

Did Scotus Embrace Anselm's Notion of Freedom?

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In his “Duns Scotus and the Experience of Human Freedom,” Joseph Incandela outlines three contemporary interpretations of Duns Scotus’s understanding of freedom.¹ Much of the article is devoted to explaining William Frank’s view that Scotus embraces Anselm’s understanding of freedom as “the ability to keep the rectitude of the will for its own sake.”² Frank is not alone in seeing this connection; it has been noted by, among others, B. M. Bonansea and Allan B. Wolter.³ There can be no doubt that Scotus was influenced by Anselm’s thought on many issues: the satisfaction theory of the atonement, the distinction between *affectio commodi* and *affectio iustitiae*, and the ontological argument, to name a few.⁴ It is important, however, to see exactly what the influence is, for Scotus often rejects Anselm’s views. In particular, it is important to gauge what influence Anselm’s views about freedom exerted on Scotus’s own understanding of freedom. To do so, we must first look briefly at Anselm’s own claims about free choice.

I benefited greatly from comments on earlier versions of this article by Joseph Incandela and two anonymous readers of *Medieval Philosophy and Theology*.

1. *Thomist* 56:2 (1992): 229–56.

2. The Latin phrase *potestas servandi rectitudinem voluntatis propter ipsam rectitudinem*, has been translated by the various authors I treat as “the ability to keep rectitude of the will for its own sake,” as well as “the ability to keep uprightness of the will for the sake of its uprightness.” They are to be treated as equivalent expressions.

3. See Bonansea’s *Man and His Approach to God in John Duns Scotus* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1983), p. 61; and Wolter’s *The Philosophical Theology of John Duns Scotus* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 148.

4. For Anselm’s satisfaction theory of the atonement and Scotus’s reaction to it, see my “Scotus’ Departure from Anselm’s Theory of the Atonement,” *Recherches de Théologie ancienne et médiévale* 50 (1983): 227–41. I discuss the two-affectio theory of the will later in this article. Scotus’s discussion of Anselm’s ontological argument can be found in the *De Primo Principio*, chap. 4, par. 65, translated by Allan B. Wolter as *A Treatise on God as First Principle* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1966), p. 122.

I

In *On Freedom of Choice*, Anselm defines 'free choice' as "the ability to keep uprightness of will for the sake of this uprightness itself."⁵ He also asserts in the opening paragraphs of the treatise that free choice is a concept that is univocal to God and some creatures (angels, the blessed, and human beings). Many scholars have claimed that Anselm uses 'free will' interchangeably with 'free choice', and so they claim that his definition of 'freedom' is also "the ability to keep uprightness of will for the sake of this uprightness."⁶ Although there are difficulties if this definition defines both 'freedom' and 'free choice', apparently Scotus thought that Anselm saw the two notions as being closely connected.⁷ In addition to his insistence on the univocal nature of the concept of free choice, it is important to realize that Anselm holds that God, the good angels, and the blessed are free, even though they are not able to sin.⁸ Satan and the other fallen angels, as well as human beings, are free, however, because they are able to follow either their affection for benefit or their affection for justice. To clarify this point, we must turn briefly to Anselm's treatise *The Fall of Satan*.

In this treatise, Anselm claims that there are two dispositions found in the wills of human beings and of all angels before some of them fell. By means of the first disposition, "the affection for benefit" (*affectio ad commodum*), an individual is able to will that which seems to benefit him, in the sense of bringing him happiness. This disposition is in play, for example, whenever a human being wills to eat, wills to protect himself, wills to gather possessions, and so on. By means of the second disposition, "the affection for justice" (*affectio ad justitiam*), an individual is able to will what an individual should do. In particular, according to Anselm, through this disposition an individual is able to follow the commands of God.

In an intriguing thought experiment, Anselm considers the creation of Satan in a series of distinct steps. If Satan were created with neither of the dispositions, he would be unable to will at all. For the only way to move from the state of not willing to the state of willing is to will, and without an already existing ability to will, one cannot will. So, Satan must possess one of the two

5. *Truth, Freedom, and Evil: Three Philosophical Dialogues by Anselm of Canterbury*, trans. and ed. Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 127. The Latin text is to be found in *Opera Omnia*, vol. I, ed. F. S. Schmitt (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1968), p. 212.

6. See Jasper Hopkins, *A Companion to the Study of St. Anselm* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972), p. 141, for an explicit linking of the two concepts.

7. I discuss these difficulties and argue for a distinction between 'freedom' and 'free choice' in Anselm's thought in "An Implicit Distinction between Freedom and Free Choice in Anselm's Thought," in *Anselm Studies III* (Toronto: Mellen Press, 1995).

