

**Zeitschrift:** Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie = Revue philosophique et théologique de Fribourg = Rivista filosofica e teologica di Friburgo = Review of philosophy and theology of Fribourg

**Band:** 59 (2012)

**Heft:** 1

**Artikel:** Charity and sin in William Ockham's theology

**Autor:** Hirvonen, Vesa

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-760554>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 05.04.2026

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

## Charity and Sin in William Ockham's Theology

Various love-terms have always been central to Christian theology. The most used terms for love, both in patristic and Medieval Latin theology, were *amor*, *dilectio* and *caritas*. The terms *amor* and *dilectio* were not only theological but also in more general use. Instead, the term *caritas*, "charity", was adopted for mainly theological usage. Referring to the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 13, verse 13, the theologians thought that there were three theological virtues, faith (*fides*), hope (*spes*), and charity. Following St. Paul and Augustine, it was thought that charity is the greatest of these three. On the base of what Augustine says about charity, it was believed that a human being without charity cannot be saved: charity is what separates the children of the Kingdom from the children of perdition.<sup>1</sup>

Over the centuries, many theologians discussed what was the salvific charity, often also referred to by the term "grace" (*gratia*), in a Christian. The usual conception was that it was something supernatural and infused, which inclines the human being towards love or merits. Did it have a negative counterpart, that is, did the theologians posit in a human being a corresponding form inclining him or her towards hatred or demerits? They did not posit any supernatural and infused form, but they posited the tinder of sin (*fomes peccati*), inclining one towards evil acts. My aim in this article is to clarify William Ockham's view of both charity and the tinder of sin, inclining a Christian towards merits or demerits.

### CHARITY AND SALVATION

When dealing with charity, Ockham, as an employer of the "razor", was particularly interested in the question of the necessity of charity for salvation. Could a human being be saved in his or her natural state, that is, without charity, or was charity absolutely necessary for salvation? Ockham has quite long considerations on the necessity of charity for salvation in

<sup>1</sup> In the text to which medieval theologians referred, Augustine used both the terms *dilectio* and *caritas* for the love concerned. See AUGUSTINUS: *Aurelius. Aurelii Augustini opera. Ps. 16, 1-2, Sancti Aurelii Augustini De trinitate libri XV*. Cura et studio W.J. Mountain, auxiliante Fr. Glorie (= Corpus christianorum. Series Latina 50, 50A). Turnhout: Brepols 1968, c. 18, 507-508.

*Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum*<sup>2</sup>, d. 17, q. 1, *Quaestiones in librum tertium Sententiarum*<sup>3</sup>, q. 9, a. 1, *Quaestiones variae*<sup>4</sup>, q. 1, and in *Quodlibets VI*, q. 1. A question that is closely linked to this is whether a human being's acts of the will can be meritorious naturally, that is, without charity. This question Ockham especially deals with in *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum*, d. 17, q. 2, and *Quodlibet VI*, q. 1.

As in many cases in his theology and philosophy, Ockham approaches the question of the necessity of charity for salvation by applying a semantic analysis to the terms concerned. The answer depends on the way of understanding the term "charity". In one meaning, it refers to an absolute quality, more precisely said, an infused habit in the human being.<sup>6</sup> This quality can also be referred to by the term "grace" (*gratia*).<sup>7</sup> The created charity is a supernatural gift that God infuses in human beings. It is not in human beings' power to acquire it, but they can dispose themselves to receive it.<sup>8</sup> According to Rega Wood, Ockham is, when allowing a humanly achievable disposition to grace, closer to Pelagianism than ever. However, Ockham is not, according to Wood, even here Pelagianist, since "neither for Ockham nor for other medieval theologians is this tantamount to maintaining that people can take an initial step toward meriting salvation".<sup>9</sup> Although the created charity is a supernatural form, it is possessed as an accidental form in the intellectual soul, just like all the

<sup>2</sup> GUILLELMUS DE OCKHAM: *Scriptum in librum primum Sententiarum (Ordinatio)*. Ed. Gedeon Gál, Stephanus Brown, Girardus I. Etzkorn et Franciscus E. Kelley (= *Opera Theologica I-IV*). St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: St. Bonaventure University 1967-1979.

