God and Morality

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I’m not going to discuss whether or not there is a God (that’s something I’m argued for a lot over the years), but simply whether if there is a God, that makes any difference to morality., I shall argue first that the existence and actions of God would make no difference to the fact that there are moral truths -and on this you may already agree with me. But I shall go on to argue that the existence and actions of God would make a great difference[1] to the content of morality, to the seriousness of morality, and our knowledge of morality - and on all that I may need to convince you. I assume a standard Western account of the nature of God, as essentially eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, perfectly good, creator and sustainer of the universe and all that it contains (from moment to moment), the kind of God affirmed by Christianity, Judaism and Islam as well as some other religions.

I

Actions may be morally good, bad, or indifferent. Among good actions are those which are obligatory, and ones which go beyond obligation and which we call ‘supererogatory’. I am obliged to pay my debts, but not to give my life to save that of a comrade - supremely supererogatorily, good though it is that I should do so. The obligatory are those which we are blameworthy for not doing, the supererogatory are those which we are praiseworthy for doing. Likewise among bad actions, there are those which it is obligatory not to do - these are wrong actions; and there are bad actions which are not wrong, and which I call infravetatory. It is wrong to rape or steal, yet it is bad but not wrong to watch many pornographic programmes on TV rather than read one or two great works of literature.

Quite clearly some moral judgments (that is, judgments that some particular action or kind of action is morally obligatory or wrong or whatever) are true and others are false. As a result of experience and reflection, it is evident to almost all of us at the beginning of the twenty first century that torture is morally wrong, and so is suttee and so is slavery; and it is morally obligatory to keep your promises and tell the truth at any rate when it causes you little trouble, barring quite extraordinary counter-considerations. And so on, and so on. And if those of some other culture think otherwise, they are obviously mistaken - just as obviously mistaken as are

solipsists and flat-Earthers. In morals, as in everything else, we must believe that things are as, overwhelmingly, they appear to be. We start our construction of a world view from what seems most evident, including the immediate deliverances of sense (e.g. 'I am now giving a lecture') and of memory (e.g. 'Two days ago I was in England'), universally held beliefs (e.g. that the earth is millions of years old), and obvious truths of reason (e.g. '2 + 2 = 4'). Although allowing the theoretical possibility of error, it is on the foundations of these basic beliefs that we must construct a world view; for no foundations are surer than the most evident ones, and these include some of the most obvious moral beliefs. If some philosopher's theory of meaning or knowledge has the consequence that there cannot be moral truths or that we cannot know what they are, then we must reject his theory since it will be more obvious that torture is wrong than that his theory is true.

Now the moral properties (i.e. moral goodness, badness etc.) of particular actions (picked out in terms of who did them where and when) are supervenient on their non-moral properties. What Hitler did on such and such occasions in 1942 and 1943 was morally wrong because it was an act of genocide. What you did yesterday was good because it was an act of feeding the starving etc. No action can be just morally good or bad; it is good or bad because it has certain other non-moral properties - those of the kinds which I illustrated earlier. And any other action which had just those non-moral properties would have the same moral properties. The conjunction of non-moral properties which gives rise to the moral property may be a long one or a short one. It may be that all acts of telling lies are bad, or it may be that all acts of telling lies in such and such circumstances (the description of which is a long one) are bad. But it must be that if there is a world W in which a certain action a having various non-moral properties (e.g. being an act of killing someone to whom the killer had a certain kind of relation) was bad, there could not be another world W* which was exactly the same as W in all non-moral respects, but in which a was not bad. A difference in moral properties has to arise from a difference in non-moral properties. If a certain sort of killing is not bad in one world, but bad in another world, there must be some difference between the two worlds (e.g. in social organisation or the prevalence of crime) which makes for the moral difference. Moral properties, to use the technical term, are supervenient on non-moral properties. And the supervenience of moral properties on non-moral properties must be logical supervenience. Our concept of the moral is such that it makes no sense to suppose both that there is a world W in which a is wrong and a world W* exactly the same as W except that in W* a is good. It follows that there are logically necessary truths of the form 'If an action has non-moral properties A, B and C, it is morally good', 'If an

