the Incarnation and the Passion. Affirming that God *could* have become incarnate had there been no sin concerns possibility absolutely or simply, and Aquinas is very comfortable with such an affirmation. The problem with affirming what God *would* have done had there been no sin is that the affirmation concerns possibility based upon a supposition (*ex suppositione*). Aquinas limits Christological speculation to possibility absolutely or simply and finds no warrant for speculation concerning possibility and necessity *ex suppositione*. These are matters dependent only on God's will, which humanity knows through revelation alone. Speculation promotes understanding only where there is some reasonable foundation for the speculation.⁴² The appropriate

⁴¹ Thomas Aquinas, *ST* III, q. 1, a. 3: "Dicendum quod aliqui circa hoc diversimode opinantur. Quidam enim dicunt quod etiam si homo non peccasset, Dei Filius incarnatus fuisset. Alii vero contrarium asserunt. Quorum assertioni magis assentiendum videtur. Ea enim quae ex sola Dei voluntate proveniunt, supra omne debitum creaturae, nobis innotescere non possunt nisi quatenus in Sacra Scriptura traduntur, per quam divina voluntas nobis innotescit. Unde cum in Sacra Scriptura ubique incarnationis ratio ex peccato primi hominis assignetur, convenientius dicitur incarnationis opus ordinatum esse a Deo in remedium contra peccatum, ita quod peccato non existente, incarnatio non fuisset. Quamvis potentia Dei ad hoc non limitetur; potuisset enim, etiam peccato non existente, Deus incarnari."

⁴² Gelber offers the following conception of Aquinas on speculation. "Since the Principle of Sufficient Reason fails in regard to God's creative act, even though there are many, even infinite, possibilities that God did not choose to create, questions about such counterfactual possibilities are not of much point. Nor is counterfactual speculation of much moment in regard to the contingent events of the ordained system. Since all such events are part of God's providential design, the important focus for a theologian is on what is actually the case. What is the case offers information about God's purposes, whereas speculation about what might have happened differently does not" (Gelber, *It Could Have Been Otherwise*, 123). Knnuttila makes a similar point: "Like his forerunners, Thomas thought that God's possibilities were not all realized. This idea is, however, seldom used in his discussions of philosophical problems. In most cases, Thomas seems to be satisfied with the solutions achieved by supplying the statistical interpretation of modality. And even if God's unrealized possibilities are needed in some connections, e.g. in the definition of Divine Omnipotence, it is enough to know that there are such possibilities. It is not important what they are" (Knnuttila, "Time and Modality in Scholasticism," 214–15). Aquinas's approach to counterfactual speculation differs slightly in his Christology, where counterfactual speculation is designed to clarify God's purposes and wisdom.

modal category for concerns internal to God is fittingness, and fittingness guides Aquinas's approach to the modal categories of possibility and necessity. Presenting the Incarnation and the Passion as the most fitting means for human salvation requires creating space for other possibilities absolutely or simply, limiting necessity to the weak external necessity of fittingly achieving an end, and detailing the Incarnation and the Passion as the most fitting means to the end freely chosen by God. Thomas's reasons for the Incarnation's fittingness seem equally applicable apart from sin, but he is unwilling to reason from fittingness to what would have happened had there been no sin.

The *Summa's* discussion of the Passion begins with a consideration of its necessity.⁴³ Repeating much from the *Summa halensis*, Thomas distinguishes many types and subtypes of necessity. The strictest sense of necessity, a strong internal necessity, pertains when something by its nature cannot be otherwise, and Aquinas summarily rejects the Passion's necessity in this sense.⁴⁴ This does not rule out external necessity. Thomas follows the *Summa halensis* in discussing external necessity according to the Aristotelian causes, though he contrasts only efficient and final causes. Efficient causes produce necessity of coercion, a strong external necessity. Aquinas denies that the Passion was necessary because of coercion.⁴⁵ The necessity of final causality depends upon the supposition of an end. Thomas's real contribution lurks in a further distinction within the necessity of final causality. First, there is a necessity of final causality when a certain end cannot be except through a specific means, and this is strong

⁴³ For discussions of Thomas on soteriology and Christ's Passion, see W. J. Bracken, "Of What Benefit to Himself Was Christ's Suffering? Merit in Aquinas's Theology of the Passion," *Thomist* 65 (2001): 385–407; A. Patfoort, "Le vrai visage de la satisfaction du Christ selon saint Thomas: une étude de la *Somme théologique*," in *Ordo sapientiae et amoris: image et message de saint Thomas d'Aquin à travers les récentes études historiques, herméneutiques et doctrinales*, ed. C.-J. Pinto de Oliveira (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1993), 247–65; A. Nichols, "St. Thomas Aquinas on the Passion of Christ: A Reading of *Summa Theologiae* IIIa, q. 46," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 43 (1990): 447–59. Patfoort is particularly helpful on the many and diverse aspects of satisfaction within Aquinas's soteriology.

⁴⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *ST* III, q. 46, a. 1: "Uno quidem modo quod secundum sui naturam impossibile est aliter se habere. Et sic manifestum est quod non fuit necessarium Christum pati, neque ex parte Dei, neque ex parte hominis."

