

7

Kant, Morality, and Hell

James Edwin Mahon

1 God and morality

The first thing to note about the place of God, and ultimately Hell, in Kant's account of morality, is that Kant rejects the idea that morality is in any way based upon, or derived from, God and His commands.¹ The position that morality is based upon, or is derived from, God and His commands, is known as Divine Command Theory, or Theological Voluntarism. This is the view that, if there is no God then nothing is morally right or morally wrong – or morally optional;² on the other hand, if there is a God, and if God issues commands (e.g., “Thou shalt not lie”), then it is morally wrong to disobey those commands, morally right to obey them, and, it seems, morally optional to behave in ways that are not covered by those commands.

Kant rejects Divine Command Theory for the same reason that the characters of Socrates and Euthyphro reject it in Plato's dialogue *Euthyphro* (Plato, 2002). It is false that nothing is morally right, morally wrong, or morally optional independent of God's commands. The proof of this is that, if God were to, for example, command people to perform some immoral action, such as to lie, then it would still be morally wrong to lie, despite God's command to do so: “So nobody, not even the deity, is an originator of moral laws, since they have not arisen from choice, but are practically necessary; if they were not so, it might even be the case that lying was a virtue” (*L* 27:283, p. 76). As Kant says in more detail in his lectures on ethics:

For example, if I am not supposed to lie because God has forbidden it, but has done so because it pleased Him, then He could also have not forbidden it, had He so wished. But... I must not lie, not because God

has forbidden it, but because it is bad in itself. ... [A]n action must be done, not because God wills it, but because it is righteous or good in itself; and it is because of this that God wills it and demands it of us. (L 27:262, p. 56)³

Morality, as Kant says, is not created at all. Rather, morality is a set of necessary truths – *a priori* truths – that are independent of God and that are discovered by reason (see R. G. Swinburne, 1976). As Kant says, “People have perceived their duties correctly, and recognized the odiousness of lying, without having any proper notion of God” (L 27:277, p. 68). God does not create morality, “just as God is no originator of the fact that a triangle has three sides” (L 27:283, p. 76). In fact the “moral laws...are... just as necessary and eternal as God” (L 27:331, p. 114).

Kant points out that it is quite obvious that Divine Command Theory is false. As he says: “God wills it – why should I” (L 27:9, p. 5)? If I already know that God is moral, then I will do what God commands, but not because God commands it; I will do it because it is morally right. On the other hand, if I do not know that God is moral, then I will not do what God commands simply because God commands it: I will not do it because it might not be morally right. A divine command that something be done does not, by itself, make it morally right – no more than a federal law, or a parent’s command, or a Nazi officer’s order, ever, of themselves, make it morally right to obey. As Kant says: “Supposing the *arbitrium* [will] of God to be known to me, where is the necessity that I should do it, if I have not already derived the obligation from the nature of the case?” (L 27:9, p. 5) To believe that a divine command to do something makes that thing morally right to do is, simply, to commit the fallacy of deriving a (moral) “ought” from an “is.”⁴ One would first need at least some other moral ought, such as “One ought to obey God,” or “Whatever God commands is right,” to make God’s commands something morally right to do, and this moral ought (if it were a moral ought) would itself be completely independent of those commands. Morality, therefore, is independent of God. Indeed, according to Kant, the truths of morality apply to God as much as to His creations: “the human being (and with him every rational being) is an *end in itself*, that is, can never be used merely as a means by anyone (not even by God)” (CPR 5:131, p. 245). Hence, “even in God, morality must exist” (L 27:10, p. 6). The reason why people hold that morality is somehow based upon, or derived from, God, as Kant explains, is that duties are often given in the form of a prohibition: “The cause of this derivation of morality from the divine will is as follows: Because moral laws run, Thou shalt not, it

is supposed that there must be a third being, who has forbidden it" (L 27:277, p. 68).

