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Ockham as a divine-command theorist

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Abstract: **Although this thesis is denied by much recent scholarship, Ockham holds that the ultimate ground of a moral judgement's truth is a divine command, rather than natural or non-natural properties. God could assign a different moral value not only to every exterior act, but also to loving God. Ockham does allow that someone who has not had access to revelation can make correct moral judgements. Although her right reason dictates what God in fact commands, she need not know that God so commands. Ockham's divine-command theory plays an important role in the shift away from a nature-based ethics, and it anticipates contemporary problems concerning truth in meta-ethics.**

There are several rival interpretations of William of Ockham's ethical theory. A once predominant view was that Ockham is a divine-command theorist who holds that the source of moral obligation is a divine command.[1] Although Armand Maurer emphasizes the role of right reason in Ockham's moral philosophy, he also thinks that, for Ockham, it is the divine will that ultimately makes an act right or wrong.[2] Servais Pinckaers holds an unmitigated interpretation of Ockham as a divine-command theorist.[3] According to Pinckaers, Ockham's divine-command ethics plays a central role in the transition from a moral theology based on virtue and happiness to one based entirely on obligation.

The general trend of recent scholarship has been to reject this interpretation of Ockham. There are two main rival interpretations of Ockham which are represented by two contributors to *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham*.[4] The first is that of Marilyn McCord Adams, who argues that Ockham's ethics is based not only on divine commands but also on right reason. On her view, there are two different norms in Ockham's theory. The second is that of Peter King, who argues that Ockham's ethics is based on loving God. On this view, God should be obeyed because He should be loved, and it would be impossible virtuously to hate God.

This disagreement over whether Ockham is a divine-command theorist is important because it affects the way in which one interprets the history of ethics.

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Many philosophers and theologians have stressed Ockham's importance for ethics. For example, like Pinckaers, Oliver O'Donovan thinks that Ockham's thought represents a turning point in the development of a modern ethics which is based on precepts.[5] The recent scholarship of King and Adams sheds doubt on the position that Ockham's ethical theory plays such a role. This doubt is connected to the issue of whether a precept-based ethics naturally follows from the way in which Ockham denies his predecessors' understanding of natural teleology and human nature.

I shall attempt to show that Ockham does indeed represent a shift towards a divine-command morality, although the extent and nature of this shift has often been misapprehended. It will be argued here that a more consistent reading of Ockham's texts can be given if he is understood to hold that the ultimate source of moral obligation is a divine command. This interpretation of Ockham as a divine-command theorist makes it possible to reconcile his different statements about right reason, divine commands, and loving God. Against Adams, it will be argued that right reason is not a norm for ethics in a way that divine commands are. For Ockham, actions are ultimately made right or wrong by a divine command. But even though right reason may dictate that such an act is right or wrong, the agent does not always recognize that the action's rightness or wrongness depends upon a divine command. Against King, it will be argued that a divine command is the source of even the obligation to love God.

Right reason and divine commands

According to Marilyn McCord Adams, Ockham's moral theory has two norms which, in principle, are separable, although in fact they are not separated. She writes, 'it is enough for the coherence of moral theory if the two criteria for morally virtuous action, right reason and divine precepts, *in fact* yield extensionally equivalent results … . The two norms could break apart but they do not and will not!'[6] On her view, divine precepts and right reason, (1) are intentionally different norms, and (2) express different moralities, one which is positive and based on divine precepts, and another which is non-positive and Aristotelian. Positive morality is about that which is right or wrong because it is commanded or prohibited by a superior, and non-positive morality is about that which can be known to be right or wrong apart from such a command. There are two different meanings of the moral 'ought', one which refers to the binding power of God's commands, and another which refers to the rationality of an action. Ockham's moral theory is consistent because these two 'oughts' never conflict.

My objection to Adams's position is twofold. First, right reason merely indicates that an act should be done; it is not a reason for the rightness of an act in the way that a divine command can be. Second, the distinction between positive and non-positive moral science is only about the way in which different obligations

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are known. Ockham's acceptance of this distinction does not entail that he thinks that positive and non-positive morality are two independent and possibly competing moral theories.

Two clarifications need to be made in order properly to explain my objections. First, the term 'divine commands' will be used to denote not just commands which are explicitly issued by God, such as those which are in the Mosaic Law, but also God's free decisions to make any particular acts right or wrong. The word 'command' is ambiguous. Second, the 'source of moral obligation' denotes that which makes an act right or wrong, not only in a particular world but in any possible world. It will be argued here that the rightness or wrongness of a particular act is ultimately a result of God's free decision and is determined by no other factor. Right reason dictates that an act is right or wrong, and its judgement is true because God freely chose to create a world in which such an act is right or wrong.

According to Ockham, right reason is a type of practical knowledge.[7] Some practical knowledge does not dictate that an act should be done, but merely how an act should be done.[8] For example, architecture is about how a house should be built.[9] He calls such knowledge 'ostensive'. The arts are ostensive in that they direct how an act should be done. In contrast, prudence is 'dictative' because it dictates that an act should be done. Although Ockham thinks that, properly speaking, prudence is that knowledge which is gained through experience, he also thinks that, improperly speaking, prudence can denote all the universal and particular knowledge necessary for a virtuous action.[10] It is in this latter sense that right reason is prudence.[11] We might make a complex judgement, 'helping this needy person is good'. Right reason issues the command, 'this needy person ought to be helped'. Although right reason dictates that an obligation be fulfilled, alone it does not indicate the ultimate source of an obligation.

Adams is correct to claim that right reason is necessary for the virtuous action. Nevertheless, the fact that right reason is necessary for a virtuous action does not entail that right reason is a norm in the way that a divine command can be. In what way is right reason necessary?[12] Ockham emphasizes that, in order to act virtuously and not in ignorance or for a non-moral reason, someone must make and obey a judgement that the act should be done.[13] Moreover, right reason is a secondary partial object of an intrinsically virtuous act of the will.[14] In order for an act to be virtuous someone has to will that it be done because right reason indicates that it should be done. If someone helps the needy unthinkingly, or for vainglory, instead of out of obedience to right reason, then a necessary condition for the virtuous action is missing.

The addition of right reason changes the species of the will's act and the moral value of an external action.[15] The external act has its own object, but it has no unchangeable moral value from its object. The external act is good by extrinsic denomination.[16] Its value comes from an act of the will which is good by intrinsic

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denomination. For example, when someone gives alms out of vainglory and then does it for the honour of God, there is the one external action, which is giving alms. Right reason is a circumstance of such an external act because the act remains the same whether it is elicited in accordance with right reason or not. The external act of almsgiving remains the same, just as it remains so whether it is done in the morning or in the evening, or in one town or another. However, the value of the external action depends on whether the act of the will is elicited in accordance with right reason or not. Right reason indicates that alms should be given for God rather than out of vainglory. When the agent during the same external act begins to do it in obedience to the dictates of right reason, she performs a new act of the will. The addition of right reason coincides with the production of an act of a different species and a consequent change in the moral value of the external act.

Although right reason in a sense is the object of an act of the will, it is not its primary object. Ockham states that right reason is the secondary partial object of such an act. What does it mean to be such an object? The object specifies the act. Since the addition of right reason changes the species of the act, right reason is an object. Consequently, right reason is necessary for the goodness of the action. Nevertheless, it is not the primary object of the internal act, which is the end.[17] In the case of the almsgiver, the primary object of the will's virtuous act would be God's honour. Right reason does not explain the goodness of the action in the way that the honour of God does.