⁴⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *ST* III, q. 46, a. 1: "Alio modo dicitur aliquid necessarium ex aliquo exteriori. Quod quidem si sit causa efficiens vel movens, facit necessitatem coactionis, utpote cum aliquis non potest ire propter violentiam detinentis ipsum." *ST* III, q. 46, a. 1: "Non ergo fuit necessarium Christum pati necessitate coactionis, neque ex parte Dei, quid Christum definivit pati; neque etiam ex parte ipsius Christi, quid voluntarie passus est."

external necessity *ex suppositione*. Second, there is a necessity when a specific means more fittingly brings about the end, and this is weak external necessity *ex suppositione*.⁴⁶ The Passion was necessary by this second type of necessity from three perspectives. First, human beings are freed through the Passion, which fits with divine justice and mercy. Second, Christ merited the exaltation of glory. Third, God's determination for Christ's Passion was foreshadowed and announced in Scripture.⁴⁷ This last reason is particularly interesting. The necessity here is not about God's immutable will and what necessarily follows from that will. Rather, the necessity follows from what God revealed, which Aquinas seems to regard as its own type of weak external necessity *ex suppositione* inasmuch as God's will is known only through revelation. It is also worth stressing that Aquinas gestures to an Anselmian satisfaction theory in the reply to the third objection but certainly does not construct his consideration of the Passion's necessity around a satisfaction theory.⁴⁸ The *Summa halensis* explained the Passion's necessity through the necessity of final causality in order to preserve its freedom; Aquinas repeats this explanation with a

⁴⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *ST* III, q. 46, a. 1: "Si vero illud exterius quod necessitatem inducit, sit finis, dicetur aliquid necessarium ex suppositione finis, quando scilicet finis aliquis aut nullo modo potest esse, aut non potest esse convenienter, nisi tali fine praesupposito." This recalls and specifies the two types of necessity discussed in *ST* III, q. 1, a. 2.

⁴⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *ST* III, q. 46, a. 1: "Fuit autem necessarium necessitate finis. Quid quidem potest tripliciter intelligi. Primo quidem ex parte nostra, qui per eius passionem liberati sumus. . . . Secundo, ex parte ipsius Christi, qui per humilitatem passionis meruit gloriam exaltationis. . . . Tertio, ex parte Dei, cuius definitionem circa passionem Christi praenuntiatam in Scripturis et praefiguratam in observantia veteris Testamenti oportebat impleri."

⁴⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *ST* III, q. 46, a. 1, ad 3: "Dicendum quod hominem liberari per passionem Christi, conveniens fuit et misericordiae et iustitiae eius. Iustitiae quidem, quia per passionem suam Christus satisfecit pro peccato humani generis, et ita homo per iustitiam Christi liberatus est. Misericordiae vero, quia cum homo per se satisfacere non posset pro peccato totius humanae naturae, ut supra habitum est, Deus ei satisfactorem dedit Filium suum." Aquinas presents satisfaction as one of several means for explaining the Passion's efficacy, but his presentation differs markedly from Anselm's. *ST* III, q. 48, a. 2: "Dicendum quod ille proprie satisfacit pro offensa qui exhibet offenso id quod aequae vel magis diligit quam oderit offensam. Christus autem, ex caritate et obedientia patiendo, magis Deo aliquid exhibuit quam exigeret recompensatio totius offensae humani generis. Primo quidem propter magnitudinem caritatis ex qua patiebatur. Secundo, propter dignitatem vitae suae, quam pro satisfactione ponebat, quae erat vita Dei et hominis. Tertio, propter generalitatem passionis et magnitudinem doloris assumpti." Scotus presents a formulation of satisfaction similar in many respects.

distinction of strong and weak forms of the necessity of final causality to add a layer of further protection to the Passion's freedom.

Aquinas follows this affirmation of weak necessity by questioning the possibility of achieving human liberation without the Passion. Possibility, unsurprisingly, admits of a distinction. Something can be possible or impossible absolutely and simply or from a supposition. Considered absolutely and simply, achieving human liberation through other means was possible; considered from the supposition of divine providence and immutability, it was impossible for Christ not to suffer or for humanity to be liberated apart from Christ's Passion.⁴⁹ This amounts to a distinction between God's absolute power and God's ordained power. Possibility considered absolutely and simply falls under God's absolute power. Possibility considered *ex suppositione* falls under God's ordained power. God could have done otherwise, but God's election to save humanity through the Incarnation and the Passion restricts alternatives. This at first appears little more than a minimal reworking of the *Summa halensis* and its appeal to divine immutability. Aquinas is doing a bit more than that by specifying the question in terms of human liberation rather than redemption. The *Summa halensis* argued that the Passion was necessary for satisfaction and thus for redemption but that humanity could be liberated through other means. Aquinas takes this cue from the *Summa halensis* and devotes all his attention to human liberation rather than narrowing the focus to redemption and satisfaction. Thomas's framing of the question minimizes the importance and risks of reading the necessity of the Passion only within the strictures of a satisfaction theory of atonement.

