

Summa Theologica Ia IIae q100. THE MORAL PRECEPTS OF THE OLD LAW

1. Do all the moral precepts of the Old Law belong to the law of nature?

...

8. Are they dispensable?

...

[From the *Summa Theologica* of Saint Thomas Aquinas as translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, and from the works of Blessed John Duns Scotus as selected and arranged by Jerome of Montefortino and as translated by Peter L.P. Simpson. Texts are taken from the *Opus Oxoniense* of the Wadding edition of Scotus' works.]

Article 1. Whether all the moral precepts of the Old Law belong to the law of nature?

Aquinas

Objection 1. It would seem that not all the moral precepts belong to the law of nature. For it is written (*Sirach* 17:9): “Moreover He gave them instructions, and the law of life for an inheritance.” But instruction is in contradistinction to the law of nature; since the law of nature is not learnt, but instilled by natural instinct. Therefore not all the moral precepts belong to the natural law.

Objection 2. Further, the Divine law is more perfect than human law. But human law adds certain things concerning good morals, to those that belong to the law of nature: as is evidenced by the fact that the natural law is the same in all men, while these moral institutions are various for various people. Much more reason therefore was there why the Divine law should add to the law of nature, ordinances pertaining to good morals.

Objection 3. Further, just as natural reason leads to good morals in certain matters, so does faith: hence it is written (*Galatians* 5:6) that faith “worketh by charity.” But faith is not included in the law of nature;

Scotus [Oxon. 3 d.37]

Objection 1. It seems that all moral precepts belong to the law of nature. For the Apostle (*Romans* 2) writes: “the Gentiles which do not have the law naturally do the things that are of the law;” but that is to be understood of things that belong to moral goods; therefore all moral precepts belong to the law of nature.

Objection 2. The law of nature is that in accord with which the natural reason of any man judges that these and those things are to be done or not done, such as *Honor thy father and mother*, and *Thou shalt not kill*, *Thou shalt not steal*, and the like; therefore all these, and similar things in the Decalogue, are absolutely of the law of nature.

Objection 3. Love of one’s neighbor follows necessarily from the principle that God is be loved. Declaration: [Oxon. 3 d.37 n.9] sincere love of God cannot, properly speaking, be jealous, since it is love of the common good; therefore he who would appropriate this good to himself, not wishing God to be loved also

since that which is of faith is above nature. Therefore not all the moral precepts of the Divine law belong to the law of nature.

On the contrary, The Apostle says (*Romans* 2:14) that “the Gentiles, who have not the Law, do by nature those things that are of the Law”: which must be understood of things pertaining to good morals. Therefore all the moral precepts of the Law belong to the law of nature.

I answer that, The moral precepts, distinct from the ceremonial and judicial precepts, are about things pertaining of their very nature to good morals. Now since human morals depend on their relation to reason, which is the proper principle of human acts, those morals are called good which accord with reason, and those are called bad which are discordant from reason. And as every judgment of speculative reason proceeds from the natural knowledge of first principles, so every judgment of practical reason proceeds from principles known naturally, as stated above (94, A2,4): from which principles one may proceed in various ways to judge of various matters. For some matters connected with human actions are so evident, that after very little consideration one is able at once to approve or disapprove of them by means of these general first principles: while some matters cannot be the subject of judgment without much consideration of the various circumstances, which all are not competent to do carefully, but only those who are wise: just as it is not possible for all to consider the particular conclusions of sciences, but only for those who are versed in philosophy: and lastly there are some matters of which man cannot judge unless he be helped by Divine instruction; such as the articles of faith.

It is therefore evident that since the moral

by others, would act in a disordered way. Further, the love of someone who does not wish the beloved to be loved also by others is imperfect. Since, therefore, God is to be loved perfectly and in orderly fashion, then certainly he who loves God must want his neighbor to love God, and by wanting this he loves his neighbor; for only in this way can one’s neighbor be loved with the love of charity.