8. Anselm makes this point early in *On Freedom of Choice*.

abilities in order to will at all. If, however, Satan were created with only the disposition to will what is beneficial (*affectio ad commodum*), he would not be free, for he could only will what seemed beneficial to him. Likewise, if he were created with only the disposition to will what is just (*affectio ad justitiam*), he would not be free since he could will only what is just. Satan can be free only if he possesses both dispositions since the possession of both dispositions is necessary for choice to exist. Thus, only if Satan can choose between what is beneficial and what is just would he be free. The same is true of human beings.

One fascinating aspect of Anselm's claim that the possession of both dispositions is necessary for the freedom of human beings and Satan is that, according to him, an agent must be in a state of ignorance about the exact relationship between the two affections.⁹ For example, if the agent were to know for certain that his ultimate benefit lies in following justice, the agent would not be free to act in accordance with what seemed beneficial; he could act only in accord with what is just. Likewise, if an agent knew that he would be punished for acting in accord with what seems to be beneficial (in distinction to what was just), he would know that choosing the seemingly beneficial would not ultimately benefit him and so he could choose only what is just. Consequently, he would not be free. It follows, then, that Satan before he fell and all angels before they fell, as well as all human beings when they act freely, must possess the two abilities in ignorance of the fact that doing what is just is of ultimate benefit. Moreover, the angels who did not fall and saw the punishment of the angels who did fall now understand that acting in accord with justice (the will of God) is in their ultimate interest. They are therefore not able to will anything but that which is just. This ability, of course, gives them freedom of choice, but it effectively eliminates any freedom in the sense that human beings have freedom.

Human beings, ignorant that it is to their ultimate benefit to act in accord with justice, retain both the affection for benefit and the affection for justice. They are able to choose between the two affections, and, consequently, they are able to sin. (Once human beings are numbered among the blessed, they lose their ignorance and no longer have a choice between the affections.) As Anselm points out at the end of *On Freedom of Choice*, human beings have the freedom to retain uprightness of will (by serving justice) or to lose it (by rejecting justice). Once they have lost uprightness of will, they can regain it or never regain it. God's grace plays an important

9. This position is made very clear in *The Fall of Satan*, chaps. 21–25. It is difficult to ascertain precisely what Anselm means by 'know' when he talks about 'knowing' that one's ultimate benefit is the same as following justice. Believing Christians, for example, hold that their ultimate benefit (the beatific vision) is achieved by doing what is just. Presumably, this does not qualify as the knowledge Anselm has in mind. This knowledge seems to be something like an absolute certainty from seeing it to be the case that one's ultimate benefit is to serve justice. God has this knowledge, of course, as do the angels and the blessed.

role here in addition to the choice to follow justice.¹⁰ The fallen angels, in contrast, are never able to regain uprightness of will. Even though they, presumably, possess the two affections, they will not receive God's grace and be restored to uprightness of will. Their fall is irrevocable.

Although this is only a brief sketch of Anselm's intriguing comments on free choice and freedom, it reveals the key elements of Anselm's views that Scotus cites in his texts. How much of Anselm's views did Scotus endorse? Let us turn to Scotus's own texts, cited by Bonansea and Frank, to answer this question.

II

In chapter two of his *Man and His Approach to God in John Duns Scotus*, Bonansea claims that, following Augustine, Anselm defines 'freedom' as "the ability to keep uprightness of the will for the sake of this uprightness itself."¹¹ He also says that Scotus endorsed Anselm's definition of freedom and made it his own. In defense of this claim, Bonansea provides a number of citations from Scotus's works. The first citation is from *Ordinatio* I, distinction 8, part 1, question 3: "Whether it is consistent with divine simplicity that God or anything formally said of God be in a genus."¹² This question discusses how concepts may be univocally said of God and creatures.¹³ In the section of the question Bonansea cites, Scotus is describing how concepts found in creatures are made univocal to God and creatures by separating out imperfections found in creaturely concepts.¹⁴ Scotus attributes to Anselm the claim that free

10. Stanley Kane treats the role of God's grace in *Anselm's Doctrine of Freedom and the Will* (Toronto: Edwin Mellen Press, 1981), pp. 160f. But see also Jasper Hopkins's negative assessment of Kane's treatment of Anselm: "Anselm on Freedom and the Will: A Discussion of G. Stanley Kane's Interpretation of Anselm," *Philosophy Research Archives* 9 (1983): 471–94.

11. Bonansea, *Man and His Approach to God*, p. 61.

12. *Opera Omnia*, Vatican ed., vol. 4, pp. 169f. (Civitas Vaticana: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1950).

13. I discuss Scotus's doctrine of univocity in "Duns Scotus' Epistemological Doctrine of Univocity," Ph.D. thesis, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J., 1978.