So, Aquinas "reduces" the Passion's necessity to its fittingness for a certain end and recognizes that other modes of human liberation are possible absolutely and simply but impossible granting God's ordination to liberate humanity through the Passion. This can also be formulated as the Passion's weak external necessity *ex suppositione*. Thomas questions whether another mode of human liberation would have been more fitting. He stipulates the more fitting mode to be the one in which more things expedi-

⁴⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *ST* III, q. 46, a. 2: "Dicendum quod aliquid potest dici possibile vel impossibile dupliciter: uno modo, simpliciter et absolute; alio modo, ex suppositione. Simpliciter igitur et absolute loquendo, possibile fuit Deo alio modo hominem liberare quam per passionem Christi. . . . Sed ex aliqua suppositione facta, fuit impossibile. Quia enim impossibile est Dei praescientiam falli et eius voluntatem sive dispositionem cassari, supposita praescientia et praeordinatione Dei de passione Christi, non erat simul possibile Christum non pati, vel hominem alio modo quam per eius passionem liberari."

ent to the end concur.⁵⁰ Evident here is a parallel between the Incarnation's fittingness and the Passion's fittingness; the parallel is less explicit than in the *Summa halensis* but no less certain. Christ's Passion frees humanity from sin but also promotes human salvation (*salutem hominis*) in at least five further ways: (1) it provides knowledge of God's love; (2) it provides an example of obedience, humility, etc.; (3) it merits for humanity justifying grace and the glory of beatitude; (4) recognizing Christ's suffering to free humanity from sin introduces a greater need to preserve oneself from sin; and (5) it magnifies human dignity.⁵¹ This list recalls the five ways the Incarnation promotes humanity in the good (*ST* III, q. 1, a. 2).

Aquinas adopts a parallelism in exploring the Incarnation and the Passion that owes much to the *Summa halensis*. At the same time, Aquinas shifts the emphasis away from necessity and a satisfaction theory. The *Summa theologiae*'s dominant modal category for the Incarnation and the Passion is fittingness. The modal categories of necessity, fittingness, and possibility can all be considered internally and externally. The Incarnation is internally fitting to God as the maximally self-diffusive supreme good. The Incarnation represents the richest, most expedient, and most efficacious means through which human beings might accomplish their ordained end and so is externally fitting as well. The *Summa theologiae* suggests that fittingness may also be described in terms of necessity, in which case internal fittingness represents weak internal necessity and external fittingness represents weak external necessity *ex suppositione*. In the *Summa theologiae*, the repeated modal distinctions of strong and weak, internal and external, absolute and ordained, efficient and final add up to a modal framework within which to situate the modal status of the Incarnation and the Passion as the most fitting means for human redemption. Aquinas is unwilling to affirm that God would have become Incarnate

⁵⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *ST* III, q. 46, a. 3: "Dicendum tanto aliquis modus convenientior est ad assequendum finem, quanto per ipsum plura concurrunt quae sunt expeditia fini."

⁵¹ Thomas Aquinas, *ST* III, q. 46, a. 3: "Primo enim per hoc homo cognoscit quantum Deus hominem diligit, et per hoc provocatur ad eum diligendum, in quo perfectio humanae salutis consistit. . . . Secundo, quia per hoc dedit nobis exemplum obedientiae, humilitatis, constantiae, iustitiae, et ceterarum virtutum in passione Christi ostensarum; quae sunt necessariae ad humanam salutem. . . . Tertio, quia Christus per passionem suam non solum hominem a peccato liberavit, sed etiam gratiam iustificantem et gloriam beatitudinis ei promeruit. . . . Quarto, quia per hoc est homini inducta maior necessitas se immunem a peccato conservandi, qui se sanguine Christi redemptum cogitat a peccato. . . . Quinto, quia hoc ad maiorem dignitatem hominis cessit, ut sicut homo victus fuerat et deceptus a diabolo, ita etiam homo esset qui diabolum vinceret."

had there been no sin, because such an affirmation confuses internal and external as well as strong and weak modal categories. This amounts to a transformation of the *Summa halensis*'s contention that the Incarnation was fitting apart from the fall but was made weakly necessary by the fall.

John Duns Scotus's Commentaries on the *Sentences*

John Duns Scotus is generally acknowledged to have introduced or promoted developments in modal philosophy, including novel presentations of necessity, possibility, compossibility, and contingency.⁵² These developments, together with an increasing use of the distinction between *potentia absoluta* and *potentia ordinata*, inevitably shaped Scotus's use of modal categories in discussing the Incarnation and the Passion. Following a convention of earlier commentaries on the *Sentences*, Scotus's commentaries lead off their Christological investigations with a question on the possibility of the Incarnation.⁵³ Though Scotus follows a convention, he

⁵² For a brief orientation to Scotus's life and the tangled issues of determining the dates of composition of his various works, see T. Williams, "Introduction: The Life and Works of John Duns the Scot," in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, ed. T. Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1–14. C. Normore provides a useful introduction to and overview of Scotus's use of modal categories in "Duns Scotus's Modal Theory," in *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, 129–60. According to Knuuttila, the "new idea in Scotus' modal theory is to consider several alternative states of affairs at the same time and with respect to the same time," thereby breaking with the dominant statistical interpretation of modality (Knuuttila, "Time and Modality in Scholasticism," 227). Dumont shows that Scotus's views on synchronic contingency depend upon and develop Peter Olivi's understanding of the will as a potency for opposites. See S. Dumont, "The Origin of Scotus's Theory of Synchronic Contingency," *The Modern Schoolman* 72 (1995): 149–67. Sylwanowicz argues that the statistical interpretation of modality was never as dominant as Knuuttila suggests and that Knuuttila wrongly limits Scotus's view of modality to propositional content. Sylwanowicz counters that Scotus granted ontological content to modality and that his contribution to modal philosophy rests primarily in the notion of contingent causality as an ontological reality. See M. Sylwanowicz, *Contingent Causality and the Foundations of Duns Scotus' Metaphysics* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996).