On the Contrary, [Oxon. 3 d.37 n.1] What belongs to the law of nature binds, in any state of that nature, to acting or refraining from acting in accordance with such a law; for it must always have existed and been known. But the Decalogue did not bind in every state, because it did not do so in the state of innocence since at that period of time the law of the Decalogue had not been laid down; and before it was given by God through Moses, the Israelites were not held to its observance; therefore the precepts of such a law cannot belong to the law of nature. – Further, the Apostle (*Romans* 17) writes: “I would not know concupiscence if the law did not say, ‘thou shalt not covet’;” but those things which are known from the law of nature are known as to be avoided or done without written law: just as those things which are naturally known in matters speculative are known without any tradition handing it down, as that God exists.

I answer that, [Oxon. 3 d.37 n.5] granted what was expounded above (q.94 a.2) about the notion of the law of nature, namely how by the term law of nature are first properly and strictly meant the first practical principles, as *the good is to be loved but evil is to be fled from*; how the second rank is held by the conclusions which are evidently deduced from such first principles, as that *therefore God is to be loved, pride is to be detested*, by the fact

precepts are about matters which concern good morals; and since good morals are those which are in accord with reason; and since also every judgment of human reason must needs be derived in some way from natural reason; it follows, of necessity, that all the moral precepts belong to the law of nature; but not all in the same way. For there are certain things which the natural reason of every man, of its own accord and at once, judges to be done or not to be done: e.g. "Honor thy father and thy mother," and "Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal": and these belong to the law of nature absolutely. And there are certain things which, after a more careful consideration, wise men deem obligatory. Such belong to the law of nature, yet so that they need to be inculcated, the wiser teaching the less wise: e.g. "Rise up before the hoary head, and honor the person of the aged man," and the like. And there are some things, to judge of which, human reason needs Divine instruction, whereby we are taught about the things of God: e.g. "Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything; Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

This suffices for the Replies to the Objections.

involve a malice necessarily turning away from the ultimate end, as neither do their opposites have a good necessarily turning towards the same. But certain things that regard the second table are of themselves depraved, and hence they belong per se to the law of nature taken strictly, as are *do not bear false witness* and *do not lie*; and so they do not admit of any dispensation. But several of these precepts do not include in themselves necessary connection and truth such that, antecedent to any act of the divine will, everyone apprehending their terms would know that thus they must be and so cannot be otherwise, and that therefore they must be placed among the practical principles, or among their necessary conclusions, and that thereby all the moral precepts belong altogether to the law of nature. Nevertheless [*Oxon. ib. n.8*] all the precepts even of the second table may rightly be said to belong to the law of nature insofar as they are very consonant to the law of nature taken most strictly and most properly. – As concerns the

that it is evil; and finally how, third, by extending the signification of the name, all those things can be said to be of the law of nature which, though not being first principles nor necessary conclusions of those principles, are nevertheless very consonant with them; then such indeed is what the moral precepts contained in the second table are proved to be. – But that these precepts are not all of the law of nature as known from their terms is established by the fact that the reasons for what is there prescribed or prohibited are not simply necessary practical principles nor simply necessary conclusions. For there is not in those there prescribed a goodness necessary for the goodness of the ultimate end, turning one towards the ultimate end; nor is there in those there prohibited a malice necessarily turning from the ultimate end. So if that good had not been prescribed the ultimate end could still be loved and attained; and if that evil had not been prohibited the acquisition of the ultimate end could stand with it. For several of the things [*Oxon. 3 d.37 n.3ff.*] which are forbidden as illicit would be licit if they were prescribed or permitted by the legislator, as theft, murder, adultery, and other things of that kind (whether they be said to be licit through change of matter or circumstances, or through dispensation from the law or by interpretation of the same); these indeed do not of their nature