This discussion of right reason's role in virtuous action shows in what way right reason can be described as a 'norm'. Right reason is a necessary condition for virtuous action. But this necessity results from the fact that an act's moral value depends upon the agent's knowledge of the relevant objects and circumstances. Someone who lacks the use of reason lacks both the ability to act virtuously and also the ability to sin. For example, a drunk person does not have the use of reason. Consequently, a drunken person who commits adultery is guilty of drunkenness but not of adultery.[18] To be guilty, she would have to know what she is doing. Similarly, a virtuous agent must know what she is doing. To this extent, Adams may be justified in describing right reason as a 'norm' or perhaps better as a 'criterion'. But Ockham never hints that right reason can be a source of obligation, which competes with a divine command.

At times, Adams suggests that, whereas right reason is the basis for good actions, divine commands are the basis for meritorious actions.[19] Ockham himself does not make this distinction. It is true that an act is meritorious because God has made it so and not simply because it is virtuous, or even because of the supernatural habit of charity.[20] Moreover, there are some virtuous actions, such as those of pagans, which are not meritorious.[21] Nevertheless, Ockham's acceptance of the distinction between positive and non-positive morality shows that, on his view, divine commands in some way determine the moral value of many

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acts.[22] Merit and virtue are distinct for Ockham, and God could have made it so that their relationships were very different. Nevertheless, this distinction between merit and virtue does not imply on its own that right reason and divine commands are similarly distinct, and that God could create a world in which they played different and even conflicting roles in the structure of a different moral theory.

What would it mean for right reason and divine commands to conflict? There are two scenarios. First, right reason could dictate that a divine command be disobeyed. But Ockham thinks that a divine command is a sufficient reason for right reason to dictate that the commanded act be done. Moreover, God cannot command an unjust act, since the act would be just by the very fact that it is commanded by God.[23] There is no possible conflict. Second, God could command that right reason be disobeyed. Ockham does not consider this as a possibility. Any action with moral worth must be done freely and with knowledge. God could not make the act of digestion virtuous by a command because digestion is not the type of act that can be virtuous. Similarly, God cannot command that right reason be disobeyed, because the only type of act that can be virtuous is an act which is elicited in accordance with right reason. It is impossible for right reason and divine commands to be conflicting norms in Ockham's ethical theory.

Adams's position, that there are two norms in Ockham's ethical theory, is connected to her belief that there are two distinct moralities for Ockham, the positive and the non-positive. On her interpretation, divine commands are norms for positive morality and right reason is a norm for non-positive morality. On her view, since divine commands play the central role only in positive morality, it follows that, for Ockham, the ultimate source of moral obligation cannot be a divine command.

Adams does not fully take into account the context in which Ockham distinguishes between the two types of moral science. Ockham mentions the distinction between positive and non-positive moral science in the context of a question about whether moral science is demonstrative.[24] Positive moral science is about those divine and human laws which make an act right or wrong simply because it is commanded or prohibited. A contemporary example would be the wrongness of driving down the incorrect side of the street, or of not paying the appropriate tax. There is no way to know the wrongness of such acts apart from knowing the law. Ockham seems to have human law especially in mind when he states that positive moral science is the science of jurists and consequently not demonstrative, since it is based on human laws rather than on evident principles.[25] Nevertheless, positive moral science includes knowledge of some divine commands as well. These commands presumably would be promulgated in such a way that every agent obeying them would recognize their divine source. But the ultimate source of moral obligation is not discussed in this context. One might ask why a law should be obeyed, or why the ruler or God can tell someone what to do.

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Non-positive moral science is about principles whose morality is either self-evident (*per se notum*) or known through experience.[26] Examples of self-evident principles are, 'good is to be sought', and 'a needy person is to be assisted'. An example of a principle known through experience is, 'an angry person should be mollified by fair words'. Both types of principles can be used in syllogisms and consequently in a demonstrative science.

Right reason is not just limited to non-positive moral science but also is a necessary condition for those virtuous actions which are studied by positive moral science. As has already been shown, right reason dictates that God's commands be obeyed. Ockham never directly addresses the issue of how someone knows that God should be obeyed. Perhaps the closest discussion of his issue occurs when he asserts that the bad angel knows it is wrong to lead someone into disobedience.[27] The bad angel not only knows that a particular act is a transgression, but he also knows that no-one should be encouraged to transgress. Ockham suggests that the angel has this knowledge because it is self-evident. Presumably right reason also dictates that laws established by a legitimate human authority should also be obeyed.

It is clear that right reason plays a role, not only in non-positive morality but also in positive morality, because right reason dictates that the precepts of positive morality should be followed. But do divine commands play a role, not only in positive morality but also in non-positive morality? Adams suggests that, in non-positive morality, the divine precepts derive their authority from right reason.[28] But what would it mean for right reason to give authority to the precepts? A distinction needs to be made between how an action's moral value is known and what makes it good or bad.[29] A pagan can know the principles of non-positive moral science without having any knowledge of God's commands. Nevertheless, the ability of the pagan to know the worth of the actions, without knowing that they are commanded, does not entail that the moral worth of the action is independent of a divine command, broadly understood. The pagan can judge that an act is worthy, but this ability to judge does not imply that the worthiness of the act is not a result of God's free decision to grant the act worth.

What makes an action good or bad? As has been shown, Ockham is clear that external actions such as going to church have moral value only by extrinsic denomination. Such an act is right or wrong only by reference to an act which is intrinsically right and wrong. For example, this external act of going to church is good only because an internal act, such as willing the glory of God, is intrinsically good. Acts which are intrinsically good are also necessarily good because their goodness comes from being a certain type of act which cannot be bad in the present moral order. The goodness of every external act must be traced back to an intrinsically and necessarily virtuous act of the will. Peter King states that loving God is the only intrinsically virtuous act.[30] This interpretation makes Ockham's theory absurd and contradictory. Since every extrinsically virtuous act has its

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value from an intrinsically virtuous act, on King's interpretation it would be impossible for someone who does not love God to perform even an extrinsically virtuous act. But Ockham explicitly asserts that pagans can have a sort of virtue. Moreover, although Ockham emphasizes that the love of God is intrinsically virtuous, in many passages he suggests that there can be many such acts.

What makes an act intrinsically virtuous? When Ockham discusses an intrinsically or necessarily virtuous act he often adds the qualification 'with the divine command in effect' (*stante praecepto divino*).[31] An act is necessarily good only supposing that God's command to do it remains. This point is important for understanding Ockham's divine-command theory. Some divine-command theory could hold that an act is right if and only if it is explicitly an act of obedience to a known command of God. Ockham does, at times, state that an act is virtuous because it is done on account of the divine command.[32] But Ockham does not state that only obeying God is the intrinsically good act. Obedience to God does not specify what a particular act would be. Instead, Ockham states that the intrinsically good act, whether it be loving God or something else, is virtuous when God commands that it be done. This command is necessary not only for the meritoriousness of the act but also for its being virtuous.[33]

This distinction between explicitly obeying a command and doing what is commanded is important for understanding pagan virtue.[34] Ockham does think that those who are invincibly ignorant of God and His commands can be virtuous if they follow the dictates of right reason. A pagan may not know that she should go to church for the honour of God, but she does know that she should avoid adultery and murder. How does the pagan know that such actions are wrong? Ockham does not fully address this point. Nevertheless, the distinction between positive and non-positive moral science implies that such knowledge can be had without any knowledge of God's commands.