⁵³ See, e.g., Bonaventure, *Commentaria in tertium librum Sententiarum, Opera theologica selecta*, vol. 3 (Quaracchi: Collegio S. Bonaventurae, 1961), d. 1, a. 1, q. 1; Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum*, Bk. III, ed. M. F. Moos (Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1933), d. 1, q. 1, a. 1; Peter of Tarentaise, *In IV Libros Sententiarum Commentaria*, vol. 3 (Toulouse, 1652), d. 1, q. 1, a. 1; Peter Olivi, *Quaestiones de Incarnatione et Redemptione, Quaestiones de virtutibus, Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi*, vol. 24 (Grottaferrata: Collegio S. Bonaventura, 1981), q. 1. Presenting the Incarnation in terms of possibility was done in conscious opposition to presenting it in terms of necessity. Something possible is, by definition, not necessary.

alters that convention by changing the meaning of possibility and contingency.⁵⁴ The convention prior to Scotus, as seen in the *Summa halensis*, was to use possibility as a foundation for demonstrations of fittingness. Scotus devotes all attention to possibility itself rather than to possibility as a condition for something else.

Scotus's reflections on the Incarnation's possibility achieve several ends.⁵⁵ At the most basic level, Scotus argues that the Incarnation does not entail a contradiction. A logical contradiction implies a logical impossibility, which does not fall under divine omnipotence. God's absolute power can accomplish whatever is logically possible, but not all logical possibilities are compossible.⁵⁶ There are various collections of logically consistent possibilities, often referred to as possible worlds.⁵⁷ God's knowledge encompasses all of these possible worlds, and from these possible worlds God wills to create the actual world. To demonstrate the Incarnation's possibility, Scotus must argue that the Incarnation is logically possible within the realm of God's absolute power and that the Incarnation is compossible with created reality as it exists. This must be born in mind when addressing Scotus's views on Christ's predestination, what is often referred to as the primacy of Christ.⁵⁸ Within possible worlds, God's knowledge and will begin with the end.

⁵⁴ "Accordingly, Scotus says that the contingency does not mean what is not always the case (as in the statistical interpretation of modality); a contingent event is one the opposite of which could occur at the time when it is actual. This concept of contingency is erroneous from the point of view of the statistical interpretation of modal concepts. According to Scotus, it must, nevertheless, be accepted if one wants to express that something does not happen necessarily" (Knuuttila, "Time and Modality in Scholasticism," 222).

⁵⁵ For a discussion of Scotus's understanding of the Incarnation, see R. Cross, *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation: Thomas Aquinas to Duns Scotus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 121–36.

⁵⁶ See Knuuttila, "Time and Modality in Scholasticism," 231–32.

⁵⁷ Classic presentations of possible worlds can be found in K. J. J. Hintikka, "The Modes of Modality," in *Proceedings of a Colloquium on Modal and Many-Valued Logics, Helsinki 23–26 August 1962*, Acta Philosophica Fennica XVI (1963), 65–81, and S. A. Kripke, "Semantical Considerations on Modal Logic," in *Proceedings of a Colloquium on Modal and Many-Valued Logics*, 83–94. See also D. Langston, "Scotus and Possible Worlds," in *Knowledge and the Sciences in Medieval Philosophy* (see above, note 34), vol. 2, 240–47.

⁵⁸ For a thorough treatment of Scotus on Christ's predestination, see M. Burger, *Personalität im Horizont absoluter Prädestination: Untersuchungen zur Christologie des Johannes Duns Scotus und ihrer Rezeption in Modernen Theologischen Ansätzen* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1994). On the primacy of Christ, see M. M. Adams, "The Primacy of Christ," *Sewanee Theological Review* 47 (2004): 164–80; I. Delio "Revisiting the Franciscan Doctrine of Christ," *Theological Studies* 64 (2003): 3–23.

Whereas earlier scholastics (and here Bonaventure again provides a fine example) answered the question of the Incarnation's possibility mainly by eliminating objections, Scotus eliminates objections and proposes a model for understanding the union of human nature to the Word. Eliminating objections requires ruling out any repugnance to union in God or in human nature. The greater difficulty rests with human nature having "an alien supposit"; solving this difficulty leads Scotus to define personality through the absence of actual and aptitudinal dependence.⁵⁹ Scotus also addresses general concerns, such as the seeming impossibility of the finite and infinite existing simultaneously. Contraries cannot exist simultaneously because of their mutual repugnance rather than because of their diversity.⁶⁰ In the Incarnation, finite and infinite are diverse but not repugnant and so can exist simultaneously. Scotus's model for this simultaneous existence is an accident's dependence on its substance. This model is not perfect, but Scotus admits he knows of no better name for the union.⁶¹ These few

⁵⁹ Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* III, d. 1, q. 1, n. 46: "Licet ergo sola negatio dependentiae 'actualis' non sufficiat ad propositum, neque negatio dependentiae tertiae [scil. 'possibilis'] posset poni in natura creata ad Verbum (nulla enim est natura vel entitas creata, cui repugnet contradictorie dependere ad Verbum), tamen negatio dependentiae 'aptitudinalis' potest concedi in natura creata personata in se ad Verbum, alioquin violenter quiesceret in natura creata (sicut lapis violenter quiescit sursum). Et ita ista negatio, non dependentiae actualis sed aptitudinalis, talis, complet rationem 'personae' in natura intellectuali et 'suppositi' in natura creata." Citations are from John Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* III, *Opera omnia*, vol. 9 (Vatican City: Typis Vaticanis, 2006). See also Cross, *The Metaphysics of the Incarnation*, 297–309.