precepts of the first table, [*Oxon. ib. n.6ff.*] which are, first: *I am the Lord thy God, thou shalt not have foreign gods before me*; second: *thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*; third: *remember that thou keep holy the sabbath day*; about these one must speak differently. For since they immediately refer to God as their object, the two first of them, if they be understood as merely negative, are most strictly of the law of nature. For it is evident to anyone who apprehends the terms that nothing other than God is to be worshipped as God, that no injury or irreverence is to be directed against him. The third precept is affirmative, *thou shalt keep holy the sabbath day*. For there it is commanded that worship is to be given to God at some determinate time. As far, then, as the determination of this or that time is concerned, the command is not, strictly speaking, of the law of nature. Neither, similarly, is it as regards the prohibition, included in that affirmation, of servile acts for a determinate time. For those acts are not forbidden except insofar as they impede or draw one away from the act there prescribed. But whether this precept about the sabbath is strictly of the law of nature as regards worship needing to be given to God for some determinate time, that is doubtful. [Cf. q.100 a.8]

Reply to Objection 1. I reply that, [*Oxon. Prol. q.2 n.7*] from what was said above (q.94 aa.4-6), the Gentiles, to whom no knowledge of the written law was handed on, naturally do those things which are of the law, namely those things that are known to all without the law, as the first practical principles and their necessary conclusions, with respect to which the law of nature is one and the same among the different nations and does not suffer variation. But it is otherwise as regards those that the written law has added, by way of explication, to the law of nature. For these vary among the different nations, nor is there as regards them one observance and custom among them all (as was said in the above cited articles). For although these are very consonant with the practical principles known by the natural light, nevertheless their evidence is not everywhere of the sort that none can think and feel otherwise and even make it into a custom, as is evident about polygamy, the eating of human flesh, theft, adultery, and the like. For the Scripture is not to be understood as speaking about these when it says that the Gentiles perform without law the things that the law commands.

Reply to Objection 2. We concede, [*Oxon. 3 d.37 nn.5, 8*] that all the precepts of the Decalogue are of the law of nature, both because they are most consonant with what most strictly belongs to the law of nature and also because nature, when not perverted by disordered customs, immediately endorses them as to be done and rejects, by a right judgment, their not being done. And further, whatever is contained in the Decalogue, right reason cannot not endorse. But because perverted customs have introduced among different nations several things contrary to what is contained in the Decalogue, that is why a plausible argument is rightly deduced to the effect that they do not belong to the law of nature as it embraces the first practical principles and the conclusions necessarily inferred therefrom; and thereby the terms of those compound expressions, that is, of several precepts of the second table, do not have a connection between them such that they are of themselves necessarily true and altogether immutable, as are the first principles and the necessary conclusions of the same.

Reply to Objection 3. I reply, [*Oxon. 3 d.37 n.10*] that from the precept *thou shalt love*

the Lord thy God it does not follow that everyone ought to want their neighbor to love God. And *when it is argued* that jealousy cannot be a perfect and ordered love, I reply that, while I ought not to want the common good to belong to one individual alone and thus not to be loved by someone else, I am not obliged to want that good to belong to some other person, because it can come about and happen that it not please God that such a good belong to him; just as, when God predestines one person and not another, he wishes thus the wellbeing of the one predestined and not of the other. – And *when it is added* that the perfect lover wants the beloved to be loved by others, *it can be said* that this is true, namely that he wants the beloved to be loved by him whose friendship is pleasing to the beloved; but it is not certain about anyone, from the law of nature, that his love is pleasing and accepted by God the beloved. – A response can also be made in this way, [*Oxon.* 3 d.33 n.11] that although love of neighbor, or wanting one's neighbor to love God (because this it is to love one's neighbor), belongs to the law of nature strictly taken, yet there do not follow from this all the precepts of the second table, to wit: that one should, as regards the good of his own person, not want to kill him, or that one should, as regards the good of the person united to him, not want to commit adultery; or that one should, as regards the goods of fortune that he is using, not want to steal; that reverence, both in honors and sustenance, be shown to parents; and so on as regards the other precepts of the second table; for it is possible for me to want my neighbor to love God and yet not to want him to have bodily life or to be faithful to his wife and so on; and certainly these two things can stand together, namely my wanting my neighbor to love God as I ought to love God, as being a necessary truth deduced from the practical principles, and my not wanting for my neighbor this or that good, about which there is an express precept of the second table, since it is not a necessary truth. – To the authorities from Paul and Christ it can be said, [*Oxon.* 3 d.37 n.12] that God has now in fact made explicit a love of neighbor beyond what is included in it as it follows from the principles of the law of nature; and indeed, insofar as it is a conclusion from those principles, it only contains wanting one's neighbor to love God in himself; however, insofar as it is made explicit in the law, it includes those goods being wished for one's neighbor, or at least the opposite evils not being wanted for him, as his bodily life or his wife's fidelity or his worldly goods etc. being unjustly taken from him. – It is true, therefore, that he who loves his neighbor fulfills the law, namely in the way it has been made explicit that the law ought to be kept, albeit not in the way does love of neighbor follow as a conclusion from the first principles of the law of nature. And likewise the whole law, as far as the second table is concerned, and the Prophets hang on this precept, *thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*, understanding such a precept, not as it follows from the first practical principle of the law of nature, but as the Legislator has declared that it ought to be kept and as is made explicit in the precepts of the second table.