Nevertheless, it is true that there is an important relationship between morality and God: God is a moral being. Indeed, God is "the *only holy*, the *only blessed*, and the *only wise*" (CPR 5:131, p. 245) being. Because God is a moral being who is "morally perfect (holy and beneficent)" (CPR 5:129, p. 245), everything that God commands is morally right. As he says: "the subjective morality of the divine are therefore coincident with objective morality" (L 27:263, p. 56). Because God is omniscient as well as moral, God commands everything that is morally right: "God wills everything that is morally good and appropriate" (L 27:1425, p. 68). All moral duties, therefore, are *also* the commands of God. Indeed, Kant says that, properly understood, religion is "*the recognition of all duties as divine commands, not as sanctions*" (CPR 5:130, p. 244), and "All morally good actions are thus, in their highest states, religious acts" (L 27:17, p. 10). A moral individual who is a theist understands that, for example, even if it is a moral duty not to lie because lying is morally wrong, and not because God commands it, in addition to its being a moral duty not to lie, God commands us not to lie. This is true for every duty: "all moral laws...are rules of divine will" (L 27:263, p. 56).

2 God and punishment

To return to Kant's argument against Divine Command Theory, it is possible to argue that, whether or not it is morally right to do what God commands because God commands it, it is nevertheless in one's self-interest to do what God commands because God commands it. Otherwise, one will be punished. A divine command is not a *command*, after all, unless it is backed up by a sanction. As the legal positivist John Austin (1861, p. 6) pointed out, "a command is distinguished from other significations of desire by this peculiarity: that the party to whom it is directed is liable to evil from the other, in case he comply not with the desire."

Kant considers this objection by imagining a non-moral God who issues commands and punishes those who do not obey: "How dreadful, though, is a God without morality" (L 27:10, p. 6). As terrifying as this prospect is, it would pose no conflict for the moral individual. Since morality is independent of a non-moral God, and since what the non-moral God commanded would be morally wrong to do, one would only have a self-interested reason to obey the command of a non-moral God, whereas one would have an overriding moral reason to disobey the

command. The result is that “He will punish me; in that case it is injurious” (L 27:9, p. 5) but nothing more, and the moral individual would avoid moral wrongdoing. As Kant elsewhere says, “one who threatens me does not obligate, but extorts” (L 27:1426, p. 69). Such a moral individual would be like the Stoic in extreme pain who was proud because “he was aware that he had not incurred by it any wrongful action and thereby made himself deserving of punishment” (CPR 5:60, p. 189).⁵ More importantly, what the non-moral God would do to the moral individual for refusing to obey the wrongful command would not, in fact, *be* punishment. In such a case the “God displays merely ill-will” (L 27:10, p. 6). For a non-moral God to inflict harm upon a moral individual for refusing to do what was morally wrong would simply be a morally wrongful act by the non-moral God – that is, the harming of an innocent person. As John Rawls (1955, p. 7) has pointed out, punishment, according to retributivist philosophers like Kant, is reserved for the infliction of harm upon the *guilty*: “no man can be punished unless he is guilty.”⁶ Punishment, on Kant’s retributivist account, is the morally rightful infliction of harm upon those who have violated their moral duties, and thus who are guilty. A non-moral God, by its very nature, could never punish.

By contrast, God, who is a moral being, does engage in punishment. Indeed, God *must* punish. All moral wrongdoing, according to Kant, is deserving of punishment, that is, the infliction of harm on the person who has committed the moral wrong:

Finally there is in the idea of our practical reason something further that accompanies the transgression of a moral law, namely its *deserving punishment*. Now, becoming a partaker in happiness cannot be combined with the concept of punishment as such. For, although he who punishes can at the same time have the kindly intention of directing the punishment to this end as well, yet it must first be justified in itself as punishment, that is, as mere harm, so that he who is punished, if it stopped there, and he could see no kindness hidden behind this harshness, must himself admit that justice was done to him and that what was allotted him was perfectly suited to his conduct. In every punishment as such there must first be justice, and this constitutes what is essential in this concept. (CPR 5:27, p. 170)

To punish is an act of justice, and to *refrain* from punishing – to refrain from inflicting harm on those who have transgressed their moral duties – is to *commit* an act of injustice. God, in addition to being holy and

beneficent, is just: "We must therefore represent to ourselves a supreme being, who is holy in His laws, benevolent in his government, and just in His punishments and rewards. Now this in one being is the concept of God that is needed for religion, as the basis of natural religion" (L 27:306, p. 95). Indeed, Kant says about God that we "fear Him as a just judge" (L 27:322, p. 107) and our "fear of God is directed simply to the righteousness of His justice" (L 27:322, p. 108).