action has non-moral properties C and D, it is morally wrong' and so on. If there are moral truths, there are necessary moral truths - general principles of morality. I re-emphasise that, for all I have said so far, these may often be very complicated principles - e.g. 'All actions of promise breaking in circumstances C, D, E, F, and G are wrong', rather than just 'All actions of promise breaking are wrong'. All moral truths are either necessary (of the above kind) or contingent. Contingent moral truths (e.g. that what you did yesterday was good) derive their truth from some contingent non-moral truth (e.g. that what you did yesterday was to feed the starving) and some necessary moral truth (e.g. that all acts of feeding the starving are good).

So what makes it the case that promise keeping and truth telling (possibly to some qualifications about circumstances) are obligatory, and killing someone (except perhaps an enemy combatant in a just war or a criminal justly sentenced to death) morally wrong. My answer is simple - the very nature of the act itself. An act of killing being an act of killing (not in specified circumstances) entails that it is morally wrong. Just as a surface could not be blue without having something in common with a surface which is green, which something is being coloured, so promise-keeping and truth-telling could not be what they are without having it in common that they are (possibly subject to qualifications) both morally obligatory.

We acquire a sense of morality by being told that such and such actions are obligatory or good beyond obligation, and our parents praising us for doing the latter and blaming us when we fail to do the former; and certain other actions are wrong or bad, and our parents blaming us for doing the former, and praising us for failing to do the latter. As with all fundamental concepts, be it 'cause' or 'believe' or 'deduce', we need to be shown or have described to us many instances of their correct application as well as their logical relations to other concepts (e.g. praise or blame) before we can grasp the concepts. The paradigm instances of the 'morally obligatory' (or whatever) will fall into describable kinds - keeping promises, not telling a lie, feeding our own children etc. Once we have in this way via particular instances or kinds of instances, grasped the concept of the 'morally obligatory' (or whatever) we can come to recognise that some of the instances by which we have been introduced to it are rather different from the others, and if blame is (or is not) an appropriate response to the failure to perform the latter it is not (or is) an appropriate response to failure to perform the former. We might be told that it is morally obligatory to feed your family if they are starving and also your close neighbours, but it is not merely not obligatory but wrong to feed foreigners if they are starving. But we may then reflect that the human need is the same in both cases, and what is good for our family and neighbours must be good for

foreigners also; and so even if we have greater obligations to those close to us, it cannot be bad, let alone wrong to feed foreigners, and so it is not appropriate to blame someone for doing so. Or we may be told that it is morally permissible (that is, not wrong) for the state to execute those found guilty of murder and for anyone to kill in order to save their own or others' lives, and also that fighting a duel to defend one's honour is morally obligatory. But we may then come to derive through reflection on the former situations and other possible situations where we are told that it is not permissible to kill, a general principle that someone's life is a very valuable thing, so valuable that it should only be taken from them to save a life or in reparation for a life which they have taken away; that is that noone should ever try to kill anyone except to prevent them killing someone or as a punishment for killing someone. So we conclude that although it is not appropriate to blame someone who kills in a war to save the lives of his fellow soldiers or who executes a convicted murderer, it is appropriate to blame someone for fighting a duel to defend their honour. This kind of reflection can lead each of us and (over the centuries) the whole human race to improve our grasp of what are the necessary truths of morality. But if someone started with paradigm cases of actions which he calls 'morally obligatory' which had nothing in common with what most of us regard as morally obligatory, I see no reason to suppose that he has a concept of moral obligation. Suppose that a person were introduced to the concept of 'moral obligation' only by being told that it is 'morally obligatory' in all circumstances to walk on alternate paving stones, to touch your head three times before getting out of bed in the morning, and to do actions of other kinds which we would think (barring special contingent circumstances) to be morally indifferent, and were blamed for not doing such actions, we would surely regard him as not having been introduced to the concept of moral obligation. The difference between him and the rest of us would be not that we and he have different views about which actions are morally obligatory, but that he would not have the concept of moral obligation. There has to be a measure of agreement about what are paradigm cases of actions which are morally obligatory, good etc for disputants to have a common concept about the further application of which they are in disagreement. What I have described as the method by which we can reach agreement about what are the necessary truths **of** morality is of course the method of 'reflective equilibrium' as described by Rawls.[2]