What gives an act its moral worth? Ockham does not say which factors right reason takes into account when it issues a command, and he never discusses in detail how it is possible to know those principles of non-positive morality which are not self-evident but known through experience. Why do humans experience the world in such a way that they make judgements about the rightness and wrongness of certain acts? Are there factors apart from divine commands which play a role in right reason's decisions, or is the human mind designed so that it recognizes what God has commanded as good even if the commands themselves are not recognized? It is difficult to know what other factors aside from divine commands could play a role. Right reason dictates that murder is wrong, but why does it do so?

Adams seems to argue that dictates of right reason are based on considerations of natural goodness.[35] Ockham does hold the general medieval view that there is a natural goodness.[36] Species are ordered according to a hierarchy of such goodness, and members of a species can be more or less perfect. Moreover, he does

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say that the good which is convertible with being is 'something willable or loveable according to right reason'.[37] There is a clear connection between being good and being loveable or willable. This connection can take many forms.[38] The useful, the pleasant, and the morally worthy are all goods. Moreover, something can be good merely by the fact that it is willed. Ockham also distinguishes between moral and natural goodness, and he does not explicitly tie moral goodness to natural goodness.[39] Moral goodness connotes that the agent is obliged to a particular act.[40] But what is the source of this obligation? A creature's natural goodness indicates that it is loveable, but this loveableness does not entail the specific rightness or wrongness of any specific action. When discussing the nature of moral obligation Ockham does not mention natural goodness but instead he focuses on the will of God.[41]

It could be thought that, on Ockham's view, morality is bound to the final cause of human nature. Adams notes that Ockham distinguishes between those ends which are actually loved and those ends which should be loved according to right reason.[42] Nevertheless, as Adams has shown, Ockham's discussions of final causality are inconsistent with each other, and in his mature discussions he attributes final causality to the end of the intelligent agent and not to nature.[43] He suggests that if it were not for revelation we might think that there are no final causes in nature, since we would not know that there is someone who orders them to an end.[44] Everything could be thought to come about through natural necessity. Indeed, Ockham's distinction between the *de facto* ends and the ends which should be sought is made in the context of a discussion about acquiring science.

This distinction between the two ends does not indicate that there is final causality in nature which makes it the case that humans in all possible worlds would judge that certain actions are morally worthy or blameworthy. Ockham's point is merely that in our world there are good and bad reasons for acquiring science. The final cause of acquiring science might be financial profit.[45] But the final cause should be thought in the case of speculative science and action in the case of practical science.[46] This distinction between the possible ends of science does not entail that God could not create a world in which human beings would be obliged to direct their actions to a different final end. Ockham does not connect so tightly right reason, final causality, and human nature.

Why should humans act for some reasons and not for others? It may indeed be the case that natural goodness is a reason for action. But not only does Ockham pass over considerations of human nature when discussing moral obligations, he also mentions that acts would have a different moral worth if God were to issue a different command.[47] For example, everyone should know that adultery and theft are wrong. By His ordained power God has prohibited adultery and theft. Nevertheless, by His absolute power God could create a world in which adultery and theft would be virtuous. Ockham is not saying that such a world actually

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exists or will exist in the future. He is saying that such a world would not be inconsistent with human nature.

What would need to change about such a world? Ockham emphasizes that there is nothing about an action itself that makes it good or evil. In a separate discussion he states that the rectitude and deformity of an act are solely connected to whether it is in conformity or not with God's commands and right reason:

> … the deformity [of an act] is not an absence of justice or the rectitude that should be in the act, but is a lack of rectitude that should be in the will itself; since there is nothing else to say except that the will is obliged to elicit some act according to a divine command which it does not elicit. And therefore the rectitude of an act is nothing other than the act itself that should be elicited according to right reason.[48]

There is a connection between Ockham's belief that there is nothing about an act by itself which makes it deformed or right and his divine-command theory. If God were to command that the acts now called adultery and theft be performed, the external acts would still be the same.[49] The descriptions of the acts would differ in only one respect, namely in that the acts would be in accord with right reason. The names would have to change because they signify these acts not absolutely, but through the connotation of their being prohibited by God. Strictly speaking, although the external acts would be identical, the internal acts would not be the same. Since they would have a different moral value, they would not both be able to be elicited in accordance with right reason or against it. Consequently, the intrinsically virtuous act would have right reason as its secondary partial object, and it would differ specifically from the other act, which would not be virtuous. Nevertheless, the external act would be the same, and all the features of the internal act could be the same with the exception of right reason, which would have to play a different role because there would be a different relation to the divine command.

According to Ockham, the moral goodness of any external act is morally good only by extrinsic denomination. There must be an intrinsically virtuous act of the will. When Ockham discusses intrinsically virtuous acts, he always states that the moral worth of such an act depends on a divine command. There is no explicit reference to natural goodness.

It is difficult to reconcile these statements of Ockham about the moral goodness of acts with Adams's belief that, for Ockham, right reason's dictates against adultery and theft are based on natural goodness. According to, at least, Adams's more recently expressed view, Ockham's discussion of adultery and theft is about the meritoriousness of such actions.[50] She seems to be the only scholar who defends this interpretation. On her view, if God were to command their opposites, then there would be a split between meritorious actions, which are so on account of divine commands, and morally virtuous actions, which right reason dictates on account of natural goodness. Ockham himself never suggests that his many

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statements about the changing value of the actions are only about merit and not about moral value, and never states that the moral goodness of actions is determined by natural goodness. Indeed, Ockham's position that the name would have to change is in response to Aristotle's belief that certain names have goodness or malice annexed to them, and Ockham refers not only to Aristotle but also to 'saints and philosophers'.[51] Aristotle and the philosophers are presumably discussing moral goodness. Ockham is discussing both moral goodness and meritoriousness together.

God, by His commands, can change the moral value of an act. I have left open the question of whether right reason can use considerations of natural goodness when dictating actions. If God were to issue commands, then would that natural goodness which is under consideration differ? If the natural goodness would differ, then ultimately even the natural goodness which explains the goodness of an act depends on God's commands. If the natural goodness would not differ, then divine commands override concerns of natural goodness when it comes to making moral judgements. On either interpretation, even if moral judgements take into account natural goodness, moral judgements are ultimately made true or false by divine commands.

It is possible to conclude from this discussion of how an act's moral value can change that Ockham is a divine-command theorist. Divine commands override other factors in determining the rightness or wrongness of a particular action. Whatever natural goodness or other quality that might help to give an act its moral value, a divine command can always override it. Nevertheless, it remains true that an act is right if and only if it is done in accordance with right reason. It is in this sense that right reason could be described as a 'norm'. But what determines the truth-value of those propositions which are known by right reason and upon which its dictates are based? Why is the human intellect structured in such a way that it recognizes the rightness and wrongness of certain acts? Ultimately, even the dictates of right reason have their source in God's free decision about the moral value of certain acts. Right reason dictates that certain acts are to be done. Right reason can so dictate because God has created a world in which such acts are right, and humans can recognize their rightness. Ockham does not indicate that anything other than a divine command ultimately determines the moral worthiness of a particular act. At the very least, Ockham thinks that divine commands are fundamentally the most important factors for making it true that certain actions are right or wrong. In all probability he regards them as the only such factors.

It is important to emphasize again that, for Ockham, all moral knowledge need not explicitly be about God and His commands. Not only were pagans able to know the rightness and wrongness of particular acts, but pagan philosophers such as Aristotle were able to give reasons for the rightness and wrongness of acts. For Ockham, the central point is that, although they might know acts to be right

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or wrong within the context of a particular moral order, God could have created an entirely different moral order. Morality would still be rational, but, nevertheless, right reason would dictate the performance of entirely different acts. Even the dictates of right reason depend on God's free decisions to make certain acts worthy or blameworthy.