Reply to On the Contrary. To the first argument I reply, [*Oxon. ib.* n.4] that certainly the precepts of the Decalogue ought in every state to be kept. And indeed there will in bliss be a full and most perfect observance of the affirmative precepts, except perhaps for the one about showing honor to parents, not because the will to do so will be lacking, but because there will be no necessity for undertaking that act, at least as far as it extends to necessary sustenance, since no one will need another's help. – But in the state of innocence, and before the law was given, [*Oxon. ib.*] everyone was held to keeping those

precepts; because each carried them written in his heart, or perhaps through some exterior teaching given by God which the parents learnt and were passing on to their children; nor did they need to be written in a book, because they could easily be committed to memory and retained, for the people of that time had a longer lifespan and were better disposed in their natural powers than were men of later times when the weakness of the people required a law to be given and written down. But it does not follow from this that they pertained to the law of nature properly meant, but only that they were very consonant to such law.

To the second argument on the contrary I say, [*Oxon. ib. n.13*] that although God's existence can be concluded by natural reason from principles known of themselves, nevertheless to a people rude and untrained in matters of the intellect, as the Israelites wandering in the desert were, this was not known except from the law. Hence the Apostle says to the *Hebrews* (c.11) that *he who comes to God must believe that he is*, understanding by this those who do not have, nor can acquire, knowledge of God's existence in any other way. Thus, although it could be concluded that some concupiscence is against the law of nature, that was not however known to men of perverted morals, and so there was need for it to be handed on by a law whereby they might be persuaded that concupiscence was to be restrained. – It can also be replied that concupiscences were forbidden by the precepts of the second table; but that these precepts do not, or not all at any rate, belong to the law of nature strictly taken was explained in the solution.

Article 8. Whether the precepts of the decalogue are dispensable?

Aquinas

Objection 1. It would seem that the precepts of the Decalogue are dispensable. For the precepts of the Decalogue belong to the natural law. But the natural law fails in some cases and is changeable, like human nature, as the Philosopher says (*Ethic. v, 7*). Now the failure of law to apply in certain particular cases is a reason for dispensation, as stated above (96, 6; 97, 4). Therefore a dispensation can be granted in the precepts of the Decalogue.

Objection 2. Further, man stands in the same relation to human law as God does to Divine law. But man can dispense with the precepts of a law made by man. Therefore, since the precepts of the Decalogue are

Scotus [Oxon. 3 d.37]

Objection 1. It seems that the precepts of the Decalogue are altogether unable to be dispensed from. For in *Isaiah 14* certain people are rebuked because they altered right and destroyed the eternal compact; but that seems to refer above all to the precepts of the Decalogue; therefore the precepts of the Decalogue cannot be altered by dispensation.