As was established above, every moral duty is also something that God commands people to do. Given that God commands people to fulfill their moral duties, it follows that He must back up those divine commands with divine sanctions. Since God is omnipotent, it follows that He can punish anyone who transgresses any moral duty: that is, disobeys His commands. Since God is just, it follows that He must always punish all wrongdoers:

The binding force of the law lies, therefore, in principle as it is known to reason; on the other hand, we can and must attach to this hypothesis the sense that God, as a moral and omnipotent being, is the supreme executor of all inner and outer moral laws, that He adds to their force the efficacy that is needed to manifest it, and that we, therefore, when we observe or transgress the laws, are subject to God's judgment-seat, in that we have acted according to His will, or against it, and must expect the consequences. (L 27:530, p. 291)

God is thus the "supreme law-giver" (L 29:629, p. 246) for all morality – the executor of all morality: "You know the necessity of morality, and must also know that God is the supreme executor of its laws" (L 29:628, p. 245).

Here it is important to note the distinction between God's beneficence and God's justice. In God's role as punisher of those who transgress morality, God must act justly, rather than beneficently. Beneficence consists of promoting the happiness of others who are *innocent* of wrongdoing (only). Those who are guilty of wrongdoing are not candidates for beneficence: they are candidates for punishment, which is a requirement of justice. As Kant is fond of pointing out, "indulgence and dispensation...do not harmonize with justice" (CPR 5:124, p. 103). In a lengthy passage in the lectures on ethics, Kant explains that because *morality*, which is independent of God, requires that moral wrongdoers be punished, it follows that God must punish moral wrongdoers:

Because men are exceedingly frail in all acts of morality, and not only what they practice as a good action is very defective and flawed, but

they also consciously and willfully violate the divine law, they are quite unable to confront a holy and just judge, who cannot forgive evil-doing *simpliciter*. The question is, can we, by our vehement begging and beseeching, hope for and obtain through God's goodness the forgiveness of all of our sins? No, we cannot without contradiction conceive of a kindly judge; as ruler he may well be kindly; but a judge must be just. For if God could forgive all evil-doing, He could also make it permissible and if He can grant it impunity, it rests also on His will to make it permitted; in that case, however, the moral laws would be an arbitrary matter, though in fact they are not arbitrary, but just as necessary and eternal as God. God's justice is the precise allocation of punishments and rewards in accordance with men's good or bad behavior. The divine will is immutable. ... So begging can bring about no remission of punishment; the holy law necessarily entails that punishments should be appropriate to actions. (L 27:331, p. 114)

Here it is worth making explicit the form that God's punishment of moral wrongdoers takes. It is to send wrongdoers to Hell, where "[H]ell [is]... a state containing nothing but evil and involving a total loss of consolation and the utmost pain" (L 27: 691, p. 420).

God's role in Kant's account of morality, therefore, is not to create morality, or to ground morality, or to serve as the basis of morality, since morality is independent of Him, and even applies to Him. God's role is to *enforce* morality, in the sense of punishing those who transgress their moral duties, by sending them to Hell, and rewarding those who abide by morality, by sending them to Heaven. Kant says that "God must necessarily reward men whose behavior is in accordance with the moral law" (L 27:268, p. 60), but it is equally true that He must necessarily punish those whose behavior is not in accordance with the moral law. Without the availability of Hell, God could not punish moral wrongdoers, and hence would not be just.

In order for God to punish moral wrongdoers (and reward moral rightdoers), it is necessary that God be omniscient, for a very particular reason. Morality does not merely require that one perform certain actions and omissions. It requires that one perform those actions and omissions because it is one's moral duty to do so – that one have a "good will" (G 4:393, p. 49) and act from the motive of duty, which is the only moral motive. Only God, however, is able to know the motives behind people's actions and omissions, and whether or not they are acting from the motive of duty. In addition to acting contrary to duty ("consciously

and wilfully violate the divine law”), it is possible for people to act in accordance with duty from motives that are other than the motive of duty (“what they practice as a good action is very defective and flawed”). As Kant is fond of saying: “God desires, not the action, but the heart” (*L*: 27: 274, p. 65).⁷ One fails to be moral – one’s actions fail to have moral worth – if one abides by one’s moral duties from a motive that is not the moral motive.