Ockham does not oppose right reason to the divine command. They are not two competing norms in his moral theory. Through right reason, the pagan knows that adultery and theft are wrong and is able to follow the dictates of right reason. Indeed, every virtuous action must be done in accordance with right reason. Nevertheless, ultimately the wrongness of the act comes from God's prohibition of it. There are two reasons why it is incorrect to present Ockham as holding that divine commands and right reason are two criteria of morality. First and more superficially, right reason dictates that a divine command should be obeyed. In such a situation the divine command would be promulgated as a divine command. Taking the term 'divine command' in this most narrow sense, right reason dictates that an act be done explicitly because it is commanded. Second and more importantly, divine commands play the more fundamental role if they are understood more broadly as God's free decision about the rightness of acts. Whenever right reason dictates that an act be done, the rightness of the act depends upon a divine command – even when the command is unknown to the agent.

Right reason and divine commands play different roles in Ockham's moral theory. Right reason is necessary for the production of a virtuous act; it is a circumstance of an extrinsically virtuous act and it is the secondary partial object of an intrinsically virtuous act. The divine command makes the type of act right or wrong. Too great an emphasis on the distinction between positive and non-positive moral science can obscure the role of divine commands in Ockham's moral ethics. This distinction is made to describe the different ways in which moral obligations are known. Ockham must account for the fact that there are humans who are ignorant of God's commands even though they possess some moral knowledge. What is the basis for their knowledge? Although some truths known by them are self-evident, other truths are known from experience. Ockham does not clarify exactly how the knowledge through experience works in this case. His avoidance of this issue may be connected to his belief that the moral value of all actions, even intrinsically virtuous actions, could change. With the exception of the act's relation to right reason and the divine command, all the features of the act could remain the same. Those precepts of non-positive moral science which are not self-evident could change if God's commands were to change. Ockham's moral theory is designed to take into account two different positions, namely (1) that pagans can have moral knowledge even though they are ignorant of God's commands; and (2) the moral value of any action has its ultimate source in God's command or prohibition.

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Loving God

This interpretation of Ockham as primarily a divine-command theorist conflicts not only with Adams's view, but also with the other major interpretation, which understands Ockham to say that loving God is the source of moral obligation. Peter King writes, 'For Ockham, then, the core of ethics is the love of God (the intrinsically good act), and the love of God is a matter of conforming one's will to God's will.'[52] On this view, loving God is understood to be intrinsically virtuous, in the sense that God cannot create a world in which someone virtuously obeys a divine command to hate Him. Hating God and acting virtuously are not just *de facto* incompatible, but they are contradictory. God should be obeyed only because He should be loved.

The main problem with this second interpretation of Ockham is that it is flatly contradicted by at least two of his texts. In the *Reportata*, Book 4, q. 16, Ockham discusses whether in heaven someone could freely will not to enjoy God through love. To prove the possibility of so willing, Ockham writes:

> … every will can conform itself to a divine command. But God can command that the created will hate him, therefore the created will can do this. Moreover, everything that can be right on earth can be right in heaven. But hating God can be right on earth, for instance if it is commanded by God, therefore [it can be right] in heaven.[53]

In this passage it is clear that someone could rightly hate God if God were to command him to do so. There is no contradiction between obeying God and hating Him.

Not only does Ockham hold that someone could rightly hate God, but he also thinks that the obligation to love God is based on a divine command. In the *Reportata*, Book 2, q. 15, he discusses why it is right for God to cause an act of hatred for Himself in a bad angel or a human, even though it is wrong for the agent to cause within himself such an act. The reason is that the creature has an obligation to love God whereas God is under no obligation. What is the source of moral obligation? Someone is obliged to love God because God has commanded him to do so:

> … the created will is obliged to love God by a divine command, and therefore with that command in effect it is not possible for someone to hate God or to cause an act of hatred in a good way, but necessarily in a bad way he causes moral malice. And this [is so] because he is obliged by God's command to [perform] the opposite act.[54]

In this passage Ockham explicitly states that the duty to love God comes from a divine command. Whereas some interpret Ockham to say that the duty to obey God comes from the duty to love Him, Ockham himself holds the opposite position.

In the course of this same discussion Ockham lists the hatred of God along with adultery and theft as an act whose moral value depends on a divine command. If God were to command that someone should commit adultery, or theft, or an act

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of hatred for Him, then the same act that is now vicious would be virtuous. The obligation to love God has the same source as the obligation to avoid adultery and theft, which is God's command. Instead of making the love of God the basis of his ethical theory, with regard to the source of its moral worth Ockham places it on the same level as the other virtuous actions.

Some scholars who interpret Ockham's ethical theory as being based on loving God argue that Ockham gives a contrasting position in his *Quodlibet*, 3, q. 14. Various reasons are given for this supposed contradiction in Ockham's presentation of his moral theory. Rega Wood argues that the *Reportata*, 4, q. 16, is early and treats the love of God only in a casual manner.[55] Lucan Freppert argues that in the *Quodlibet* Ockham abandons his old position in favour of a new one.[56] Both agree that the position on loving God in the *Quodlibet* is normative, and they both interpret Ockham as saying there that loving God is necessarily virtuous in such a way that someone could not virtuously fulfil a divine command to hate God.

In *Quodlibet*, 3, q. 14, it is asked, 'whether only an act of the will is necessarily virtuous?' Here Ockham gives his standard argument for the existence of necessarily virtuous acts, but he presents it in such a way that the love of God is a privileged example. In this discussion, he states that no act is necessarily virtuous because no act is necessary. Nevertheless, some acts are necessarily virtuous in the sense that their performance is always virtuous when the divine command to perform them is in effect (*stante praecepto divino*).[57] There must be some necessarily virtuous act because otherwise there would be nothing to give moral value to a contingently virtuous action, such as walking. Such a contingently virtuous action has its moral value only from a necessarily virtuous action, which is an act of the will. Ockham writes:

> … that act necessarily virtuous in the aforesaid manner (*modo praedicto*) is an act of the will, since the act by which God is loved above everything and for his own sake is of this sort; for this act is virtuous in a way that cannot be vicious, nor can this act be caused by a created will unless it is virtuous.[58]

Freppert, King, and Wood all understand this passage to say that loving God is the virtuous act which must always be good. But Armand Maurer has pointed out that Ockham qualifies his assertion with 'in the aforesaid manner'.[59] This qualification refers to the statement that an act is necessarily virtuous only with the divine command in effect (*stante praecepto divino*). So interpreted, the Quodlibetal discussion does not contradict the passages from the *Reportata*. Ockham consistently states that the act of loving God is virtuous because it is commanded by God.

Although in the Quodlibetal discussion Ockham focuses on loving God, he does not state that this act is the only necessarily virtuous act. Loving God is just 'an act of this manner'. Whereas King thinks that loving God is *the* necessarily virtuous act, Ockham states that it is *a* necessarily virtuous act which is on a par with other such actions. Freppert recognizes that Ockham never claims that loving

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God is the only necessarily virtuous act, but he also wants to read Ockham as saying that the act of loving God does not depend upon a divine command in the same way that the other necessarily virtuous acts do.[60] Consequently, he distinguishes between the primary necessarily virtuous act, which is loving God, and secondary necessarily virtuous acts, which depend on the divine command for their moral value. This distinction has no basis in Ockham's text. Although Freppert avoids the mistake of regarding loving God as the only virtuous action, he is forced to rely on an unfounded distinction between different necessarily virtuous acts.