Objection 2. *Timothy 2.2* says, "God stays faithful; he cannot deny himself." But he would be denying himself if he were to take away the order of his justice, for he himself is his justice; for by making it be the case that man be disposed towards God in a disordered way by acts contrary to the

ordained by God, it seems that God can dispense with them. Now our superiors are God's vice-regents on earth; for the Apostle says (*2 Corinthians 2:10*): "For what I have pardoned, if I have pardoned anything, for your sakes have I done it in the person of Christ." Therefore superiors can dispense with the precepts of the Decalogue.

Objection 3. Further, among the precepts of the Decalogue is one forbidding murder. But it seems that a dispensation is given by men in this precept: for instance, when according to the prescription of human law, such as evil-doers or enemies are lawfully slain. Therefore the precepts of the Decalogue are dispensable.

Objection 4. Further, the observance of the Sabbath is ordained by a precept of the Decalogue. But a dispensation was granted in this precept; for it is written (*1 Maccabees 2:4*): "And they determined in that day, saying: Whosoever shall come up to fight against us on the Sabbath-day, we will fight against him." Therefore the precepts of the Decalogue are dispensable.

On the contrary, are the words of *Isaiah 24:5*, where some are reproved for that "they have changed the ordinance, they have broken the everlasting covenant"; which, seemingly, apply principally to the precepts of the Decalogue. Therefore the precepts of the Decalogue cannot be changed by dispensation.

I answer that, As stated above (96, 6; 97, 4), precepts admit of dispensation, when there occurs a particular case in which, if the letter of the law be observed, the intention of the lawgiver is frustrated. Now the intention of every lawgiver is directed first and chiefly to the common good; secondly, to the order of justice and virtue,

precepts of the first table, or that he not keep what is commanded in the second table by which men are ordered to each other, the order of justice would without doubt be violated; therefore this is altogether impossible. For these precepts are absolutely unchangeable: *to no one is to be done what is not his due; to each is to be rendered what is his due.*

On the contrary, [*Oxon. ib. n.1*] by precepts of the Decalogue men are prohibited from murder, adultery, theft; God seems to have dispensed from these, prescribing to Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a holocaust, *Genesis 22*; about theft, *Exodus 21* and 22, where it is read that God prescribed to the children of Israel to despoil the Egyptians; but about adultery it is clear in *Hosea 1*, "Make to yourself sons of fornication."

I answer that, those who think that all the precepts of the Decalogue belong to the law of nature in the strict sense (according to what was expounded in a.1) infer thence that they are totally unable to be dispensed from. For from the fact that [*Oxon. ib. n.2*] the things prescribed include the formal goodness that turns per se to the ultimate end, and that, again, the things prohibited import the malice that turns away from the same end, the former are prescribed because they are good but the latter prohibited because they are in themselves evil. For all precepts of that sort either immediately or mediately descend from the first practical principles known by the light of reason, to assenting to which the intellect is naturally inclined, and to assenting to such a dictate the will is naturally inclined; they are therefore totally unable to be dispensed from. For what is of itself illicit cannot through any will turn out as licit; and consequently since it is, by the nature of the terms, evil to kill one's

whereby the common good is preserved and attained. If therefore there by any precepts which contain the very preservation of the common good, or the very order of justice and virtue, such precepts contain the intention of the lawgiver, and therefore are indispensable. For instance, if in some community a law were enacted, such as this--that no man should work for the destruction of the commonwealth, or betray the state to its enemies, or that no man should do anything unjust or evil, such precepts would not admit of dispensation. But if other precepts were enacted, subordinate to the above, and determining certain special modes of procedure, these latter precepts would admit of dispensation, in so far as the omission of these precepts in certain cases would not be prejudicial to the former precepts which contain the intention of the lawgiver. For instance if, for the safeguarding of the commonwealth, it were enacted in some city that from each ward some men should keep watch as sentries in case of siege, some might be dispensed from this on account of some greater utility.