Kant provides two examples of such failures in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. One involves a merchant who abides by the moral duty to treat all of his customers equally and charge everyone the same price, but who does so from the motive of self-interest, and not from the motive of duty:

For example, it certainly conforms with duty that a shopkeeper not overcharge an inexperienced customer, and where there is a good deal of trade a prudent merchant does not overcharge but keeps a fixed general price for everyone, so that a child can buy from him as well as everyone else. People are thus served *honestly*; but this is not nearly enough for us to believe that the merchant acted in this way from duty and basic principles of honesty; his advantage required it; it cannot be assumed here that he had, besides, an immediate inclination toward his customers, so as from love, as it were, to give no one preference over another in the matter of price. Thus the action was done neither from duty nor from immediate inclination, but merely for purposes of self-interest. (*G* 4: 398, p. 53)

The second involves a person who is beneficent, which is a moral duty, but who acts out of a direct inclination to help others, and not from the motive of duty:

To be beneficent where one can is a duty, and besides there are many souls so sympathetically attuned that, without any other motive of vanity or self-interest they find an inner satisfaction in spreading joy around them and can take delight in the satisfaction of others so far as it is their own work. But I assert that in such a case an action of this kind, however it may conform with duty and however amiable it may be, has nevertheless no true moral worth but is on the same footing with other inclinations. (*G*, 4: 398, p. 53)

Both of these individuals fail to be moral, although they abide by their moral duties. It follows that, unlike in the case of a human law, where one

meets one's legal obligation simply by performing the (outward) action or omission – as it has been said, “hardly any rule of penal law is more definitely settled than that motive is irrelevant” (Hall, 1947, pp. 153–4) (it does not matter *why* you did not commit murder, only that you did *not* commit murder; and it does not matter *why* you committed murder, only that it *was* murder)⁸ – in the case of morality, one fails to meet one's moral obligation simply by performing the (outward) action or omission from a non-moral motive. One must also perform the action or omission from a moral motive – the motive of duty. What this entails is that one may be punished by God – or at the very least, one may fail to be rewarded by God – if one abides by one's moral duties, that is, obeys God's commands, from a non-moral motive.

For example, the moral law tells us to promote the happiness of all men, and God wills this also; if I now act in accordance with the divine will, and practice well-doing to obtain rewards from God thereafter, I have not done the action from any moral disposition, but by reference to the divine will, in order to be rewarded later on. Insofar as a man may have fulfilled the divine law in a pragmatic sense, he has at least satisfied the law, and may to that extent expect good consequences, in that he has, after all, done what God wanted, even though the disposition was impure. But God wills the disposition; morality is what conforms to His will, and as laws of that kind they oblige absolutely... We have therefore to regard God, not as a pragmatic lawgiver, but as a moral one. (*L 27*: 283, pp. 76–7)

God's role, therefore, is that of a moral judge, to punish moral wrongdoers (and reward moral rightdoers) for failing to live up to morality. In order to avoid punishment by being sent to Hell, and earn the reward of being sent to Heaven, it is necessary “to please God by inner dispositions, and to practice His holy law, and to hope by His benevolence for a supplement to our frailties” (*L 27*: 334, p. 117). Having the right inner disposition is necessary to be moral in the case of divine justice.

3 Belief in God

Given the important role that God plays in Kant's account of morality, it may seem peculiar that Kant holds that it is impossible to know whether or not God exists, or whether or not the soul is immortal, or whether or not Hell and Heaven exist. As it turns out, however, the impossibility of

knowing any of these things might actually help people to achieve the end of avoiding Hell and making it to Heaven.

Kant is rightly famous for undermining all of the celebrated “proofs” for God’s existence. In a single section of his *Critique of Practical Reason*, for example, he runs through each of the three most famous “proofs” for God’s existence – the Cosmological Argument, the Ontological Argument, and the Teleological Argument, or Argument from Design – and points out their flaws.