14. *Ordinatio* I, dist. 8, pt. 1, q. 3 (Vatican ed., vol. 4, pp. 185–86). Scotus explains how we construct univocal concepts in this way. We first find a notion of a property found in creatures that we also want to attribute to God, for example, wisdom. We construct a common concept by stripping away all imperfections associated with the presence of the property in creatures. We can then determine this common concept in one of two ways. We can determine it to apply to God by adding the notion of infinite to the common concept and create the determinate concept, for example, infinite wisdom, that applies only to God. We can also determine it to human beings by adding a notion like finite or limited to the common concept and create the determinate concept, for example, finite wisdom, that applies to human beings. See my "Doctrine of Univocity," pp. 42–72, for a discussion of this and the relevant texts from Scotus.

choice is a concept univocal to God and creatures based on Anselm's criticism in *On Freedom of Choice* of the view that 'free will' is to be defined as the 'power to sin'. Scotus also affirms that there is a univocal concept of free choice common to God and some creatures and that this univocal concept is not the power to sin. So Scotus and Anselm agree that there is a univocal concept of free choice. Scotus does not, however, claim here that the univocal concept is the ability to follow uprightness of the will for the sake of uprightness, nor does he claim that the univocal concept as it is determined to creatures is to be identified with this definition.

The second citation is from the *Opus Oxoniense* II, distinction 7, question 1: "Whether an evil angel necessarily wills evilly."¹⁵ Scotus opens the question with several opinions that evil angels do not necessarily will evilly. One of these opinions is based on Anselm's views. As stated, the opinion argues that since Anselm regards free choice as the ability to keep uprightness of the will for its own sake, and evil angels retain this ability even after their fall, evil angels do not necessarily will evilly; they can will well. At the end of the discussion of the whole question, Scotus claims that the evil angels possess free choice.¹⁶ But he does not base his view on Anselm's definition of 'free choice' as "the ability to keep uprightness of the will for its own sake." In offering his own view, Scotus refers the reader to Anselm's claim that "to be able to sin" (*posse peccare*) is no part of liberty (*libertas*). Scotus goes on to point out that one must be careful to distinguish "to be able to sin" (*posse peccare*) from "power for sinning" (*potentia ad peccandum*). According to Scotus, "to be able to sin" (*posse peccare*) is ordered to a deformed act and consequently is not part of free choice. "Power for sinning" (*potentia ad peccandum*) is, however, different and can be a part of free choice if understood in the correct way. In explaining how it should be understood, Scotus says that this power for sinning (*potentia ad peccandum*) contains two elements: one is an ability (*posse*) and the other is a deficiency (*deficere*).¹⁷ The ability (*posse*) by which one can sin is part of free choice. This ability can be seen as a "positive power for willing," and this positive power for willing is common to all free choice—whether it be the free choice of God, of the blessed, or of human beings. If this positive power for willing is unimpeded, it results in good acts. If the second element, a deficiency, is present, however, the result is sin. Where the positive power for willing is found (even when it is coupled with a defect and results in sin), free choice is also found. Since evil angels retain the positive power for willing, they retain free choice. Unfortunately, their willing is connected with the defect of having turned from God, and so they are in the state of

15. *Opera Omnia*, Vives ed., vol. 12, pp. 372bf. (Paris: L. Vives, 1893). When I refer to the version of the *Ordinatio* found in the Vatican edition, I specify *Ordinatio*. When I refer to the version found in the Vives edition, I specify *Opus Oxoniense*.

16. *Opus Oxoniense* II, p. 406a.

17. I follow the advice of an anonymous reader in translating parts of this difficult section of Scotus's question.

sin. The saints, however, as well as the good angels, exercise their positive power for willing without defect.

Having offered this analysis at the end of this section of the question, Scotus briefly discusses an argument based on Anselm's definition of 'free choice' as the "ability to preserve rectitude for its own sake," to the effect that the evil angels, possessing this ability, can keep rectitude and not be in a state of sin. In his discussion, Scotus does not embrace Anselm's definition of 'freedom' as the ability to preserve rectitude for its own sake. His concern is only to show that Anselm is not to be understood as suggesting that the evil angels have the ability not to be in a state of sin. Thus the text of *Opus Oxoniense* II, distinction 7, question 1, does not show that Scotus embraces Anselm's definition of freedom.

This is also the case with the third citation Bonansea provides: *Opus Oxoniense* II, distinction 44: "Whether the power of sinning (*potentia peccandi*) is from God."¹⁸ The question focuses on the issue of God's role in the sins of human beings. Does He give us an ordering to sin or does He give us a power that we use for sin? Scotus chooses the latter option. To make his point, he once again cites Anselm's claim that "to be able to sin" (*posse peccare*) is not liberty or a part of it.¹⁹ In elaboration of Anselm, he claims that the power of sinning (*potentia peccandi*) can be understood either as an immediate ordering to the act of sinning or as the foundation by which someone can sin. He distinguishes two senses of the "immediate order" reading, but his interest is really in the "foundation" reading. He draws an analogy with passive powers, in which it is the same power that either has something or is deprived of it. (An example of this, perhaps, would be the power of taste. It is the same power of taste that tastes a sour-ball candy or is deprived of tasting a sour-ball candy.) The point Scotus is trying to make with the analogy is that the positive free power found in human beings can be the source for either the good done through the power when it is exercised or the evil done when the power is used defectively. It is the positive free power that is given by God. Since this positive free power can be used by human beings in a defective way to sin, God gives human beings the power of sinning (*potentia peccandi*).²⁰ Scotus goes on to point out that there is a univocal concept of liberty (*libertas*) common to God and creatures.²¹ "To be able to sin" (*posse peccare*) is, of course, not