Now the precepts of the Decalogue contain the very intention of the lawgiver, who is God. For the precepts of the first table, which direct us to God, contain the very order to the common and final good, which is God; while the precepts of the second table contain the order of justice to be observed among men, that nothing undue be done to anyone, and that each one be given his due; for it is in this sense that we are to take the precepts of the Decalogue. Consequently the precepts of the Decalogue admit of no dispensation whatever.

Reply to Objection 1. The Philosopher is not speaking of the natural law which

neighbor, then, as long as the same cause or matter, on which the act operates, remains, the act will always be evil; and thus, no willing, because it is outside the logic of those terms, can bring it about that the act be good. And then the authorities, which seem to say that God has dispensed in such cases in this way, are expounded thus, that although there could be a dispensation as regards the act in its genus as act, there could not be as regards the act itself insofar as it is prohibited, and so not as against the prohibition.

But we do not think this opinion is to be approved. For [*Oxon. ib. n.3*] to dispense is not to make it to be that the precept may be flouted while it remains in effect; but to dispense is to revoke the precept, or to explicate how it is to be understood. For there is a twofold dispensation, namely revoking of the right and explicating the right. – This supposition in hand, I inquire whether, when the circumstances of that act which is the killing of a man stay the same, only the circumstance of its being prohibited or not prohibited being changed, God could make it that that act, which was, with these circumstances, prohibited, not be prohibited but rather permitted. If the answer be yes, then God can simply dispense by revoking the right, making it thereby the case that, the act remaining the same, one is not bound to it as heretofore. This is also the way any legislator simply dispenses, when he revokes a precept of the positive law he himself has set up, and not by making it the case that, though the precept remains as such, it loses its nature as illicit and becomes licit. God also in this way simply dispensed from the Old Law as regards its ceremonies, when he laid down the New Law. – But if God cannot make it the case that an act, which with such circumstances was prohibited, should turn out as licit while the same circumstances

contains the very order of justice: for it is a never-failing principle that “justice should be preserved.” But he is speaking in reference to certain fixed modes of observing justice, which fail to apply in certain cases.

Reply to Objection 2. As the Apostle says (*2 Timothy 2:13*), “God continueth faithful, He cannot deny Himself.” But He would deny Himself if He were to do away with the very order of His own justice, since He is justice itself. Wherefore God cannot dispense a man so that it be lawful for him not to direct himself to God, or not to be subject to His justice, even in those matters in which men are directed to one another.

Reply to Objection 3. The slaying of a man is forbidden in the Decalogue, in so far as it bears the character of something undue: for in this sense the precept contains the very essence of justice. Human law cannot make it lawful for a man to be slain unduly. But it is not undue for evil-doers or foes of the common weal to be slain: hence this is not contrary to the precept of the Decalogue; and such a killing is no murder as forbidden by that precept, as Augustine observes (*De Lib. Arb. i, 4*). In like manner when a man’s property is taken from him, if it be due that he should lose it, this is not theft or robbery as forbidden by the Decalogue.

Consequently when the children of Israel, by God’s command, took away the spoils of the Egyptians, this was not theft; since it was due to them by the sentence of God. Likewise when Abraham consented to slay his son, he did not consent to murder, because his son was due to be slain by the command of God, Who is Lord of life and death: for He it is Who inflicts the punishment of death on all men, both godly and ungodly, on account of the sin of our

remain, then neither could he make it that to kill a man should not be prohibited, the opposite of which is manifestly clear in the case of Abraham, whom God commanded to kill his son. – Next, [*Oxon. ib. n.4*] things that are true from the terms, whether they be first principles or conclusions necessarily deduced therefrom, precede, in their truth, every act of will; for they have a truth where every willing is delimited as ‘per impossible’. If therefore all the precepts of the Decalogue are endued with the like necessary connection, such that these are necessary: *one’s neighbor is not to be killed, theft is not to be committed*, and consequently, all willing having been removed, they would be thus known to every intellect apprehending the terms of their composition, the divine intellect would, on apprehending them, understand them as true of themselves, and then the divine will would of necessity accord with such propositions, or it would not be right; and thus the idea of practical science in God would receive addition, which is false. Moreover, God’s will would simply be necessarily determined with respect to certain objects of will outside itself, which was the error of the philosophers.