In the case of the Cosmological Argument, which holds that one can deduce the existence of God from the existence of the universe, Kant argues that, given our understanding of God as a being endowed with all perfections, in order to deduce the existence of a perfect being from the existence of the universe, it would be necessary to know that the world or universe is perfect. This, however, is impossible for us to know:

But it is impossible through metaphysics to proceed by *sure inferences* from knowledge of this world to the concept of God and to the proof of his existence, for this reason: that I order to say that this world was possible only through a *God* (as we must think this concept) we would have to cognize this world as the most perfect whole possible and, in order to do so, cognize all possible worlds as well (so as to be able to compare them with this one), and would therefore have to be omniscient. (*CPR* 5: 138–139, p. 251)

In the case of the Ontological Argument, which holds that one can deduce the existence of God from the concept of God as a being with all perfections – since existence is a perfection, and thus God has the perfection of existing – Kant argues that all the argument demonstrates is that existence, like omniscience or omnipotence, belongs to the concept of God. It still remains to be determined if there is anything that exists that corresponds to this concept:

[I]t is absolutely impossible to cognize the existence of this being from mere concepts, because every existential proposition – that is, every proposition that says, of a being of which I frame a concept, that it exists – is a synthetic proposition, that is, one by which I go beyond that concept and say more about it than was thought in the concept, namely, that to this concept *in the understanding* there corresponds an object *outside the understanding*, which it is absolutely impossible to elicit by any inference. (*CPR* 5: 138–139, p. 251)

Finally, in the case of the Teleological Argument, or Argument from Design, which holds that God's existence can be deduced from the order that we find in the universe, Kant argues that the most that can be inferred from the order of the universe is a being that is intelligent, powerful, and good. This, however, falls short of God, who is not merely that, but omniscient, omnipotent, and omni-beneficent:

Since we can know only a small part of this world and can still less compare it with all possible worlds, we can well infer from its order, purposiveness, and magnitude a *wise, beneficent, powerful*, and so forth author of it, but not his *omniscience, all-beneficence, omnipotence*, and so forth. (CPR 5:140; 252)⁹

In place of all these arguments for God's existence Kant provides a radically different argument, one that has sometimes been referred to as the Moral Argument for the existence of God, although it should not be thought of as an attempt at a "proof."

Kant argues that God, personal immortality, and with them, Hell and Heaven, are possible, and that there is no disproof of any of them (they are not self-contradictory, and they are not disproven by science, since they are outside the purview of science; see Sullivan, 1989, p. 224). He also argues that we know it to be true that we *have* moral duties, and that we know it to be true that our moral duties are categorical – that is, that they *must* be fulfilled, *without* exception. He also argues that we know that there is no guarantee that abiding by such moral duties will bring us happiness, since being happy is distinct from being moral, and we also know that those who do not abide by their duties can be happy. The certainty of our moral duties, combined with the certainty that fulfilling them does not necessarily lead to our own happiness, leads us to conclude that there is a future state in which, of necessity, those who do not abide by their moral duties are punished (Hell), and those who abide by them are rewarded (Heaven). The *only* way in which such a just outcome can be *certain* is if God exists, we are immortal, and Hell and Heaven exist. Hence, we believe that "God will, in total, at the end of it all, make everything good" (L 27: 28, p. 14). That is, God will punish the wicked, and reward the virtuous, in a way that is perfectly proportionate to their vice and virtue. Our belief in morality leads us to believe this. It is, however, less than proof: "We know God, not by intuition, but through faith" (L 27: 338, p. 120).