⁶⁰ Duns Scotus, *Lectura* III, d. 1, q. 1, n. 51: "Ad tertium, cum arguitur quod contraria non possunt esse simul sic, ita ergo nec finitum et infinitum, quae sunt magis diversa, dicendum quod non sequitur. Nam album et linea sunt magis diversa quam album et nigrum, et tamen haec possunt simul esse, non autem illa. Unde illa dicuntur 'diversa' quae minus conveniunt; sed haec non sunt opposita aut repugnantia, nam opposita in pluribus conveniunt quam diversa; unde repugnantia non excludit qui in aliquo possint convenire; ideo repugnantia est causa quare non sunt simul, non autem diversitas." Citations are from John Duns Scotus, *Lectura* III, *Opera omnia*, vol. 20 (Vatican City: Typis Vaticanis, 2003). In *Ordinatio* III, d. 1, q. 1, n. 65, Scotus presents contraries as 'impossible' because they fit together in no way; he goes on to argue that divine and human nature, though more diverse than contraries, are less mutually repugnant than contraries because they fit together in some respects. See also Normore, "Duns Scotus's Modal Theory," 146.

⁶¹ Duns Scotus, *Lectura* III, d. 1, q. 1, n. 22: "Et sic est in proposito, quod persona est prior natura et terminat dependentiam naturae assumptae, non prioritate causae efficientis vel materialis. Unde 'naturam uniri personae alterius naturae' est eam dependere ad illam personam, non quidem dependentia causati ad causam, nec dependentia causati posterioris ad causatum prius, sed dependentia simili dependentiae accidentis ad subiectum (in quantum subsistat accidenti, sed non in quantum accidens informat ipsum subiectum). Nec scio alio nomine eam nominare."

remarks certainly do not do justice to Scotus's complex presentation of the Incarnation's possibility, but they suffice to serve as a point of contrast with the *Summa halensis* and the *Summa theologiae*. To the extent that those texts address the Incarnation's possibility, they do so under the categories of necessity or fittingness. Treating the Incarnation's possibility on its own, without reference before or immediately after to its necessity or fittingness, gives the topic a remarkably different feel. It moves it squarely into the realm of logical possibility, setting up discussion of its compossibility with created reality and bracketing any connection with human salvation.

Scotus addresses topics similar to the Incarnation's necessity and fittingness when he investigates whether Christ was predestined to be the Son of God.⁶² Predestination is primarily directed to glory and secondarily to the means to glory.⁶³ The union of Christ's human nature to the Word was ordered to the highest glory as a fitting means, which suffices to explain Christ's predestination. The *Summa halensis* and the *Summa theologiae* refer to this as the necessity of final causality. The more interesting point here is Scotus's response to the many authorities who hold that Christ would not have become incarnate had humanity not fallen. Scotus employs the same basic logic as before but notes here that predestination to glory precedes not only grace as a means to glory but also foreknowledge of sin and the damnation of some.⁶⁴ The logical ordering

Scotus distinguishes two types of relationship between accidents and subjects, "scilicet informantis ad informatum," and "ut posterioris naturaliter ad prius" (*Ordinatio* III, d. 1, q. 1, n. 15). This second type indicates no imperfection in the subject and bears some similarities to the dependence of Christ's human nature on the divine person of the Word (*Ordinatio* III, d. 1, q. 1, n. 16). See M. M. Adams, "The Metaphysics of the Incarnation in Some Fourteenth-Century Franciscans," in *Essays Honoring Allan B. Wolter*, ed. W. Frank and G. Etzkorn (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1985), 21–57.

⁶² See R. Cross, *Duns Scotus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 127–32.

⁶³ Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* III, d. 7, q. 3, n. 58: "Cum 'praedestinatio' sit praeordinatio alicuius ad gloriam principaliter et ad alia in ordine ad gloriam, et huic naturae humanae in Christo praeordinata sit gloria et unio ipsa in Verbo in ordine ad gloriam, quia non tanta gloria fuisset sibi conferenda si non esset unita, sicut modo collata est, – quemadmodum ergo merita cadunt sub praedestinatione, sine quibus non ordinaretur de congruo quid ad tantum gloriam sicut cum eis, ita videtur ista unio, quae ordinatur ad tantam gloriam de congruo, licet non tamquam meritum, cecidisse sub praedestinatione; et ita sicut praedestinatum est hanc naturam uniri Verbo, ita praedestinatum est Verbum esse hominem et 'hunc hominem' esse Verbum." See also *Lectura* III, d. 7, q. 3, n. 73.