It must be said, therefore, that most precepts of the Decalogue, or in particular those belonging to the second table, are dispensable simply. For since [*Oxon. ib. n.5*] there does not shine out in them, when a view is had of the formal nature of such precepts, a goodness necessary for attaining the ultimate end, nor, conversely, does there appear in the things forbidden any malice necessarily turning one away from the ultimate end, therefore they are to be adjudged evil because prohibited, and good because commanded, by God. As, therefore, he has prescribed that theft is not to be committed, nor adultery, nor murder, he could have prescribed or could prescribe

first parent, and if a man be the executor of that sentence by Divine authority, he will be no murderer any more than God would be. Again Osee, by taking unto himself a wife of fornications, or an adulterous woman, was not guilty either of adultery or of fornication: because he took unto himself one who was his by command of God, Who is the Author of the institution of marriage.

Accordingly, therefore, the precepts of the Decalogue, as to the essence of justice which they contain, are unchangeable: but as to any determination by application to individual actions--for instance, that this or that be murder, theft or adultery, or not--in this point they admit of change; sometimes by Divine authority alone, namely, in such matters as are exclusively of Divine institution, as marriage and the like; sometimes also by human authority, namely in such matters as are subject to human jurisdiction: for in this respect men stand in the place of God: and yet not in all respects.

Reply to Objection 4. This determination was an interpretation rather than a dispensation. For a man is not taken to break the Sabbath, if he does something necessary for human welfare; as Our Lord proves (*Matthew 12:3, seqq.*).

determination of time it does not strictly belong to the law of nature, because it is not a practical principle known of itself nor a conclusion inferred therefrom. Nor again can it, as regards the negative part involved in the precept, in that servile work is forbidden on the sabbath day, belong to the law of nature. For that act is prohibited in that it draws away from or impedes the presenting of worship to God at that period of time which falls under the precept of worship; but whether this precept about presenting worship to God on set days belongs to the law of nature is dubious.

And to be sure [*Oxon. 3 d.37 n.7*] if it be said not to belong to the law of nature as regards the first or second rank, therefore God can simply dispense from it such that a man be held at no time of his life to have a good movement towards God nor to repay him any act of love as necessary for salvation; but this seems incredible and thoroughly

the opposite; and in that case, though remaining the same with the same circumstances, the act would be licit which was otherwise prohibited and, because of that prohibition, disordered. But dispensation does not make it that the prohibition stands along with the goodness of the act; for that, taken in the composite sense, is impossible as regards any legislator at all; but dispensation takes away the prohibition, or revokes the positive right, and by that fact what was, while the law stood, illicit and disordered can be performed simply licitly. – As regards the precepts of the first table, one must speak differently. For [*Oxon. ib. n.6*] they immediately regard God as object. And indeed the two prior, namely *thou shalt not have foreign Gods* and *thou shalt not take the name of thy God in vain* (that is, thou shalt not do thy God irreverence), if they be understood as only negative, belong strictly to the law of nature. For the consequence is necessary: if God is, he is to be loved as God and nothing else is to be worshipped as God; nor are injury and irreverence to be done against God; and hence God cannot so dispense from these that it be licit to perform the opposite. – The third precept [*Oxon. ib. n.6*], which is about *keeping the sabbath holy*, is affirmative; for the prescription is that some worship is to be presented to God at a determinate time; as regards the