It is important to note here that the fact that the Moral Argument for the existence of God is less than a proof – the fact that there is no proof for the existence of God – might actually help people to avoid Hell. If the existence of God, immortality, and Hell and Heaven, were provable – in particular, if being sent to Hell were a certainty if we transgressed our moral duties, and being sent to Heaven were a certainty if we abided by our moral duties – then this might have the effect of undermining our moral motivation. In such a situation, we would have an extremely strong non-moral motivation not to transgress our moral duties (and disobey God’s commands) – namely, the self-interested motive of avoiding Hell – and an extremely strong non-moral motivation to abide by our moral duties (and obey God’s commands) – namely, the self-interested motive of getting to Heaven. This self-interested motivation to avoid transgressing our moral duties and to abide by them (to avoid disobeying God’s commands and to obey them) might compete with the moral motivation to avoid transgressing our moral duties and to abide by them from the motive of duty: that is, to do so because it is the morally right thing to do, irrespective of divine reward and punishment. However, in order to avoid divine punishment, or at least in order to receive divine reward, it is not enough to avoid transgressing our moral duties and to abide by them (to avoid disobeying God’s commands and to obey them). One must also do so from the motive of duty. This is what it means to be moral. Since it might be more difficult to abide by our moral duties from the motive of duty if we had a competing self-interested motivation to do so, it follows that it might be more difficult for us to be moral if the existence of God, immortality, and Hell and Heaven were certain. Although it seems paradoxical to say so, it might be more difficult to avoid Hell, if the existence of Hell (and God, immortality, and Heaven) were certain. Or at least, it might be more difficult to get to Heaven.¹⁰ This may be a further reason why, as Kant (1998, p. 117) said, he “had to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith.”

As the situation stands, the existence of God, immortality, and Hell and Heaven are not certain. Nevertheless, we do not have mere uncertainty. We have a belief in their existence. Such a belief gives us the hope that “God will, in total, at the end of it all, make everything good.” What we must do is be *worthy* of divine reward, by abiding by our moral duties, from the motive of duty: “If only we cultivate good dispositions, and bend all our efforts to fulfillment of the moral law, we may hope that God will have the means to remedy this imperfection” (*L* 27:318, p. 104). This should be enough to keep us out of Hell.

Notes

1. In citing Kant's works the following abbreviations are used:
 - *G*: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (*Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*) [1785], translated by Mary J. Gregor, in *Practical Philosophy*, edited and translated by Mary J. Gregor and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 37–108.
 - *CPR*: *Critique of Practical Reason* (*Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft*) [1788], translated by Mary J. Gregor, in *Practical Philosophy*, 137–271.
 - *MM*: *The Metaphysics of Morals* (*Die Metaphysik der Sitten*), comprising the *Metaphysical First Principles of the Doctrine of Right* (*Metaphysische Anfangsgünde der Rechtslehre*) [1797] and the *Metaphysical First Principles of the Doctrine of Virtue* (*Metaphysische Anfangsgünde der Tugendlehre*) [1797], translated by Mary J. Gregor, in *Practical Philosophy*, 353–603.
 - *L*: *Lectures on ethics* (*Vorlesungen über Ethik*) [1924] translated by Peter Heath and edited by Peter Heath and J. B. Schneewind (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
 - *RE*: *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, translated by George di Giovanni, in *Religion and Rational Theology*, edited and translated by Allen W. Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 24–37.
 Pagination references in the text and footnotes are as follows: first, to the volume and page number in the German edition of Kant's works, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, edited by the Königlich Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, subsequently Deutsche, now Berlin-Brandenburg Akademie der Wissenschaften (originally under the editorship of Wilhelm Dilthey) (Berlin: Georg Reimer, subsequently Walter de Gruyter, 1900 –); secondly, to the translations. All emphases in the original unless otherwise indicated.
2. The claim that “If there is no God, then everything is permitted,” which has often been attributed to a character in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, is, as a summary of Divine Command Theory, self-contradictory. If morality is entirely dependent upon God, and if there is no God, then there is no morality; if there is no morality, then *nothing* is (morally) permitted (or prohibited, or required). Morality must exist for anything to be (morally) *permissible* to do, even if the narrower meaning of “permissible” (i.e., optional), as opposed to the broader meaning of “permissible” (i.e., either optional or required), is intended. If there is no morality, then nothing is morally okay, or morally right, morally wrong, because all of those categories are moral categories. See S. Darwall (1998, p. 42). I am indebted to Darwall's discussion of Theological Voluntarism.
3. See also: “suicide is not abominable because God has forbidden it; on the contrary, God has forbidden it because it is abominable...So the reason for regarding suicide and other transgressions of duty as abominable must be derived, not from the divine will, but from their inherently abominable nature” (*L* 27:342–343, p. 124; cf. *L* 27:375, p. 149).
4. G. E. Moore (1993, p. 179) argued that “the assertion ‘This is good’ is *not* identical with the assertion ‘This is willed,’ either by a supersensible will, or otherwise.” To believe so, was to commit the “naturalistic fallacy” (1993, p. 62) of identifying morality with something non-moral.