Disagreement about the necessary truths of morality is disagreement about which actions are similar in the right ways to paradigm instances of the morally obligatory, good etc to be themselves morally obligatory, good, etc. We may acquire a full grasp of the necessary truths without realizing their consequences

for us through ignorance of the contingent truths which determine their application. I may believe that it is good to give money to feed the starving, but not believe the TV news when it tells us that people are starving in Africa and so may not realize that it is good to give money for food for Africans. Moral disagreement about the contingent truths of morality is sometimes easier to resolve when it does not depend on disagreement about necessary truths. But there is no reason to suppose that the latter is not resolvable when there is enough agreement about paradigm cases for serious reflection on and experience of actions whose moral status is disputed, to enable us to see whether they have enough of the right features in common with paradigm cases of actions which are (e.g.) morally obligatory to be themselves morally obligatory.

Theists and most atheists alike are introduced to this common concept of morality by being shown many of the same paradigm cases - keeping promises, talking to the lonely etc are both morally good actions, and so on; and they recognize these are morally good actions in virtue of what is involved in making a promise or being lonely. If theists and atheists did not have this common understanding of what makes many actions morally good or bad, we would not agree so much about which actions are good, or be able to dispute –as so often we can- about the morality of particular actions. Hence theists and atheists may agree - as clearly they do - both about the moral status (good or bad, as the case may be) of many particular actions, and also about the reasons why those actions have the moral status that they do. The existence of God makes no difference to the fact that there are necessary moral truths.

II

But the existence and actions of God would make a great difference to what the contingent moral truths are. Among the necessary moral truths, which atheists as well as theists may come to recognise is that it is very good to reverence the good and the wise who are truly great, and obligatory to thank and please benefactors. If there is a God, he is all-good and all-wise, and truly great, and for that reason alone it is very good to worship him. But he is also our supreme benefactor. He is so much more the source of our being than are parents. God keeps us in existence from moment to moment, gives us knowledge and power and friends; and all the help that other benefactors give us arises from God sustaining in them the power to do so. Hence it becomes a duty to thank him abundantly; but properly to thank someone involves showing that you know who they are and what is their relation to you. You must take them seriously. So thanking God will involve rendering the kind of thanks appropriate to the all-good all-wise source of everything; that means that grateful worship is a dominant obligation. That there is a God is a contingent truth (logically contingent, that is, neither it

or its negation entail a contradiction. It is no doubt necessary in other ways). So it becomes a contingent moral truth that we have a dominant obligation to give him grateful worship.

All the western theistic religions claim that God has issued specific commands to humans, among them the 'Ten Commandments'. A very obvious way to please benefactors is to obey their commands. It is in virtue of the necessary truth that beneficiaries have a duty to please benefactors that parents who are not just biological parents but are nurturing and educating parents have certain rights over their children while they are still young to command them to do certain things - e.g. to do the family shopping - and the command creates an obligation which would not otherwise exist. Such parents are our greatest earthly benefactors, as I believe Chinese tradition stresses. It follows that if children have limited duties to obey parents, humans have obligations far less limited in extent to obey God. His command will make it contingently the case that some action which otherwise would be only be superogatorily good or morally indifferent is now obligatory; and his forbidding it will make an action contingently wrong when previously it was only infravetatorily bad or morally indifferent. But there are, I suggest, other necessary truths (and so other contingent truths) of morality which relate the obligatory to features of human situations not connected with a divine command.