18. Vives ed., vol. 13, pp. 496bf.

19. Vives ed., vol. 13, pp. 496bf. Alan B. Wolter has translated this question in *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1986), pp. 458–63.

20. Vives ed., vol. 13, pp. 497a and b. Compare Wolter, *Will and Morality*, p. 460. As pointed out by an anonymous reader, Scotus's example of passive powers (and my sour-ball illustration) is best understood as an example of the contrast between having something and lacking it. But what Scotus wants to illustrate is the contrast between exercising a power and using it defectively, and this contrast is not captured well by his example.

21. Vives ed., vol. 13, pp. 497a and b.

found in God; nor is it part of the univocal concept of liberty common to God and creatures. The positive free power, which serves as the foundation for the sinning of human beings through defective use of the free power, is part of the univocal concept and is found in both God and human beings.²² God, of course, never uses the positive free power to do evil, even though human beings use it defectively in this way.

Despite Bonansea's statements, this text seems to undermine any claim that Scotus sees freedom as being identical to the ability to follow rectitude for its own sake. On the contrary, freedom for Scotus seems to be closely related to a positive free power that is manifested differently in God and in human beings.

III

William Frank has recently argued that the *Quodlibetal Questions*, especially question 16, lend considerable support to linking Scotus's view of freedom to Anselm's notion of keeping uprightness of will for its own sake (which Frank labels *firmitas*.) He states the connection most clearly in his "John Duns Scotus' Quodlibetal Teaching on the Will":

The argument we find ourselves developing is in all points similar to that posed by St. Anselm in his *De libertate arbitrii*. In light of Anselm and Scotus' agreement on the nature of free will as ability to adhere to the good, the convergence is not surprising. Scotus' theory of the will is more developed than his Benedictine ancestor's. The intervention of some two hundred years of a living tradition comes to fruit in the thought of Duns Scotus.²³

Frank is less explicit about Scotus's connection to Anselm in his article "Duns Scotus' Concept of Willing Freely: What Divine Freedom Beyond Choice Teaches Us."²⁴ Since the article presents many of the essential components of his longer work, there is no reason to think he abandons the connection in the former.

The bulk of Frank's argument depends on a close analysis of question 16 of the *Quodlibetal Questions*: "Are Freedom of Will and Natural Necessity Compatible as Regards the Same Act and Object?"²⁵ This question is, in turn, divided into three articles: "Is There Necessity in Any Act of the Will?" "Can

22. Vives ed., vol. 13, p. 498a; Wolter, *Will and Morality*, p. 462. On p. 11 of his introduction, Wolter identifies God's freedom with the potentiality to will the opposite.

23. Ph.D. thesis, Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., 1982, p. 207.

24. *Franciscan Studies* 42 (1982).

25. Translated in Allan B. Wolter and Felix Alluntis, trans. *God and Creatures* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 369f. Vives ed., vol. 26, pp. 180f.

Freedom and Necessity Coexist in the Will?” “Can Natural Necessity Ever Coexist with Freedom?” The first article presents the beginning of a puzzle that is carried into the second article. God is obviously the most free of all beings. Yet, there are at least two necessary acts God performs: God necessarily loves Himself and God necessarily spirates the Holy Spirit as the third person of the Trinity. It is clear, then, that there are at least two acts of a will, that is, God’s will, in which necessity is found. The same necessities do not, however, occur in the wills of finite beings like human beings. Human beings do not, of course, spirate the Holy Spirit, nor are they necessitated to love the final end; for they can cease to think about the end or even be prevented from willing the end by some external factor.²⁶ Scotus is thus careful to distinguish divine acts of the will from the acts of the wills of finite creatures.

Having established in the first article that there is necessity in acts of the will (i.e., necessity in two of God’s acts of will), Scotus then addresses in the second article—“Can Freedom and Necessity Coexist in the Will?”—how such necessity is compatible with freedom. He begins his discussion with two citations from authorities that freedom is compatible with necessity.²⁷ The first is from Augustine’s *Enchiridion*. Here Augustine claims that in the present life human beings are free because they have the power to will both good and evil. In the next life, however, human beings will not be able to will evil and yet they will retain their free will. In fact, they will be freer in that they will not be able to sin. The second citation is from Anselm’s *On Freedom of Choice*, and it follows a similar line. Here Anselm states that “someone who has what is appropriate and advantageous in such a way that it cannot be lost is freer than he who has this in such a way that it can be lost.” This point leads to the conclusion that “the will then which cannot cease to be upright is freer.”²⁸ Both of the citations from authority indicate that freedom is to be found even where the agent cannot do otherwise. Thus freedom must be compatible with necessitation. Scotus then offers three arguments from reason to establish that freedom can coexist with necessity.