Consequently, there are here two problems with the interpretation of *Quodlibet*, 3, q. 14 as stating that loving God is a necessarily virtuous action apart from any divine command. First, it contradicts other passages of Ockham. Second, even if the Quodlibetal question were the only discussion that remained, a careful reading of the text would show that Ockham is fundamentally a divine-command theorist. A reason for the reluctance to view Ockham as a divine-command theorist may in some part be due to Ockham's response to an objection he raises in the latter part of *Quodlibet*, 3, q. 14.

The evidence for a change in Ockham's understanding of loving God is thought to be in a response to the objection he raises against the position that loving God is necessarily virtuous. According to this objection, God could command for a time that someone study rather than love Him. If that person elicited an act of love for God with that command in effect, then this act of loving God would not be virtuous, since it would violate the command. But even the possibility that such love would not be virtuous makes the act of loving God only contingently, and not necessarily, virtuous. Ockham concedes to the objection that God could issue such a command, but he denies that in such a case it would be possible to love God above everything. It can still be maintained that loving God is necessarily virtuous because this act is virtuous whenever it is committed. If God were to command that He not be loved, it would not follow that the loving God would be virtuous, but instead that such loving could not exist. Ockham writes:

> … from this fact that he would elicit such an act, he would love God above everything, and consequently he would fulfil the divine command, since to love God above everything is this: to love whatever God wills to be loved; and from this fact that he would then love, he would not fulfil the divine command in this case; and consequently in so loving, he would love God and not love [him], he would fulfil the divine command and not fulfil it.[61]

With the command to love God in effect, loving God is necessarily virtuous. Nevertheless, God could command for a time that someone study and not love Him. In such a case, the person would not be hating God, but he would be studying rather than loving. It would be impossible for him to love God, because if he did so he would have to obey the command to study rather than love Him, and it is impossible to both elicit the act of love and not elicit it.

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Some scholars think that this reply indicates a shift in Ockham's position. They understand him to say here that God could command that He be hated, but that it would be impossible to fulfil such a command.[62] On this reading, loving God is necessarily virtuous even apart from any command to do so. There are two problems with such an interpretation. First, Ockham does not state that God can command the impossible. In fact he suggests the reverse.[63] Second and more importantly, it confuses the command not to love God with a command to hate Him.[64] Ockham's position, that it is impossible to love God and disobey a command not to love Him, is understood incorrectly to entail that it is impossible to obey a command to hate God.

This interpretation is based on a misreading of Ockham's argument. In *Quodlibet*, 3, q. 14, Ockham is supposing that a command to love God is in effect, and he is considering what would happen if God were to command that for a time someone study rather than love Him. The conclusion is that it would be impossible for the person to love God because such love requires obedience to God's commands. This is an entirely different case from that which Ockham discusses in the *Reportata*, in which God issues a command that He be hated. In this case it is not contradictory to obey God and to hate Him. Loving God requires obedience to His commands. But although, according to the order God has ordained, obedience to God does require an obedience to God's command that He be loved, according to His absolute power God could have issued different commands and this connection between obedience and love would not exist. Although in the Quodlibetal discussion Ockham does say that it is impossible to love God and disobey His commands, he never states that it is impossible to hate God and fulfil His commands.

The mistaken interpretation of the Quodlibetal discussion is probably for the most part based on the assumption that love and obedience are equivalent. Ockham frequently states that if someone loves God then he will obey Him. The object of the act of charity is, 'God and everything which God wills to be loved by me through charity'.[65] Although loving God requires obedience, it is not the case that all obedience is love. As his predecessors did, Ockham distinguishes between two types of love, namely the love of concupiscence and the love of friendship.[66] The love of concupiscence is the love of a good for oneself or another person. This love presupposes the love of friendship for the person to whom the good is desired. This love of friendship is the love of an object for itself and its own sake. Charity is a love of God above everything by the love of friendship. Consequently, charity is the love of God for His own sake as the end of the person.[67]

Obeying God is at least in principle different from loving Him.[68] The difference between love and obedience is clear, even in the case of a political ruler. A subject could both love her political ruler and carry out her commands, but she could also carry out the commands of a ruler whom she hates. Similarly, someone could both hate God and yet obey His commands. Through charity, God is loved as the

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final end. Ockham does not give any clear example, but it is possible to imagine that someone could turn away from God and yet fulfil His commands.[69] Suppose that God commands that He be hated, but He also commands that someone die as a martyr for monotheism. It does not matter whether the person knows that God has commanded these actions, or whether she only knows their rightness through the dictates of right reason. This martyr could both hate God and, at the same time, undergo the martyrdom. Perhaps the person would be motivated by self-love. There might be a promise of glory or a threat of punishment. Ockham never suggests anything that would make such an example contradictory. Moreover, when he states that it is possible virtuously to fulfil a command to hate God, he states that God can be obeyed and hated.

There are several difficulties with the attempt to view Ockham as not a divine-command theorist but rather as an upholder of an ethical theory based on love. First, it is based on an interpretation of *Quodlibet*, 3, q. 14 which is at variance with what Ockham clearly states in his *Reportata*. Second, it ignores that fact that Ockham qualifies his statement that loving God is necessarily virtuous with the statement 'with the divine command in effect'. Third, it creates an unfounded separation between that necessarily virtuous action which is loving God and other necessarily virtuous actions. Fourth, it is based on an incorrect understanding of love, which sees love as identical with obedience or at least implied by it. On the other hand, if Ockham is understood as a divine-command theorist, so that loving God has its moral worth because it is commanded by God, it is fairly easy to make Ockham's position in *Quodlibet*, 3, q. 14, consistent with his wider ethical theory.

Conclusion

In what sense does Ockham hold that the ultimate source of moral obligation is a divine command? By his absolute power, God could change the moral value of any action by prohibiting it or commanding its opposite, but He could not change self-evident principles or the necessary conditions of a virtuous act. For example, God could not change the principle, 'good ought to be sought', even though He could change whether any particular moral act is good or not. Self-evident principles are true because of their terms and they do not by themselves indicate the value of any particular action.

Similarly, God could not change the necessary conditions of a virtuous act. For example, He could not make digestion virtuous or vicious because digestion is not free. Moreover, God could not make an act good which is not in accordance with right reason. According to Ockham, the principle, 'the will ought to conform itself to right reason' is self-evident. Like the principle, 'good ought to be sought', this principle does not specify which act should be performed. Right reason should be followed, but which acts will right reason dictate? Since right reason

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dictates what ought to be done, the principle, 'the will should conform itself to right reason', could be expanded to, 'the will should conform itself to what right reason dictates it should conform itself to'. This statement has content insofar as its truth does make it impossible to separate morality from rationality. Ockham thinks that right reason is necessary because he assumes that a virtuous action must be rational.

Someone who is ignorant of God and His commands can still act virtuously to some extent because she is able to follow the dictates of right reason. Ockham does not hold that someone can know that theft and adultery are wrong only if she has knowledge of divine commands. But he does think that by issuing different commands God could change the worth of any moral action. Right reason may indicate that an act be done simply because it is good. Nevertheless, the goodness of the act depends on a divine command.