There are however limits to the rights of parents over children - parents do not have the right to command children to serve them day and night; and so, beyond a certain point, parental commands would impose no obligation. Likewise (though the main argument of this paper in no way depends on this view) my own view is that God's rights over us are also limited, even more narrowly than by the fact that he cannot command us to do what we are obliged (in virtue of some other necessary moral truth) not to do - e.g. torture children just for fun. God has the right to demand a lot from us by way of service to others and worship - but if he chooses to create free rational beings, I suggest, thereby he limits his right to control their lives. If there are such limits, it will then follow that in virtue of his perfect goodness, God will not command us to do actions beyond those limits - for to command what you have no right to command is wrong.

What God does not command, he may commend (that is declare good, though not obligatory). And since (perhaps up to a limit) it is supererogatorily good to please benefactors more than you are obliged to, God's commendation can make an action supererogatorily good, when it does not make it obligatory. And because being omniscient, God sees what is good and obligatory for reasons other than his command and commendation, and we do not always, he can inform us which actions are good or obligatory for

such reasons. But, given that there are limits to what God can *make* to good or obligatory, and so to what is obligatory, there is scope for 'works of supererogation' as the Catholic tradition has maintained in contrast to classical Protestantism.

In Plato's dialogue *Euthyphro*, Socrates asked the famous question: 'Is that which is holy loved by the gods because it is holy, or is it holy because it is loved by the gods?'[3] Put in theistic terms (and phrased simply in terms of command and obligation), the Euthyphro dilemma becomes: does God command what is obligatory for other reasons, or is what is obligatory obligatory because God commands it? Kant gave the simple answer of taking the first horn of this dilemma[4]; other thinkers in the Christian tradition (perhaps William of Ockham, and certainly Gabriel Biel[5])have taken the second horn; but the view which I am putting forward takes the first horn form some obligations and the second for others. In my view we ought not to rape, or break a just promise (that is one which we had the right to make), whether or not there is a God; here God can only command us to do what is our duty anyway. But for the latter – only a divine command would make it obligatory to join in communal worship on Sundays rather than Tuesdays. That there are very general principles of morality, including not only the principle of the obligation to please benefactors but other principles as well, was recognised by both Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus. Aquinas held that 'the first principles of natural law are altogether unalterable'.[6] He does not tell us much in the *Summa Theologiae* about which these are, but he does write that they are principles too general to be mentioned in the Ten Commandments, principles such as that no one ought to do evil to anyone, which he says are 'inscribed in natural reason as self-evident.'[7] Scotus tells us that the only moral obligations from which God could not dispense us are the duties to love and reverence God himself; which he sees as constituted by the first three of the Ten Commandments[8]. So both writers hold - and, I have claimed, are right to hold - that there are necessary moral truths independent of the will of God, but that the will of God makes a very great difference to what are the contingent moral truths.

III

The existence and commands of God make acting morally always more important and sometimes very much more important than it would otherwise be. Apart from the existence and commands of God, it may be bad if I do not give a sum of money to some medical charity for research (which may or may not produce results) into how to prevent the spread of a rare disease in Chile (when the occasion arises, and I have money to spare). But it seems doubtful that I have a duty or obligation to give money. One might plausibly say - even if I have some minimum duty to help any sentient being in a crisis, I don't <u>owe</u> lots of my spare money to help Chileans in a non-

emergency situation.

But if God made me from nothing, and sustains the laws of nature which allow others to feed, clothe and educate me, I have an enormous debt to him; and so there is a much greater obligation than there would be otherwise, to care for others whom he has benefited in the same way and which in virtue of his perfect goodness he would want me to do. The mere existence of a perfectly good creator makes it so. All other humans now have a status similar to that of our brothers and sisters. Like human parents, God may command us to do what is obligatory anyway (e.g. keeping our promises to other humans), and his command adds to the obligation of the act. And if God issues commands of the kind that the Christian tradition (among others) maintains, God creates new obligations for all of us to help others in various ways; and he commands many individuals to follow very demanding vocations. Morality now concerns so much of our lives; all wrongdoing now becomes wronging our loving creator (as well as often other humans) but living a good life now becomes living a life which pleases our loving creator (as well often, as other humans).