The first argument is of less interest than the other two.²⁹ In fact, the

26. Wolter and Alluntis, *God and Creatures*, p. 370. Vives ed., vol. 26, p. 181a. See also Frank’s “*Quodlibetal Teaching*,” p. 50.

27. Wolter and Alluntis, *God and Creatures*, pp. 377–78. Vives ed., vol. 26, pp. 193bf.

28. Wolter and Alluntis, *God and Creatures*, p. 378. Vives ed., vol. 26, pp. 194af.

29. The first argument is this (Wolter and Alluntis, *God and Creatures*, p. 348, and Vives ed., vol. 26, p. 194a): if a power acts with respect to an object insofar as it is related to a second object, the same power obviously acts with respect to both objects. (For example, if I practice courtesy toward my colleagues to get tenure, my practice of courtesy is done for my colleagues as well as for my tenure.) The divine will wills agents insofar as they are related to their final end, that is, loving God Himself. (God creates human beings, for instance, so that they may enjoy God in the next life.) The divine will contingently wills these agents so ordered and thus freely wills them so ordered. This power of willing freely is an active principle in the divine will and extends to the end for which the agents are created. Thus God freely wills the final end, that is, loving God.

second argument forms the basis for Frank's linking of Scotus's view of freedom with Anselm's.³⁰ His presentation of the argument is this:

Firmitas Argument

- (1) The action which is love of the ultimate end is the most perfect action.
- (2) In love of the ultimate end, steadfastness contributes to the perfection.
- (3) Hence, in the most perfect action, steadfastness contributes to its perfection.
- (4) Therefore, necessity in the action asserts what is constitutive of the action's perfection, viz. freedom.³¹

In discussing this "*firmitas* argument" Frank tells us that premise (1) is true of an infinite agent (God), as well as a finite agent, for example, Adam. This is not controversial. Frank's understanding of (2) is much more controversial. He states, "When love's object is the ultimate end, steadfastness on the part of the will is an essential ingredient."³² But the text does not say this at all. It does not say that steadfastness is an ingredient in the act of the love of the ultimate end. It says only that in an action concerning the ultimate end, steadfastness is of the perfection of such an action. That is, an act of loving the ultimate end that includes steadfastness is more perfect than an act that lacks steadfastness. As long as it is not taken to mean that steadfastness is part of every act of loving the ultimate end, conclusion (3) is indeed, as Frank says, a simple inference from (1) and (2).

Frank concludes by claiming about conclusion (4),

Now (4) makes a significant point; it seems to identify the character of steadfastness as a manifestation of freedom. Scotus seems to suggest that to be free with regard to the ultimate end, at least in the supremely perfect act of love, means to be steadfast in love.³³

In fact, what the Latin text says is that "the necessity in the act of loving the final end does not destroy but rather implies (*magis ponit*) that which is of

30. *God and Creatures*, p. 378. Vives ed., vol. 26, p. 194a. See also Frank, "Concept of Willing Freely," p. 80, and Frank, *Quodlibetal Teaching*, pp. 70f.

31. Before examining this argument and Frank's comments on it, two clarifications are needed. As Frank points out, there is some controversy about premise (2). The Vives-Wadding edition of Scotus's works and Alluntis's edition of the *Quodlibetal Questions* both have 'libertas' instead of 'firmitas'. (See Frank, "Concept of Willing Freely," p. 80, n. 20, and Frank, *Quodlibetal Teaching*, p. 70, n. 25. See also Wolter's remarks in *Will and Morality*, pp. 14–15.) Moreover, in his thesis, Frank expresses conclusions (3) and (4) above in one conclusion, which is more faithful to the Latin text: "(3') Hence necessity, instead of precluding, actually calls for what pertains to its perfection, viz. freedom."

32. "Concept of Willing Freely," p. 81. It is important to note that throughout my discussion I assume that steadfastness/*firmitas* does not admit degrees. To be steadfast to something is to adhere continually to it; any turning away eliminates steadfastness/*firmitas*. I believe Frank also accepts this point (see note 36 below).

33. "Concept of Willing Freely," p. 81.

its perfection, that is liberty.” Clearly, the necessity spoken about is the necessity involved in God’s love of Himself, which is different from the contingency involved in the love human beings have for the ultimate end. Moreover, Scotus merely emphasizes that the necessity in the act of loving is based on the fact that the act of loving is free. He does not, as Frank claims, identify freedom with steadfastness even in God’s act of loving Himself.³⁴ It appears that Frank has misinterpreted this argument.