⁶⁴ Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* III, d. 7, q. 3, n. 61: "Sine praeiudicio potest dici quod cum praedestinatio cuiuscumque ad gloriam praecedat ex parte obiecti naturaliter praescientiam peccati vel damnationis cuiuscumque . . . , multo magis est hoc verum de praedestinatione illius animae quae praedestinabatur ad summam gloriam:

in God's providential creation begins with the ends, proceeds to the means to those ends, and then considers the compossible circumstances shaping or altering those means. The glory of Christ's soul is the primary end of creation, exhibiting logical priority over the glory of other souls and so also over the circumstances of those souls with respect to sin and grace. The many authorities who deny that Christ would have become incarnate even had humanity not fallen can be reverentially interpreted by noting that had humanity not fallen Christ would not have come as redeemer.⁶⁵ The fall is not the cause of the Incarnation itself but is compossible with the Incarnation and shapes it. The relative absence of modal language from Scotus's discussion of Christ's predestination is striking. Scotus argues for the logical priority of Christ's glorification as end, but the contingency of this end rules out any strong necessity. Though Scotus does not do so, Christ's predestination to glory might well be categorized as fitting and the Incarnation as weakly and externally necessary from the supposition of Christ's predestination to glory.

The clearest engagement with necessity in Scotus's Christology regards the Passion, where he eliminates necessity by defending possible alternatives.⁶⁶ Scotus questions "whether it was necessary for the human race to be restored through Christ's Passion" and rehearses Anselm's argument from the *Cur Deus homo* in four basic steps. The first point to note, however, is that Scotus describes Anselm as "seeming" to present the Incarnation as strongly necessary.⁶⁷ This reading of Anselm, generally rejected by modern interpreters, served as a foil for scholastic theologians to present their own understanding of the Incarnation's necessity or fittingness. Following the descriptions of Matthew of Aquasparta and Peter Olivi, Scotus presents Anselm's argument in the following four steps: (1) it was necessary for humanity to be redeemed; (2) humanity

universaliter enim, ordinate volens prius videtur velle hoc quod est fini propinquius, et ita, sicut prius vult gloriam alicui quam gratiam, ita etiam inter praedestinos—quibus vult gloriam—ordinate prius videtur velle gloriam illi quem vult esse proximum fini, et ita huic animae."

⁶⁵ Duns Scotus, *Ordinatio* III, d. 7, q. 3, n. 62; *Lectura* III, d. 7, q. 3, n. 76.

⁶⁶ Scotus's soteriology has been the subject of much debate. See A. Rosato, *Duns Scotus on the Redemptive Work of Christ* (unpublished doctoral dissertation: University of Notre Dame, 2009); A. Yang, "Scotus' Voluntarist Approach to the Atonement Reconsidered," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 62 (2009): 421–40; D. Langston, "Scotus' Departure from Anselm's Theory of the Atonement," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 50 (1983): 227–41.

⁶⁷ Duns Scotus, *Lectura* III, d. 20, q. 1, n. 10: "Sed contra est quod dicit Anselmus II *Cur Deus homo* cap. 15 in fine. . . videtur igitur hic expresse dicere quod necesse erat hominem redimi per passionem Christi."

could not be redeemed without satisfaction; (3) satisfaction had to be made by the *Deus-homo*; and (4) it was necessary for satisfaction to be made through Christ's Passion even though Christ had no obligation to die.⁶⁸ With respect to modal categories, the first and fourth steps address necessity whereas the second and third address possibility.

Scotus finds doubtful any argument for the Incarnation's strong necessity. First, he denies the necessity of human restoration.⁶⁹ This might seem strange, given Scotus's views on the priority of predestination, but what must be born in mind is that predestination, even given its logical priority with respect to means and compossible circumstances, remains contingent, and its contingency means that alternatives to predestination remain genuine possibilities at the same time. From all the logically possible ends, God freely chose to predestine some to glory. There was no necessity restricting the divine design to such predestination; it exists within the realm of logical possibility (and thus within the realm of God's absolute power) but is not necessary. The only meaningful sense of necessity respecting logical possibility and God's absolute power is strong internal necessity. So, predestination to glory is contingent, and no means to that contingent end can themselves be strongly necessary. This might appear to leave intact Anselm's logic regarded from the point of subsequent necessity. Scotus disagrees. What follows from an antecedent takes its contingency or necessity from that antecedent; what follows from a

⁶⁸ Duns Scotus, *Lectura III*, d. 20, q. 1, n. 13: "De primo ostenditur, secundum Anselmum, quod necesse fuit hominem redimi"; *Lectura III*, d. 20, q. 1, n. 14: "Praeterea, pro secundo articulo, scilicet quod non potuit redimi sine satisfactione"; *Lectura III*, d. 20, q. 1, n. 19: "Tertio ostenditur quod satisfactio ista, quae debetur, non potuit fieri ab homine puro"; *Lectura III*, d. 20, q. 1, n. 23: "Quantum ad quartum articulum, quod oportuit Christum satisfacere per mortem, non tamen quia debitor mortis." See Matthew of Aquasparta, *Quaestiones disputatae de incarnatione*, *Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi*, vol. 2, qq. 6–7; Peter Olivi, *Quaestiones de incarnatione et redemptione*, *Quaestiones de virtutibus*, *Bibliotheca Franciscana Scholastica Medii Aevi*, vol. 24, q. 3.