Further - given the view common to most theistic religions - God wants to take to Heaven those who love to do good and so would be happy in Heaven. For Heaven is a place where people see God as he is, and respond in grateful worship and service (for example by asking God to help others on earth) - without the obstacles to such activity which are so prevalent on earth (obstacles in the form of a clouded vision of what is good, and temptations to do what is bad); and these activities of response are supremely good activities. You are happy if you do what you want (desire) to do. So you will only be happy in Heaven if you love the good and so want to see God and worship him, and serve him and others. We can make ourselves the sort of people who love to do good by making ourselves do good despite these obstacles, so that doing good becomes natural. All human choices are character forming – each good choice makes it easier to make the next choice a good one – agents can form their own characters. Aristotle famously remarked: 'we become just by doing just acts, prudent by doing prudent acts, brave by doing brave acts.'[9] That is, by doing a just act when it is difficult – when it goes against our natural inclinations (that is our desires) – we make it easier to do a just act next time. We can gradually change our desires, so that – for example – doing just acts becomes natural. Thereby we can free ourselves from the power of the bad and less good desires to which we are subject, and make ourselves fitted for Heaven. And so, not just because it is good in itself and because God commands it, but also for the sake of our own future, it matters greatly that we should do good. God makes morality a much more serious matter than it would be otherwise.

IV

How do we know what is morally good? If there is a God, all knowledge of moral truths which hold apart from those dependent on his command are clearly due to God, because he made us and gave us moral awareness, and awareness of many of the non-moral facts of the world which enable us to apply the necessary moral truths. And he gave us experience of the world, and the ability to discuss moral issues with others, so that we could improve our understanding of what are the necessary moral truths - in the way I discussed earlier. God did not give moral awareness to cats and dogs. But we clearly need further help in discovering some of the more specific necessary moral truths - e.g. about whether abortion or euthanasia are always morally wrong or wrong only under certain conditions. For it looks as if some of us are too stupid or self – deceiving to discover such truths for ourselves. It would help us if God revealed what are the relevant necessary moral truths. As for the contingent moral truths created by divine command or commendation - particular individuals might learn what God has commanded (or commended) them to do by means of some deep private religious experience (e.g. they might learn in this way to which particular vocation God has called them). But for knowledge of God's commands (and commendations) of a general character, as well as for knowledge of the necessary moral truths which we are not capable of discovering by ourselves we need a more public revelation. Different religions make different claims about what God has revealed. For Christians that revelation is to be found in the Bible (with the qualification added by Orthodox and Catholic Christians 'as interpreted (and perhaps amplified) by the Church') But any claim to revelation needs to be backed up by evidence that it comes from God. Claims about what God has commanded must be consonant with those moral truths which we know to hold independently of the will of God; a purported revelation which included a command to rape or break a just promise could not come from God. But within those limits the teaching of some prophet about what God has revealed needs to be confirmed by God's signature. A signature is an act which can be done readily only by the person whose signature it is and one which is recognised as a mark of endorsement in the culture in which it was made. Cultures vary in respect of which acts they recognize as marks independently of endorsement. A person's name handwritten by him or herself at the end of a document constitutes a signature in our culture, as the imprint of a signet ring used to do in the Middle Ages. Ancient Israel recognised a violation of natural laws by the agency of some prophet which forwarded the work of that prophet as just such a mark of endorsement by God. My own Christian view (for which I have argued elsewhere[9]) is that there is good evidence favouring the

claim that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, a clear violation of a law of nature (if it happened) which led to the promulgation of Christ's teaching throughout the world. Hence, I would argue, that constituted God's endorsement of the teaching of Jesus Christ and the Church which he founded. No other religion has as its foundation event a miracle for which there is in any way the kind of historical evidence which there is for the Resurrection of Jesus.But it would take us too far away from our main theme to discuss here whether the Christian claim or some rival claim that God intervened in history to authenticate a claim to revelation are correct. My only point there is that without such evidence of divine intervention, we would have no knowledge of which commands God had issued, and much less knowledge of some of the necessary truths of morality which hold independently of God's command.