5. One might say here, with Socrates, that “a good man cannot be harmed either in life or in death,” in the sense that a “good man’s” goodness – his good character or moral being – cannot be affected by the immoral acts of others, and that the most that can happen to a “good man” is that he physically harmed or killed (Plato, 2002, p. 44).
6. Even consequentialists, who would justify “accepting the infliction of suffering on innocent persons if it is for the good of society (whether or not one calls this punishment)” (Rawls, 1955, p. 9), and who would perhaps call this “punishment,” would perhaps be reluctant to call the infliction of harm on an innocent person who refused to obey a command of non-moral God a “punishment.”
7. See also “God looks to the humbled heart and not to the humbled body” (L 27:339, p. 120).
8. Motive must be irrelevant to the judgment of innocence or guilt under the law, since it is not possible, on Kant’s account, to determine a person’s motives. It is enough to determine a person’s intentions (the *mens rea*), regardless of the motive behind the intention.
9. See also the more extensive criticisms of these three celebrated “proofs” (Kant, 1998).
10. Lara Denis (2003, p. 204 n 12) has said that “Because we do not *know* that God exists, Kant thinks that our interest in pleasing God through our good conduct need not undermine pure moral motivation.” The implication here, I take it, is that, if we *did* know that God exists, then this *would* undermine our pure moral motivation to do our duty, since we would have an *even stronger* interest in pleasing God through our good conduct. But the effect of undermining our pure moral motivation would be to make us less eligible for divine reward.

References

- J. Austin (1861) *The Province of Jurisprudence Determined* (London: John Murray).
- S. Darwall (1998) *Philosophical Ethics* (Boulder: Westview Press).
- L. Denis (2003) “Kant’s Criticisms of Atheism,” *Kant-Studien*, 94, 198–219.
- J. Hall (1947) *General Principles of Criminal Law* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company).
- I. Kant (1996) *Critique of Practical Reason (Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft)*, M. J. Gregor (tr.), in M. J. Gregor and A. W. Wood (eds) *Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press).
- I. Kant (1996) *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten)*, M. J. Gregor (tr.), in M. J. Gregor and A. W. Wood (eds) *Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press).
- I. Kant (1996) *The Metaphysics of Morals (Die Metaphysik der Sitten)*, comprising the *Metaphysical First Principles of the Doctrine of Right (Metaphysische Anfangsgänge der Rechtslehre)* and the *Metaphysical First Principles of the Doctrine of Virtue (Metaphysische Anfangsgänge der Tugendlehre)*, M. J. Gregor (tr.), in M. J. Gregor and A. W. Wood (eds) *Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press).

- I. Kant (1996) *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* G. di Giovanni (tr.) in A. W. Wood and G. di Giovanni (eds) *Religion and Rational Theology* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press).
- I. Kant (1997) *Lectures on ethics (Vorlesungen über Ethik)*, P. Heath (tr.) and P. Heath and J. B. Schneewind (eds) (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press).
- I. Kant (1998) *Critique of Pure Reason (Kritik der reinen Vernunft)*, P. Guyer and A. W. Wood (trs. and eds) (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press).
- G. E. Moore (1993) *Principia Ethica*, T. Baldwin (ed.) (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press).
- Plato (2002) *Apology*, G. M. A. Grube (tr.) in G. M. A. Grube and J. M. Cooper (eds) *Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo* (Indianapolis: Hackett).
- Plato (2002) *Euthyphro*, G. M. A. Grube (tr.), in G. M. A. Grube and J. M. Cooper (eds) *Five Dialogues: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo* (Indianapolis: Hackett).
- J. Rawls (1955) "Two Concepts of Rules," *The Philosophical Review*, 64: 1, 3–32.
- R. J. Sullivan (1989) *Immanuel Kant's Moral Theory* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press).
- R. G. Swinburne (1976) "The objectivity of morality," *Philosophy*, 51, 5–20.