Frank uses his understanding of the *firmitas* argument to claim that Scotus has two distinct formulations of the fundamental meaning of freedom. The first formulation is what Frank calls “basic freedom”: “the ability to have opposite intentional objects.”³⁵ The second formulation is *firmitas*: “the ability to continually adhere to the unlimitedly perfecting object.”³⁶ This ability obtains in the absence of alternatives and is consistent with necessity. It is the latter formulation that connects Scotus’s view of freedom with Anselm’s. Indeed, in the final section of his article, Frank claims that Scotus’s univocal notion of freedom consists of “active power, indeterminate over-sufficiency, and firmitas.”³⁷

Unfortunately, Frank has misunderstood what Scotus means by a univocal concept. This is a concept that is common to both God and creatures.³⁸ *Firmitas* is not part of the common notion of freedom, for among creatures, freedom is found in choice among alternatives.³⁹ This is particularly true of the love of the ultimate end, for Scotus strongly affirms the contingency of creatures’ love of the ultimate end. *Firmitas* (steadfastness) is a perfection of the freedom exercised by creatures but is not an essential part of it. Having made a choice—for example Adam’s marriage to Martha instead of to Gertrude—a creature increases the perfection of his act by remaining steadfast to his choice. But a creature makes free choices even in cases in which he does not remain steadfast to the choice. *Firmitas* is, of course, part of any act God performs. As Scotus points out in the conclusion to article 1, question 16, of *Quodlibetal Questions*, God’s acts are marked by the necessity of immutability as opposed to the necessity of inevitability.⁴⁰ The neces-

34. “Concept of Willing Freely,” p. 80.

35. “Concept of Willing Freely,” p. 81.

36. “Concept of Willing Freely,” p. 83.

37. “Concept of Willing Freely,” p. 86.

38. See nn. 13 and 14 above. In correspondence, Joe Incandela suggests that Frank’s view that *firmitas* is what is univocal to God and creatures be seen in this way: “the will of the viator has the innate ability to tend towards steadfastness. Since this is an ability God’s will always has, there is a kind of univocity here.” Steadfastness can indeed be univocal to God and creatures, for God enjoys perfect steadfastness and rational agents are sometimes steadfast in their actions. But establishing that steadfastness is univocal to God and creatures does not establish that steadfastness is equivalent to freedom (in Scotus’s eyes). Simply because one univocal concept may be related to another, it does not follow that they are the same concept.

39. Frank, “Concept of Willing Freely,” p. 86.

40. Wolter and Alluntis, *God and Creatures*, pp. 376–77. Vives ed., vol. 26, p. 190a.

sity of inevitability, on the one hand, "not only excludes change or succession but rules out that the divine will could have willed other than it has." It is thus not appropriate to God. On the other hand, the necessity of immutability "excludes a change of will in which at some subsequent moment the divine will would will differently than at present." Scotus explicitly states that this necessity of immutability is appropriate to God, for if He were to will differently after willing in a particular fashion He would have changed, and this is inconsistent with His immutability. So *firmitas* is part of all God's free acts. Since it is not an essential part of the free acts of creatures but a perfection of them, it should not be seen as an ingredient of those acts. *Firmitas* is different from freedom and is not part of any univocal notion of freedom.

One of the appeals of Frank's identification of *firmitas* with freedom is that it explains how a necessary act can be free, and he sees *question 16* as providing this explanation. In particular, Frank thinks that the identification between *firmitas* and freedom can be used to show that the simple necessity found in God's loving Himself and spirating the Holy Spirit is consistent with their freedom. If *firmitas* is seen as a perfection of freedom and is not identified with it, it is not obvious how God's necessary actions can be seen as free. How, then, does Scotus explain how God's necessary acts can be free? Perhaps the remaining parts of the second article of *question 16* help to answer this question.

The third argument from reason that Scotus offers to show that freedom is consistent with necessity can be summarized in this way.⁴¹ A condition that is intrinsic to a power either in itself or in its ordering to a perfect act must be consistent with the most perfect act of the power. Liberty is a condition of the will in its acts. Hence, liberty must be consistent with the most perfect act of the will. As was shown in the first article of *question 16*, God's necessarily loving Himself is one of the perfect acts of His will, which is free. Hence, liberty must be consistent with God's necessarily loving Himself.