V

But, although obviously God has good reason to tell us those moral truths which hold independently of his will but which we are not clever enough to discover, what reason would he have for adding to our moral burdens by issuing commands? Four reasons I suggest. First, to give us further motivation to do what is obligatory anyway. As I noted earlier, parents often tell their children what to do what they ought to do anyway - sometimes no doubt because children may not realise what they ought to do anyway; but on other occasions, when children do realise this, to reinforce the obligation. Parents care that their children do what they ought to do. So if there is a God, does God. It does not need God to command us not to murder, but his command may add to our motivation not to do so. Secondly, God may issue commands for the purpose of coordination. Often we can only attain good goals which we have some obligation to promote if the actions of each of us are coordinated with those of others. We have an obligation to avoid crashing each other's cars, and to enable us to fulfil this obligation the state lays down a coordinating rule 'always drive on the left' or 'always drive on the right'. I mentioned earlier the obligation to worship on Sundays. Plausibly we have some obligation to join in public prayer ,and plausibly too –barring a divine command there is no particular obligation why we should worship publicly weekly rather than daily, or on Sundays rather than Thursdays. A divine command is necessary to ensure coordination. Or consider as another possible divine command , the New Testament's 'Wives, be subject to your husbands'.[10] Husbands and wives have certain obligations to each other and their children- for example, to care for each other and educate their children. Clearly any institution needs a system for resolving differences about how the institution should fulfil its obligations. Some sort of 'majority vote' system is used by many

institutions. But of course that is of no use in a two-member organisation, such as marriage. Clearly too the parties ought to seek agreement on how to fulfil these obligations central to marriage - on where they should live, how their children should be educated and so on. But if they can't reach agreement by discussion within a limited time, one of them must have a casting vote. Otherwise nothing will be done. I can't see any necessary moral truth about which of them, husband or wife, it should be. It is something appropriately laid down by their creator, just as driving on the left is appropriately laid down by the state which owns the roads. Another example of a possible command issued by God for the purpose of coordination would be commands about who should govern the Church (e.g the Pope or all bishops or all Christians by majority votes).

Thirdly, there are many good things which it is good that humans should do for other humans, but which humans have no obligation to do unless a command is issued by a competent authority. Parents may tell their children to do things which they would otherwise have no obligation to do, because it is good that those things should be done by the children (and not just by the parents) and within narrow limits parents have the right to tell children to do them. For God, as I noted earlier, the limits to his right to command must be far less narrow than for human parents. One example of a possible divine command of this kind, might be the command of Jesus forbidding divorce (possibly subject to qualifications e.g.'except on the ground of unchastity).[11] Marriage involves a promise to one's spouse, and clearly - to my mind - it would be wrong anyway (without any divine command being issued) for either spouse to break this promise without the consent of the other spouse. Hence it is a necessary truth that adultery is wrong. But there is normally no obligation on those who make mutual promises not to release each other from the obligation to keep them. God however could forbid such releasing. But why should he do so? Why should God make divorce difficult or impossible - say for a wife to divorce a cruel husband? These instructions have never been seen as forbidding a temporary separation in such circumstances, but what reasons could God have to command a wife not to remarry? I suggest two connected reasons. The first is to allow great generosity of commitment in the first place; the stronger understanding of what is involved in getting married will mean that the marriage will start on the right foot. And the second reason is that this understanding of the vow will have will have the consequence that even if one spouse does not keep the vow, the other spouse will have an obligation by his or her example of steadfastness to encourage both the former party and others beyond the marriage to take the vow seriously in future. If God forbids divorce, he forbids it because he wants us in these ways to promote

our own good and the good of others. He requires those whose marriages have failed to be heroic and not enter into a second marriage for the sake of the encouragement which that will provide to others to take their marriages seriously. Barring a divine command it would be at most supererogatory not to remarry for these reasons. Similar reasons might lead God to forbid premarital sexual intercourse. It is plausible to suppose that if people get into the habit of having promiscuous intercourse before marriage, they might find it a lot more natural to be unfaithful if their marriages go through a difficult period; and that being unfaithful might lead to the end of a marriage which might otherwise recover. Yet obligations are obligations to someone, and before marriage – barring a divine command – you don't owe it to any particular person not to have sexual intercourse[12] It would be – barring a divine command – at most supererogatory not to have sexual intercourse. But God plausibly has a reason for commanding us not to have premarital intercourse – in order to benefit existing and future marriages. In issuing commands for the second or third reasons, God would give each of us a special place in his providential plan for the world. For a commander to tell a particular person to perform a particular task makes and shows that person important to the commander. God deals with us on an individual basis, and he wants us so much to play a particular role in his plan and it is so good for us that we should, that he may command us to do so.