In what sense is Ockham's moral theory traditional and in what sense is it innovative? Ockham does not differ from his predecessors in what he thinks is actually commanded by God. Although, according to His absolute power, God could make adultery virtuous, by His ordained power He will not do so. Ockham does differ from his predecessors by having a different view of what it would be possible for God to command.[70] Whereas, according to Thomas, God could not command that theft be committed, Ockham thinks that He can.[71] Whereas, according to Scotus, God could not even by His absolute power command that He be hated, Ockham not only thinks that God could issue such a command, but also that the fulfilment of this command would be virtuous.[72]

These differences not only make Ockham's moral theory significantly innovative, but they indicate how it is revolutionary. Both Thomas and Scotus think that morality is based on the types of beings that humans are.[73] Although they both think that some moral obligations would change if God were to issue different commands, they also think that God could not change the natural law. It is significant that in his academic writings Ockham does not even use the term 'natural law'.[74] For Ockham, moral obligation is not ultimately based on human nature, but instead on God's commands and the dictates of right reason, whose content is ultimately determined by God's free decision to make certain acts right and others wrong.

Ockham's theory appears much more consistent if we regard it as a divine-command theory, in which acts are right or wrong because they are commanded or prohibited by God. Why is it significant that Ockham is a divine-command theorist? Why is my argument important? Because if we interpret Ockham as a divine-command theorist then he plays a pivotal role in the development of moral theory.

First, Ockham's theory indicates a separation between morality and human nature. His predecessors' belief that morality is based on human nature is connected to their understanding of how morality is connected to happiness.

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Humans become more fulfilled and happy by acting well. Ockham does not deny that *de facto* morality is connected with happiness. But, for Ockham, the source of even this ordering to God and the happy life is in God's free command, and He could have commanded differently. Servais Pinckaers shows how, under the influence of nominalism, moral theology began to focus on laws, rules, and commands rather than on virtues and happiness.[75] Modern moral philosophy, in turn, reflects this preoccupation with rules, although it tends to reject the idea of a divine rule-giver.

Second, Ockham's theory is among the first to show the difficulties in understanding what makes a moral judgement true. In contrast with that of his predecessors, Ockham's moral philosophy makes it impossible to base the truth of moral judgements on properties of creatures. But Ockham the Christian believes that moral judgements are literally true, and as a moral philosopher he must take into account that even pagans are able to make some true moral judgements. Humans can know that some acts are in accordance with right reason. On what is the truth of these judgements based? Ockham does not accept the Thomistic and Scotistic belief that properties of human nature necessitate the rightness and wrongness of some acts in all possible worlds. But he does retain the belief that God commands right acts and prohibits wrong ones. Consequently, it makes sense for Ockham to argue that moral truth depends upon divine commands.

Like Ockham, modern philosophers have rejected attempts to base morality on a teleological understanding of nature. They have inherited the problem of reconciling the belief that there is no built-in moral order with the belief that moral judgments are true. Some have suggested that moral judgements express someone's approval. They usually are not concerned with whether God approves of such an act, but a divine-approval theory would not be that distant from a divine-command theory.

Although Pinckaers and O'Donovan do not fully take into account the way in which Ockham is a divine-command theorist, they are right to emphasize the importance of Ockham's theory for the development of later moral thought. Contemporary intuitions about morality and their consequent problems have their roots in a variety of social, religious, and philosophical traditions. By considering Ockham's divine-command theory it is possible to gain some insight into how moral philosophy began to focus primarily on rules and laws, and why it has been so difficult to understand what makes moral judgements true.[76]

Notes

1. Anita Garvens 'Die Grundlagen der Ethik Wilhelms von Ockham', *Franziskanishe Studien*, **21** (1934), 243–273, 360–408; Louis Vereecke 'L'obligation morale selon Guillaume d'Ockham', *La Vie Spirituelle, Supplément*, **45** (1968), 123–143; repr. *idem De Guillaume d'Ockham à Saint Alphonse de Liguori*, Bibliotheca Historica Congregationis Sanctissimi Redemptoris, 12 (Rome: Collegium S. Alfonsi de Urbe, 1986), 149–167.

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2. Armand Maurer *The Philosophy of William of Ockham in the Light of Its Principles*, Studies and Texts 133 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1999), 516–539.
3. Servais Pinckaers *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, Mary Thomas Noble (tr.) (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 240–253.
4. Marilyn McCord Adams 'Ockham on will, nature, and morality', in Paul Vincent Spade (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 245–272; Peter King 'Ockham's ethical theory', in Spade *Cambridge Companion*, 227–244. Adams's view can also be found in *idem* 'The structure of Ockham's moral theory', *Franciscan Studies*, **46** (1986), 1–35; *idem* 'William Ockham: voluntarist or naturalist?', in John F. Wippel (ed.) *Studies in Medieval Philosophy*, Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy, 1 (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1987), 219–247; a position similar to King's can be found in Rega Wood 'Göttliches Gebot und Gutheit Gottes nach Wilhelm von Ockham', *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, **101** (1994), 38–54. Both interpretations have either their remote or proximate source in Lucan Freppert *The Basis of Morality According to William Ockham* (Chicago IL: Franciscan Herald Press, 1988).
5. Oliver O'Donovan *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline for Evangelical Ethics*, 2nd edn (Leicester: Apollos; Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1994), 41–42.
6. Adams 'Will, nature, and morality', 266.
7. 'Recta autem ratio est prudentia in actu vel in habitu', William of Ockham *Reportata* [hereafter *Rep.*] 3, q. 12, in *idem Opera Theologica* [hereafter *OTh*], 10 vols (St Bonaventure NY: St Bonaventure University Press, 1967–1988), vol. 6, 422; '[prudentia] est recta ratio agibilium', William of Ockham *Quaestiones Variae*, [hereafter *QV*], q. 7, art. 2 (*OTh*, vol. 8, 413). See Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2.2.1103b32–32, 6.10.1144b24–1145a25. For Ockham's understanding of right reason, see especially David W. Clark 'William of Ockham on right reason', *Speculum*, **43** (1973), 15–20; Freppert *Basis of Morality*, 50–55.
8. William of Ockham *Scriptum in Librum Primum Sententiarum Ordinatio* [hereafter *Ord.*], 1, d. 35, q. 6 (*OTh*, vol. 1, 509–511). Freppert *Basis of Morality*, 21–24.
9. *Rep.* 3, q. 12 (*OTh*, vol. 6, 420).
10. *QV*, q. 7, art. 2 (*OTh*, vol. 8, 413).
11. *Rep.* 3, q. 12 (*OTh*, vol. 6, 422–423); *QV* q. 7, art. 4 (*OTh*, vol. 8, 393); Freppert *Basis of Morality*, 50, n. 50; *ibid.*, 52–53.
12. *Ibid.*, 61–77.
13. *Ord.*, 1, Prol., q. 10 (*OTh*, vol. 1, 284); *Rep.* 3, q. 12 (*OTh*, vol. 6, 428); William of Ockham *Quodlibet* [hereafter *Quod.*] 3, q. 15 (*OTh*, vol. 9, 260).
14. *Rep.* 3, q. 11 (*OTh*, vol. 6, 381–383); *ibid.*, q. 12 (*ibid.*, 423); *QV* q. 7, art. 4 (*OTh*, vol. 8, 393–395); *Quod.* 3, q. 16 (*OTh*, vol. 9, 262–265).
15. The internal acts differ in species because their objects differ: 'ille actus voluntatis qui non habet rectam rationem pro obiecto, non est natus elici conformiter rectae rationi, sed unus alius actus alterius speciei qui haberet rectam rationem pro obiecto, et non ille'; *Quod.* 3, q. 16 (*OTh*, vol. 9, 264). Ockham deliberately attacks Scotus when he develops his own position that the species of the internal act and not its value changes. See *QV*, q. 7, art. 4 (*OTh*, vol. 8, 380–384); Freppert *Basis of Morality*, 53–61.
16. *Rep.* 3, q. 11 (*OTh*, vol. 6, 387–389); *QV*, q. 7, art. 1 (*OTh*, vol. 8, 327–328); *ibid.*, q. 7, art. 2 (*ibid.*, 338).
17. *Rep.* 3, q. 11 (*OTh*, vol. 6, 380–381); *QV*, q. 7, art. 4 (*OTh*, vol. 8, 396); *Quod.* 3, q. 16 (*OTh*, vol. 9, 262–267).
18. '[E]brius, non habens usum rationis, commitens adulterium, non peccat, quia licet habeat volitionem respectu talis actus et intentionem, non tamen habet rectum dictamen rationis, et ideo non peccat'; *Rep.* 3, q. 12 (*OTh*, vol. 6, 428).
19. Adams 'Structure of Ockham's moral theory', 23–27; *idem* 'Will, nature, and morality', 265–266.
20. *Ord.*, 1, d. 17, qq. 1–3 (*OTh*, vol. 3, 440–479); *QV*, q. 7, art. 4 (*OTh*, vol. 8, 391–392).
21. *Rep.* 4, qq. 3–5 (*OTh*, vol. 7, 58); *QV*, q. 7, art. 2 (*OTh*, vol. 8, 335–336, 338–339).
22. *Quod.* 2, q. 14 (*OTh*, vol. 9, 177).
23. 'Sed eo ipso quod voluntas divina hoc vult, recta ratio dictat quod est volendum'; *Ord.* 1, d. 41, q. un. (*OTh*, vol. 4, 610). See also *ibid.*, q. 45, q. un. (*ibid.*, 684–685); *Rep.* 2, qq. 3–4 (*OTh*, vol. 5, 59); *ibid.*, q. 15 (*ibid.*, 353); *QV*, q. 7, art. 1 (*OTh*, vol. 8, 328). For Ockham's habitual connection of right reason with doing what is commanded by God, see especially *QV*, q. 8, art. 1 (*OTh*, vol. 8, 411); *ibid.*, art. 2 (*ibid.*, 428–429); *Quod.* 3, q. 15 (*OTh*, vol. 9, 261). See also Wood 'Göttliches Gebot und Gutheit Gottes nach Wilhelm von Ockham', 46–51.