⁶⁹ Duns Scotus, *Lectura III*, d. 20, q. 1, n. 29: "Praeterea, nulla est necessitas quod genus humanum repararetur; ergo nulla fuit necessitas quod Christus pateretur. Consequentia patet de se.—Antecedens probatur, quia si sic, non esset nisi quia homines praedestinati ad gloriam, et lapsi, non possunt intrare nisi per satisfactionem; sed praedestinatio hominis fuit contingens, non necessaria: sicut enim Deus ab aeterno contingenter praedestinavit hominem, et nullo modo necessario, cum nihil necessario respectu aliquorum extra se ordinando illa ad bonum, sic potuit non praedestinasse. Nec est inconveniens hominem frustrari a beatitudine nisi praesupposita praedestinatione hominis. Nulla igitur fuit necessitas redemptionis eius absolute, sicut nec eius praedestinationis."

contingent antecedent is contingent as well.⁷⁰ With these remarks, Scotus counters the first point in Anselm's logic. Removing the necessity of human restoration effectively undermines the Incarnation's necessity in Scotus's modal scheme.

Scotus finds problems with other aspects of Anselm's arguments. Anselm reasoned that satisfaction could be made only by the *Deus-homo*. Scotus denies this: "satisfaction for the sin of the first human being did not have to exceed creation as a whole in magnitude and perfection; offering to God a greater good than the evil of [the first] human being sinning would have sufficed."⁷¹ This assertion depends on an understanding of sin—and how to determine its magnitude—that differs from the understanding supported by Anselm and by the *Summa halensis*. Scotus measures sin according to the object favored rather than according to the honor stolen or the dignity of the one against whom human beings sinned. The first human beings sinned through love of a creature, and so satisfaction required only offering a love greater than that creaturely object of illicit love. Loving God solely on account of God fulfills this condition. Scotus argues "that love objectively, as it terminates in God on account of God, exceeds to infinity the love of a creature, just as God [exceeds to infinity] the creature."⁷² Satisfaction requires God as the infinite object of love, but a finite subject can offer that love and make satisfaction. Scotus further argues that satisfaction can be made on behalf of another, which allows an angel or a mere human being to make satisfaction. The only necessary condition for a mere human being to make satisfaction is that the one making satisfaction be a human being conceived without sin. Scotus summarizes his views as follows: "I say that all the things Christ did concerning our redemption

⁷⁰ Gelber notes that for Scotus secondary causes cause in the same way they are caused, so contingent secondary causes must have a contingent primary cause (Gelber, *It Could Have Been Otherwise*, 128). Normore reminds us that, based upon this principle, Scotus argues God's causality of creation must be contingent in order to allow for human freedom and contingency (Normore, "Duns Scotus's Modal Theory," 141). See also Knuuttila, "Time and Modality in Scholasticism," 218–23.

⁷¹ Duns Scotus, *Lectura* III, d. 20, q. 1, n. 31: "Credo quod, salva gratia sua, hoc non est verum, quia non oportuit satisfactionem pro peccato primi hominis excedere totam creaturam in magnitudine et perfectione: sufficisset enim obtulisse maius bonum Deo quam fuit malum huius hominis peccantis tantum."

⁷² Duns Scotus, *Lectura* III, d. 20, q. 1, n. 31: "Tunc igitur haec propositio est falsa, quod 'debit offerre Deo maius omni illo pro quo peccare non debuerat'; sed sicut pro amore creaturae, ut obiecti diligibilis, peccavit—cum non debuit peccare—in Deum, ita satisfaciendo Deo debuit offerre aliquid maius objective quam sit creatura, scilicet amorem attingentem Deum propter se; et iste amor objective, ut terminatur in Deum propter se, excedit amorem creaturae in infinitum, sicut Deus creaturam."

were necessary only presupposing the divine ordination by which [God] ordered them to be done. Christ's suffering was necessary only by the necessity of consequence (*necessitas consequentiae*). Nevertheless, the whole, both antecedent and consequent, was contingent."⁷³ The only necessity involves the causal relationship of two contingent realities, and this contingency means not only that things could have been otherwise but even that, *Deo volente*, they may yet be otherwise.

Scotus changes the tone of reflection on the Incarnation and the Passion by prioritizing the modal category of possibility and by highlighting the glorification of Christ's soul as the logically prior end according to which other ends and means are ordered. This all falls within God's ordained power and dismantles several steps in Anselm's argument for the necessity of the Incarnation and the Passion. Employing a newly developing understanding of necessity, possibility, compossibility, and contingency, Scotus stresses the contingent and also voluntary nature of the Incarnation and the Passion. The *Summa halensis* and the *Summa theologiae* express similar notions through the language of fittingness, but Scotus seems not to regard fittingness as a proper modal category and so largely ignores it.

Conclusions

Anselm's influence on scholastic theology defies easy calculation or quantification; from intellectual dispositions to specific argumentative strategies, scholastic theologians harvested the fruits of Anselm's labors, occasionally in unexpected ways. In his endeavor to demonstrate the reasonableness of the Incarnation and the Passion, Anselm employed the modal categories of necessity and fittingness in his *Cur Deus homo*. Though it is easy to read the *Cur Deus homo* solely in terms of a satisfaction theory of atonement, and though a satisfaction theory was vastly important for scholastic soteriology, the most enduring legacy of the *Cur Deus homo* in scholastic Christology could well be the use of modal categories for framing the Incarnation and the Passion. Even when scholastic Christologies disputed Anselm's logic or conclusions, they did so within an argumentative structure suffused with modal language. The modal categories of necessity, fittingness, and possibility afforded a fine-edged tool for examining the reasonableness of the Incarnation and the

⁷³ Duns Scotus, *Lectura* III, d. 20, q. 1, n. 36: "Respondeo ergo ad quaestionem et dico quod omnia haec quae facta sunt a Christo circa redemptionem nostram, non fuerunt necessaria nisi praesupposita ordinatione divina qua sic ordinavit facere; et tunc tantum necessitate consequentiae necessarium fuit Christum pati, —sed tamen totum fuit contingens, et antecedens et consequens."