One reason why parents command children to do what otherwise would only be supererogatory - e.g. to do shopping for a sick neighbour is that they want their children to get into the habit of doing what is good beyond obligation. When the children are young, parents command them to do such acts. Commands often have more effect than good advice but once children get into the habit of doing supererogatory good acts , the need for command diminishes. God rightly want humans to be holy, and so he has this fourth reason of helping the process of our sanctification , for imposing obligations on us (by way of commands) for some or all of our earthly life. Thereby he seeks to make us the unselfish people who alone would be happy in Heaven.

So there are various reasons why God might choose to issue commands to humans; and if my previous arguments are right, both the very existence of God and his actual commands will impose new obligations on us and make the observance of morality a much more serious matter than it would be otherwise.

This paper, which I was invited to read to the Symposium on Religion and Morality in Chinese philosophy at King's College, London in August 2013, examines Christian views of the relation between

religion and morality. Its content is very similar to that of my paper 'What difference does God make to morality?', in (ed.)R.K.Garcia and N.L.King, *Is Goodness Without God good enough*?, (Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield,2009)151-163. It is published here with the kind permission of Rowman and Littlefield.

NOTES

1. Makes a great difference' in the sense that things are very different if there is a God and we exist, compared with the situation when there is no God and we still exist. I ignore the point that most probably if there were no God, we too would not exist.

2. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) 20.

3. *Euthyphro* 9e.

4. See *Kant's Lectures on Philosophical Theology*, trans A.W.Wood and G.M.Clark, (Ithaca, N.Y.:Cornell University Press, 1978)159, 'The knowledge of God…must not determine whether something is morally good or a duty for me. This I have to judge from the nature of things.'

5. See his *Canonis Missae Expositio* 23E , 'The reason why the divine will accepts things as thus or thus,is not a goodness found independently in objects by God but the reason lies only in the divine will, which accepts things as having such and such a degree of goodness; that is why they are good in that degree and not vice versa.'

6. *Summa Theologiae* 1a. 2a. 94.5

7. ibid. 1a. 2a. 100.3

8. Ordinatio III, suppl. dist. 37, text and translation on pp. 268-87 and commentary on pp. 60-4 of Allan B. Wolter (ed.), *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality* (Washington D.C.:Catholic University of America Press, 1986).

9. See my *The Resurrection of God Incarnate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

10. Ephesians 5:22.

11. Mark 10:10-12, possibly qualified in Matthew 5:32.

12. In *De Malo* (tr R.Regan, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)Aquinas considers (15.2 obj.4): the objection to the claim that fornication (non-adulterous sexual intercourse outside marriage) is immoral, that 'Fornication is neither contrary to the love of God, since it is not a sin against God, nor contrary to love of neighbor, since it inflicts no injury on one's neighbor'. But, contrary to the objection, he then goes on (ad.4) to claim that it is 'contrary to the good of begetting and rearing children'. He makes the point (less forceful in these days of ready contraception, but still with force) that such fornication is liable to lead to a child being brought up by a single parent, the mother; and that children need a father.(ibid 15.1 See also Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* 3.122.) Even so, it would not consist in a wrong to an existing person, but rather lead to the existence

of a person who would not otherwise exist and who might have (despite not having a nurturing father) a life worth living. Aquinas comments elsewhere that 'In sins contrary to nature, in which the very order of nature is violated, an injury is done to God, the ordainer of nature' (*Summa Theologiae* 2a 2ae 154. 12.ad 1). But it is in no way obvious that fornication is 'contrary to nature'. Only a divine command can make it wrong.