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24. 'Utrum de moralibus possit esse scientia demonstrative?'; *Quod.* 2, q. 14 (*OTh*, vol. 9, 176–178).
25. '[D]ico quod moralis scientia positiva, cuiusmodi est scientia iuristarum, non est scientia demonstrativa, quamvis sit a scientia demonstrativa ut in pluribus regulata; quia rationes iuristarum fundatur super leges humanas positivas, quae non accipiunt propositiones evidenter notas'; *Quod.* 2, q. 14 (*OTh*, vol. 9, 177) See also, *QV* 7, art. 2 (*OTh*, vol. 8, 330); *ibid.* 8, art. 2 (*ibid.*, 423).
26. *Quod.* 2, q. 14 (*OTh*, vol. 9, 177).
27. 'Et tamen ipse [angelus malus] habet notitiam universalem istius ''nullus est inducendus ad faciendum contra praeceptum Dei sui'', quia haec videtur per se nota'; *QV*, q. 7, art. 3 (*OTh*, vol. 8, 366).
28. Adams 'Structure of Ockham's moral theory', 24.
29. It seems to me that the following words about Scotus could be better applied to Ockham: 'Granted, if Scotus holds that what is morally good depends on what God wills, he must also hold that in order to know what is morally good, we must know what God wills. But it does not follow that we must know what God wills *under that description*'; Thomas Williams 'Reason, morality, and voluntarism in Duns Scotus: a pseudo-problem dissolved', *The Modern Schoolman*, **74** (1997), 74.
30. King 'Ockham's ethical theory', 232.
31. *Rep.* 2, q. 15 (*OTh*, vol. 5, 352–353); *QV*, q. 7, art. 1 (*OTh*, vol. 8, 328); *Quod.* 3, q. 14 (*OTh*, vol. 9, 255).
32. *Ord.* 1, q. 45, q. un. (*OTh*, vol. 4, 685); *Quod.* 3, q. 15 (*OTh*, vol. 9, 260).
33. '[V]elle facere aliquid quia est praeceptum divinum, est ita virtuosus quod non potest fieri vitiosus, stante praecepto divino'; *QV*, q. 7, art. 1 (*OTh*, vol. 8, 328).
34. It has even been suggested that, for Ockham, natural law is a 'tacit divine command'. See A. S. McGrade 'Natural law and moral omnipotence', in Spade *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham*, 274–279.
35. Adams 'Structure of Ockham's moral theory', 5–6; *idem* 'Will, nature, and morality', 248–249, 265.
36. For a discussion of relevant texts, see Marilyn McCord Adams 'Ockham on final causality: muddying the waters', *Franciscan Studies*, **56** (1998), 41.
37. '''Bonum'' etiam, quod est convertibile cum ''ente'', significat idem quod haec oratio ''aliquid secundum rectam rationem volibile vel diligibile'''; William of Ockham *Summa Logicae* 1.10; *Opera Philosophica*, 6 vols (St Bonaventure NY: St Bonaventure University Press, 1974–1985) [hereafter *OPh*], vol. 1, 38.
38. '''[B]onum'' accipitur dupliciter. Uno modo pro bono ut dividitur in bonum honestum, utile, et delectabile. Alio modo bonum est idem quod volitum, vel accipitur pro omni eo quod est volibile'; Ockham *QV*, q. 8 (*OTh*, vol. 8, 442). For a contrast of Ockham with Thomas Aquinas, see Linwood Urban 'William of Ockham's theological ethics', *Franciscan Studies*, **33** (1973), 336–339.
39. 'Notandum quod bonum est duplex, scilicet naturale et morale; similiter malum est duplex, naturale et morale'; William of Ockham *Summa Logicae*, 3.3.6 (*OPh*, vol. 1, 610).
40. '[B]onitas moralis vel malitia connotant quod agens obligatur ad illum actum vel eius oppositum'; *Rep.* 2, q. 15. (*OTh*, vol. 5, 353).
41. *Rep.* 2, qq. 3–4 (*OTh*, vol. 5, 59); *ibid.*, q. 15 (*ibid.*, 353).
42. Adams 'Ockham on final causality', 11; *Ord.*, Prol, q. 11. (*OTh*, vol. 1, 308).
43. For an interpretation of Ockham as more consistently connecting final causality with agency, see Stephen F. Brown 'Ockham and final causality', in Wippel *Studies in Medieval Philosophy*, 249–272; Maurer *The Philosophy of William of Ockham*, 412–417.
44. *Quod.* 4, qq. 1–2 (*OTh*, vol. 9, 293–309).
45. '[A]liquis addiscit scientiam propter amorem amicitiae ad seipsum et concupiscit ipsam scientiam sibi ipsi vel aliquod lucrum attingibile per ipsam scientiam, tunc dico quod ipsemet est causa finalis illius scientiae … ipsum lucrum vel aliquid tale est causa finalis aliquo modo ipsius scientiae'; *Ord.*, Prol., q. 11 (*OTh*, vol. 1, 307).
46. 'Alius est finis scientiae qui secundum rectam rationem deberet intendi ab agente quod libere agit. Et isto modo finis scientiae practicae est opus vel operari, et finis speculativae est considerare'; *ibid.*, (*ibid.*, 308).
47. *Ord.* 1, q. 45, q. un. (*OTh*, vol. 4, 685); *Rep.* 2, q. 15 (*OTh*, vol. 5, 352–353); *Rep.* 4, q. 16 (*OTh*, vol. 7, 352).
48. '[D]eformitas non est carentia iustitiae vel rectudinis debitae inesse actui, sed est carentia rectitudinis debitae inesse ipsi voluntati; quod nihil aliud est dicere nisi quod voluntas obligatur aliquem actum elicere secundum praeceptum divinum quem non elicit. Et ideo rectitudo actus non est aliud quam ipse actus qui debuit elici secundum rectam rationem'; *Quod.* 3, q. 15 (*OTh*, vol. 9, 261).