Passion, a tool put to extensive use in the *Summa halensis*, Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*, and John Duns Scotus's commentaries on the *Sentences*. In this sense, Anselm's *Cur Deus homo* and its use of modal categories provided the shape for much of scholastic Christology.

Of the texts examined here, the *Summa halensis* keeps closest to Anselm, quoting from the *Cur Deus homo* frequently and at great length. More tellingly, the *Summa halensis* structures its presentation of the Incarnation and the Passion by considering in tandem necessity and fittingness, a structure that affirms Anselm's basic logic while guarding against making any claim to the strong necessity of the Incarnation or the Passion. Ruling out strong necessity and advocating only a weak necessity allow the *Summa halensis* to focus on fittingness and the voluntary character of Christ's redemptive work. The *Summa halensis* accomplishes different tasks with these different modal categories, using the category of necessity to explore humanity as fallen yet reparable by the *Deus-homo* and using the category of fittingness to explore the details of the actual Incarnation and Passion. The fittingness of the actual Incarnation and Passion emerges with greatest clarity against a backdrop of counterfactual possibilities; possible alternatives eliminate the constraint associated with strong necessity and create space for fittingness. Perhaps the clearest example of this is when the *Summa halensis* argues the Incarnation would still be fitting even if human beings had not sinned. This could be interpreted as an affirmation that God would have become incarnate had there been no sin, but the *Summa halensis* does not go so far as to affirm such a speculative view. Had there been no sin, the Incarnation still would have been fitting. Since it is not necessary in any strong sense, this fittingness cannot determine whether God would have become incarnate apart from sin. The *Summa halensis* thus links the Incarnation's fittingness with human beatification and its weak necessity with sin, a strategy that separates the strengths of Anselm's approach from its weaknesses and understands fittingness and weak necessity as distinct yet compatible modal categories.

Thomas Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* concentrates more squarely on fittingness as the appropriate modal category for discussing the Incarnation and the Passion. This might appear to be little more than a truncated version of the *Summa halensis*'s approach, with the treatment of necessity and human fallenness simply lopped off. Such an appearance would deceive. The *Summa theologiae*'s *Tertia pars* certainly assumes humanity's sinfulness and need for salvation, but Thomas shows far less interest than did the *Summa halensis* in following the logical steps of Anselm's argument. Aquinas also redefines the *Summa halensis*'s distinction between

weak necessity and fittingness, identifying external fittingness with weak external necessity *ex suppositione*, an identity that solidifies the modal status of fittingness. Fittingness can also be considered internally as whatever corresponds or agrees with the very nature of a thing (*ST* III, q. 1, a. 1). The Incarnation was fitting internally inasmuch as it corresponds with the divine nature to communicate itself maximally and was fitting externally inasmuch as it represents the most expedient and richest means for ushering humanity to its divinely appointed end. God's absolute power could always accomplish human liberation otherwise. In so restricting necessity and invoking God's absolute power and its realm of possibilities, Aquinas limits the weight of Anselm's satisfaction theory. Elevating fittingness as the primary modal category leads Aquinas to specific and narrow speculations. Hypothetical and counterfactual questions are useful only when directed to modal categories considered externally and *ex suppositione*. Aquinas's Christology takes a very cautious approach to modal speculations dependent solely on what internally befits God.

John Duns Scotus grants less value to Anselm's satisfaction theory than the *Summa halensis* or the *Summa theologiae* did. The *Summa halensis* follows Anselm, though with a few substantial qualifications, and the *Summa theologiae* presents satisfaction as one mode among many of the Passion's efficacy. Scotus dismantles the very logic of the satisfaction theory, not just its claims to necessity. Affirmation of other possible means for human salvation fits with Scotus's general framing of the Incarnation through the category of possibility. This framing was not novel, but Scotus's use of it was. His emphasis on the logical priority of the chief end and the compossibility of other ends and means to this chief end stresses the contingency of the Incarnation and the Passion and elevates the importance of God's will in human salvation. There should not be too much made of the voluntarism and intellectualism division, but Scotus's voluntarist disposition certainly defines his soteriology, depends upon his modal philosophy, and provides a further example of how modal categories shaped scholastic Christology.

Despite the differences among the *Summa halensis*, Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*, and Scotus's *Lectura* and *Ordinatio*, the Christologies presented in these texts all share a general modal shape dependent upon the advances of Anselm's *Cur Deus homo*. The dominance of a modal category within each Christology correlates with its evaluation of a satisfaction theory of atonement. Little scholarly attention has been paid to the use of modal categories in scholastic Christology or to fittingness as a modal category. Overlooking the use of modal categories ignores a prominent

tendency of scholastic thought, a tendency that sheds light on the shape of scholastic Christology and on the various uses of modal philosophy within medieval theology. Following Anselm, the authors of the *Summa halensis*, Thomas Aquinas, and John Duns Scotus confronted the task of demonstrating the reasonableness of the Incarnation and the Passion. Though not all pursued that demonstration according to a satisfaction theory of atonement, all pursued it armed with a keen sense of modal categories as useful tools for exploring a mystery. N-V