This argument from reason does not show how freedom is consistent with necessity through a demonstration that freedom can be construed in a way that is consistent with necessity. Rather, it points out that if the acts of a being are free, and necessity is the perfection of one or more of this being's acts, necessity must be consistent with freedom. Scotus thus seems to be content in justifying his claim that necessity and freedom are consistent in God's acts without actually providing an explanation. In fact, Scotus immediately after this second argument from reason asserts just this point: "If you ask, how does freedom coexist with necessity, I answer with the Philosopher: 'Do not seek a reason for things for which no reason can be given; for there is no demonstration of the starting point of demonstration'."⁴² In *question 16*, articles 1 and 2, Scotus is not interested in defining freedom so much as using God's

41. Wolter and Alluntis, *God and Creatures*, p. 378. Vives ed., vol. 26, p. 194b.

42. Wolter and Alluntis, *God and Creatures*, p. 379. Vives ed., vol. 26, p. 194b.

intrinsic acts to show that necessity is consistent with freedom. The very last lines of the question, in fact, bring home this point:

Confirmation: The division of agents into those which act naturally and those which act freely is not the same as the division of agents into those acting necessarily and those acting contingently. For some natural agents act contingently, because their action can be impeded. For like reasons, then, it is possible that some free agent act necessarily without detriment to its freedom.⁴³

As Frank points out, however, there is an addition to question 16 of *Quodlibetal Questions* in the three manuscripts he used.⁴⁴ It is a very complicated addition, discussing among other issues various senses of necessity. The principal point of the addition seems to be to explain the sense of freedom found in God's act of loving Himself. The definition Scotus offers comes in the last third of the addition: "In what, therefore, does this liberty of willing consist? I answer: because he delightfully and, as it were, electively elicits this act and persists in it."⁴⁵

The stress in these sentences, it seems to me, is on the fact that God delightfully elicits (chooses) the act of loving Himself; and this choice is what liberty of willing consists of. Having made this choice, God then continues to love Himself. This continuation is *firmitas*, of course, but it is best understood as being the preservation of the free choice rather than as being a constituent of the free choice. It is thus difficult to see these lines as defining God's freedom as *firmitas*, which Frank seems to want to do. On the contrary, they seem to indicate that liberty of will consists of choice. So even the addition to the manuscripts provides no attempt to redefine freedom in such a way as to explain its compatibility with necessity. Freedom is choice among alternatives, and Scotus affirms that it is consistent with the simple necessity of God's loving Himself and spirating the Holy Spirit.

I have not discussed the third article of question 16—"Can Natural Necessity Ever Coexist with Freedom"—because it does not bear immediately on Frank's identification of Scotus's definition of freedom with Anselm's. My discussion of the first two articles of this question, however, shows that the question does not support Frank's claim that Scotus embraced Anselm's definition of freedom. Quite simply, Frank fails to show that Scotus regards *firmitas* as anything other than a perfection of freedom.

Frank also finds support for his claim of an identity between Scotus's and Anselm's views of freedom in Scotus's endorsement of Anselm's two-affec-

43. Wolter and Alluntis, *God and Creatures*, p. 379. Vives ed., vol. 26, p. 195a.

44. *Quodlibetal Teaching*, pp. 80f.

45. My translation from the Latin text in Frank, *Quodlibetal Teaching*, p. 216: "In quo igitur est ista libertas volendi? Respondeo: quia delectabiliter et quasi eligibiliter elicit actum, et permanet in actu." Frank's translation (*Quodlibetal Teaching*, p. 84) of the critical part of the passage is "I answer it consists in the fact that he elicits this act and preserves in it as something delightful which he has elected, as it were, to do."

tions theory of the will.⁴⁶ There can be no doubt that Scotus was influenced by Anselm and appropriated many aspects of Anselm's two-affectio theory. Nonetheless, Scotus's embrace of the theory does not lead him to an embrace of Anselm's definition of freedom as the ability to serve uprightness of will for its own sake. To see this, we must examine Frank's argument.⁴⁷

Scotus agrees with Anselm that human beings, in their nature, possess an *affectio commodi*, which is an inclination to pursue what is to one's own advantage.⁴⁸ Anselm also holds that after the fall of Adam, the *affectio iustitiae* is not innate but is supernaturally infused. Scotus, however, regards the *affectio iustitiae* as innate to the will. In agreement with Anselm, Scotus holds that a will that possesses only the *affectio commodi* cannot be free since it can pursue only those things that are advantageous to it. Only when a will also possesses the *affectio iustitiae* can it be free, for with the possession of both affectioes the will can choose among significant alternatives.⁴⁹

In emphasizing the need for *affectio iustitiae*, Scotus in several places seems to identify it with freedom. In *Ordinatio* II, distinction 6, question 2—a discussion of Lucifer's sin—Scotus calls the innate *affectio iustitiae* “the liberty of the will,” as well as the “innate liberty of the will.”⁵⁰ In *Opus Oxoniense* III, distinction 26, note 17, after citing Anselm's claim in *On Freedom of Choice* and *The Fall of Satan* that there are two affectioes, Scotus claims that the *affectio iustitiae* is superior to the *affectio commodi*. In its innate form—as opposed to its acquired or infused forms—*affectio iustitiae* is natural (*ingenita*) freedom, for it allows a human being to choose other than what is to his own advantage.⁵¹ Frank emphasizes this identification and argues that Scotus's notion of innate *affectio iustitiae* is to conform one's volitions and acts to a higher will, that is, God's. Thus “any free act is an act in accordance with the order of justice,” which is to act in conformity with rectitude. Therefore, freedom is the ability to conform to the good, and this sense of freedom, according to Frank, is a development of Anselm's own definition of ‘freedom’.⁵²

46. *Quodlibetal Teaching*, pp. 191f.