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49. '[D]ico quod licet odium, furari, adulterari et similia habeant malam circumstantiam annexam de communi lege, quatenus fiunt ab aliquo qui ex praecepto divino obligatur ad contrarium, tamen quantum ad omne absolutum in illis actibus possunt fieri a Deo sine omni circumstantia mala annexa. Et etiam meritorie possunt fieri a viatore si caderent sub pracepto divino, sicut nunc de facto eorum opposita cadunt sub praecepto … . Sed si sic fierent a viatore meritorie, tunc non dicerentur nec nominarentur furtum, adulterium, odium etc., quia ista nomina significant tales actus non absolute sed connotando vel dando intelligere quod faciens tales actus per praeceptum divinum obligatur ad oppositum. Et ideo quantum ad totum significatum quid nominis talium nominum significant circumstantias malas'; *Rep.* 2, q. 15 (*OTh*, vol. 5, 352).
50. Adams 'Structure of Ockham's moral theory', 29–33; *idem*, 'Will, nature, and morality', 265–266. But in an earlier article ('Voluntarist or naturalist', 241), she writes, 'And in this logically and metaphysically possible eventuality, right reason would lead to contradictory dictates'.
51. *Rep.* 2, q. 15 (*OTh*, vol. 5, 347, 352); Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2.6.1107a9–13.
52. King 'Ockham's ethical theory', 237. See also Wood 'Göttliches Gebot und Gutheit Gottes nach Wilhelm von Ockham', *passim*, and Freppert *Basis of Morality*, 83–140.
53. '[O]mnis voluntas potest se conformare praecepto divino. Sed Deus potest praecipere quod voluntas creata odiat eum, igitur volutas creata potest hoc facere. Praeterea, omne quod potest esse actus rectus in via, et in patria. Sed odire Deum potest esse actus rectus in via, puta si praecipiatur a Deo, igitur in patria'; *Rep.* 4, q. 16 (*OTh*, vol. 7, 352).
54. '[V]oluntas creata obligatur ex praecepto Dei ad diligendum Deum, et ideo stante illo praecepto non potest bene odire Deum nec causare actum odiendi, sed necessario male causat malitia moris. Et hoc quia obligatur ex praecepto Dei ad actum oppositum'; *Rep.* 2, q. 15 (*OTh*, vol. 5, 353).
55. Wood 'Göttliches Gebot und Gutheit Gottes nach Wilhelm von Ockham', 51.
56. Freppert *Basis of Morality*, 123–125, 136–140.
57. '[A]liter potest intelligi actum esse necessario virtuosum, ita scilicet quod non possit esse vitiosus stante praecepto divino; similiter non potest causari a voluntate creata nisi sit virtuossus'; *Quod.* 3, q. 14 (OTh 9, 255). Freppert *Basis of Morality*, 147–149, argues that in this later discussion Ockham is giving two descriptions of a necessarily virtuous action: the first refers to a command whereas the second makes no such reference. Ockham's second description supposedly is only about loving God and only presented in this *Quodlibet*. It seems to me that Freppert's interpretation is eccentric.
58. '[I]lle actus necessario virtuosus modo praedicto [*stante pracepto divino*] est actus voluntatis, quia actus quo diligitur Deus super omnia et propter se, est huiusmodi; nam iste actus sic est virtuosus quod non potest esse vitiosus, nec potest iste actus causari a voluntate creata nisi sit virtuousus'; *Quod.* 3, q. 14 (*OTh*, vol. 9, 255–256).
59. Maurer *The Philosophy of William of Ockham*, 531–532.
60. Freppert *Basis of Morality*, 148–149.
61. '[E]x hoc ipso quod talem actum eliceret, Deum diligeret super omnia, et per consequens impleret praeceptum divinum, quia hoc est diligere Deum super omnia: diligere quidquid Deus vult diligi; et hoc ipso quod sic diligeret, non faceret praeceptum divinum per casum; et per consequens sic diligendo, Deum diligeret et non diligeret, faceret praeceptum Dei et non faceret'; *Quod.* 3, q. 14 (*OTh*, vol. 9, 256–257).
62. Philotheus Boehner, Introduction to *Ockham: Philosophical Writings*, Philotheus Boehner (ed. and tr.), rev. Stephen F. Brown (Indianapolis IN: Hackett, 1990), xlix–l; Clark 'William of Ockham on right reason', 34–35; McGrade 'Natural law and moral omnipotence', 279–280.
63. See above, n. 51.
64. Freppert *Basis of Morality*, 124, warns against confusing these two issues, although he himself connects them because he thinks that love and obedience are equivalent.
65. 'Obiectum caritatis est hoc complexum ''Deus et omne quod Deus vult diligi a me caritative''''; *Rep.* 3, q. 9 (*OTh*, vol. 6, 284; cf 298–299). See also *Rep.* 4, q. 13 (*OTh*, vol. 7, 353–354); *QV*, q. 7, art. 3 (*OTh*, vol. 8, 359).
66. *Rep.* 4, q. 16 (*OTh*, vol. 7, 359–360); *QV*, q. 4 (*OTh*, vol. 8, 137–138).
67. William of Ockham *Ord.* 1, d. 1, q. 1 (*OTh*, vol. 1, 371–393). Cf. *Quod.* 3, q. 16 (*OTh*, vol. 9, 265). For a discussion, see A. S. McGrade, 'Ockham on enjoyment – towards an understanding of fourteenth-century philosophy and psychology', *Review of Metaphysics*, **34** (1981), 706–728.
68. Maurer *The Philosophy of William of Ockham*, 532, n. 207.
69. I would like to thank Armand Maurer for this example.

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70. For the contrast between Ockham and his predecessors, see Klaus Hedwig 'Das Isaak-Opfer: über den Status des Naturgesetzes bei Thomas von Aquin, Duns Scotus, und Ockham', in Andreas Speer and Albert Zimmerman (eds) *Mensch und Natur im Mittelalter*, 2, Miscellanea Mediaevalia 21.2 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1992), 645–661. Ockham himself (*Ord.* 1, d. 46, q. 1), does not discuss the morality of Abraham's action, but is more concerned about the connection between God's command and His antecedent and consequent wills (*OTh*, vol. 4, 672–674).
71. Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologiae*, I–II, q. 94, art. 5, ad 2.
72. John Duns Scotus *Ord.* 3, suppl. dist. 37, in Allan B. Wolter (ed. and tr.) *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1986), 268–286.
73. For Thomas, see especially Anthony J. Lisska *Aquinas's Theory of Natural Law: An Analytic Reconstruction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 82–138.
74. For attempts to reconcile Ockham's political statements about natural law with his earlier writings see Kevin McDonnell 'Does Ockham have a theory of natural law?', *Franciscan Studies*, **34** (1974), 383–392; McGrade 'Natural law and moral omnipotence', *passim*.
75. Pinckaers *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, 240–279.
76. A previous version of this article was written as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for my degree of Licentiate in Medieval Studies at the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies. I would like to thank the Institute for granting to me a Gilson Fellowship. Special thanks to Fathers Armand Maurer and Joseph Pilsner.

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