impossible of proof, because without any good willing of the ultimate end no one can have a good willing of what is for the end. Just as, therefore, [Oxon. 3 d.27 n.18] a man is held to do some virtuous act, so he is held to do some act of that precept (*Deuteronom. 6 and Matthew 22*), *thou shalt love the Lord thy God*, which act is free love of God. And to be sure, [Oxon. ib. q.1 n.3] if the acts of the moral virtues are necessary for anyone for salvation, much more will the acts of the theological virtues, through which the acts of the moral virtues are ordered to the end, be necessary. And certainly a man in possession of his reason, keeping the moral precepts of the second table, would do nothing for salvation unless, at least virtually, he were to exercise himself, in these acts of virtues, for the sake of the ultimate end. – Next, it cannot happen [Oxon. 3 d.37 n.7] that, in the whole of one's lifetime, an opportunity for doing an act of love toward God should not occur. Just as, on the opposite side, observance of the precept about honoring one's parents can perdure though no such act be done, because the precept does not bind to an act except at the time when opportunity occurs, and it is possible that this opportunity be absent for the whole of one's lifetime. But nothing can impede and forever exclude an opportunity of adoring and worshipping God; and for that reason every adult is held to sometime eliciting an act of this affirmative precept. This inference therefore seems necessary: *God is not to be held in hatred, or injury is not to be purposed against God*; therefore he is at some time to be loved. And just as the antecedent belongs to the right of nature in the strictest sense, so also does the inferred conclusion.

But that the consequence does not pertain to the law of nature most strictly taken seems to be proved [Oxon. 3 d.37 n.7] from the fact that to the right of nature strictly taken does not belong that a man should now or today elicit an act of love toward God; it is indeed not a practical principle known of itself, nor a conclusion evidently deduced from the principle. Since the determination here is diverse and different in diverse laws, as was said, and it has been conceded that it does not regard the law of nature, therefore neither is it a thing naturally known that God is to be worshipped tomorrow or at any determinate time; for by the reason by which it follows not that worship is to be shown God now, by equal reason it follows not that it be shown then, or at any determinate time; therefore it does not seem possible to conclude when someone may be held to show worship to God, either then or now or, by equal reason, at any time generally; because to no act is anyone held for any indeterminate time to which he is not held for some definite time when certain opportunities arise. But to those who hold the affirmative side the solution to this argument is easy; for they would say that when it is argued from singulars to a universal the fallacy of figure of speech is committed, as in the case of inferring from several other determinate things to one indeterminate thing. For from the fact that this food is not necessary for sustaining life, nor that, nor another, it does not follow that no food at all will be necessary.

The sum is this [Oxon. 3 d.37 n.7], if it be held that worship's at some time needing to be given to God regards the law of nature properly taken, then the precept *thou shalt keep holy the sabbath day*, since it imports this worship and love of God, will be wholly indispensable, as was said of the other two precepts of the first table; but if it be put outside that law, then one must judge of it in the way that was said of most of the precepts of the second table.

Reply to Objection 1. I respond that the precepts of the Decalogue do not suffer dispensation nor undergo change because of human wickedness; and thus rightly are those reprobated and condemned who sin against them; because it does not fall under their power to make licit what God has commanded not to be done. But that does not prevent the legislator himself, through his most eminent power, from being able to make it that men should act against those very precepts and without sin, because in such a case the precept is understood to have been revoked, since he himself cannot be author of sin. But we do not think, [*Oxon.* 3 d.37 nn.5-8] that this can happen as regards all precepts of the Decalogue, but only about those that do not intrinsically involve malice and that are evil because prohibited, and that do not necessarily of their nature turn one away from the ultimate end, nor do their opposites necessarily lead to the attainment of the end, as was expounded in a.1.

Reply to Objection 2. We say [*Oxon.* 3 d.37 n.5ff.] that God cannot deny himself nor therefore dispense from the precepts of the first table, as was said; for they are an invariable order according to which the intellectual creature is ordered to his ultimate end. But the nature of the order whereby creatures are ordered to each other is wholly dissimilar; for although in the reduplicative sense this order cannot be changed such that, while that precept and law are in place, an act against the law not be held against the doer; for this is impossible and no legislator can, under such a condition, dispense from a law he has laid down; but he can do so by revoking the law, whether absolutely as regards everyone or in a certain case as regards some. Thus also can the Supreme Legislator dispense from certain precepts of the second table, as the reason *on the contrary* shows, and can therefore make not to be disordered what otherwise was disordered, that is, were the prohibitive law in such cases not revoked.