47. The argument is best presented in *Quodlibetal Teaching* on pp. 191–97 and 201–3.

48. In *Opus Oxoniense* III, dist. 15, n. 19 (Vives ed., vol. 14, p. 592), Scotus suggests that *affectio commodi* is based on a more basic *affectio amicitiae*.

49. John Boler has recently argued that freedom for Scotus does not involve choice between the two affectioes; it requires only the agent's ability to choose or refrain from choosing. This “superabundant sufficiency” can occur even if the agent possesses only one of the two dispositions. See “Transcending the Natural: Duns Scotus on the Two Affectioes of the Will,” *The American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 69:1 (Winter 1993): 115–16. Boler's view requires extended treatment, which I cannot offer here, but it appears from the texts I discuss that Scotus does link freedom with possession of the two dispositions.

50. Found in Wolter, *Will and Morality*, p. 468.

51. Vives ed., vol. 15, pp. 340–41.

52. Frank, *Quodlibetal Teaching*, pp. 196–97, 201. In *Philosophical Theology*, p. 149, Wolter calls Scotus's view about positive freedom Anselmian. On p. 152, he talks about the *affectio iustitiae* as the root freedom of the will.

Frank's argument is ingenious, but it has significant difficulties. First, if freedom of the will were equivalent to the innate *affectio justitiae*, a being who possessed only this *affectio* and lacked (an impossibility) the *affectio commodi* would be free. As we have seen, Scotus (and Anselm) rejects this view and holds that a human being is free only if he possesses both affections. Second, there are passages in which Scotus distinguishes freedom from the *affectio justitiae*. In *Opus Oxoniense* IV, distinction 49, question 5, note 3, he talks about how the latter belongs to the will insofar as it is free. In *Opus Oxoniense* IV, distinction 10, notes 11–14, he discusses how the *affectio commodi* is in the will even without freedom or the presence of the *affectio justitiae* and that with the presence of both affections, the will has the freedom to will something other than what is to its advantage.⁵³ These passages suggest a view of *affectio justitiae* that is different from Frank's identification of it with freedom. Freedom is not to be identified with the *affectio justitiae*; rather, freedom occurs when an agent possesses both the *affectio commodi* and the *affectio justitiae*. Only when the two affections are present is there choice among alternatives, which is the basic Scotistic notion of freedom. Since there is no disagreement between Scotus and Anselm that the *affectio commodi* is innate to human beings, Scotus tends to talk about the presence of *affectio justitiae* as yielding freedom. While one might regard this tendency as an equation of freedom with the *affectio justitiae*, as Frank does, it is important to realize that it is the presence of both affections that yields freedom. Of course, the fact that an agent has both affections and thus is free does not entail that any act he performs is free. Acts performed under the coercion of an external agent, for example, are not free.⁵⁴

IV

We have seen no evidence in the *Quodlibetal Questions* or in various other texts in which Scotus cites Anselm's view of free choice that he endorses the view that freedom is to be equated with the ability to serve uprightness of will for the sake of this uprightness. Nor does Scotus's embrace of Anselm's two-affections theory of the will lead us to think that he endorses the definition. On the contrary, the texts reveal that Scotus's own view of freedom is more properly connected with what has been called "basic

53. Vives ed., vol. 21, pp. 172, 379–81.

54. Wolter and Alluntis, *God and Creatures*, pp. 379–80. Wolter, *Will and Morality*, pp. 174f.

freedom”: the ability to choose among alternatives.⁵⁵ This is the concept of freedom that is univocal to God and creatures. As part of this notion, it is clear that a will that is free is in control of its own actions; it cannot be compelled or forced to act in a certain way by an external agent. It is not even dominated by reason, for a free will can reject what right reason dictates. To be sure, a free will is more perfect to the degree that it follows right reason and remains steadfast in this pursuit. But this is a perfection of freedom and is not to be identified with it.

55. In my *God's Willing Knowledge: Scotus' Analysis of God's Omniscience* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986), I analyze Scotus's conception of freedom in chapters 2 and 3. Although I do not use the notion of “basic freedom” to discuss his view of freedom, I show that the ability to choose among alternatives is an important component of that view. One can refer to these chapters to see why I say here that the univocal concept of freedom involves choice among alternatives. I also argue in the book that once Scotus's analysis of God's omniscience is taken into account, his conception of freedom must be seen as a form of compatibilism, which still allows the will's self-determination.