<sup>3</sup> GUILLELMUS DE OCKHAM: *Quaestiones in librum tertium Sententiarum (Reportatio)*. Ed. Franciscus E. Kelley et Girardus I. Etzkorn (= *Opera Theologica VI*). St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: St. Bonaventure University 1982.

<sup>4</sup> GUILLELMUS DE OCKHAM: *Quaestiones variae*. Ed. Girardus I. Etzkorn, Franciscus E. Kelley et Josephus C. Wey (= *Opera Theologica VIII*). St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: St. Bonaventure University 1984.

<sup>5</sup> GUILLELMUS DE OCKHAM: *Quodlibeta septem*. Ed. Joseph C. Wey (= *Opera Theologica IX*). St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: St. Bonaventure University 1980.

<sup>6</sup> "Unde 'caritas' dupliciter accipitur. Uno modo praecise pro quodam habitu absoluto infuso, et sic non est nomen connotativum." *Ord.* I, d. 17; q. 1; OTh III, 466: 15-17. "[...] 'caritas' dupliciter accipitur: uno modo, pro una qualitate animae [...]" *Quodl.* VI, q. 1; OTh IX, 589: 86-88.

<sup>7</sup> "Ideo dico quod gratia et caritas sunt omnino idem realiter [...]. [...] et solum distinguuntur sicut nomina vel conceptus connotativi." GUILLELMUS DE OCKHAM: *Quaestiones in librum quartum Sententiarum (Reportatio)*. Ed. Rega Wood et Gedeon Gál adlaborante Romualdo Green (= *Opera Theologica VII*). St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: St. Bonaventure University 1984, IV, q. 11, 215: 11, 13.

<sup>8</sup> "[...] Deus nobis infundit caritatem quae non est in potestate nostra, quamvis simus aliquo modo laudabiles si nos disponamus ad recipiendum caritatem." *Quodl.* VI, q. 2; OTh IX, 592: 77-79.

<sup>9</sup> WOOD, Rega: *Ockham's Repudiation of Pelagianism*, in: SPADE, Paul Vincent (ed.): *The Cambridge Companion to Ockham*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1999, 350-373, here 361-362.

natural absolute qualities of the soul.<sup>10</sup> It inclines the human will towards the acts of love to God and towards everything that God wants a human being to love.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to the infused charity habit (*caritas infusa*), there can – and should – be in the intellectual soul an acquired charity habit (*caritas adquisita*) inclining the will towards acts of love, that is, a habit generated naturally by repeated acts of love.<sup>12</sup> Does this not involve a plurality of entities in the will? It does, but Ockham's nominalism allows various pluralities in the human being, even the plurality of the souls which very few thinkers in history have posited.<sup>13</sup> According to Ockham, one has to posit all those entities without which obvious things in reality cannot be explained.

In another meaning, “charity” refers to being dear (*carus*) to God or to acceptance by God.<sup>14</sup> As a matter of fact, in accordance with Peter Lombard, Ockham thinks that the primary signification of “charity” in this meaning is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the acceptance of God.<sup>15</sup> Ockham thinks that the Holy Spirit, to whom the medieval theologians sometimes

<sup>10</sup> “[...] *caritas habetur a creatura rationali ut forma existens subiective in anima.*” *Quaest. variae*, q. 1; OTh VIII, 16: 332–333. The late medieval thinkers, among them Ockham, much discussed the augmentation of charity in the human being (see *Ord.* I, d. 17; q. 4–8; OTh III, 479: 11–568: 10). Ockham's opinion is that when there is augmentation in the absolute quality, something new and real is added to the quality. According to Klaus Bannach, Ockham opposed the Thomistic participation theory: “[...] widerspricht er [Ockham] der Auffassung, daß Wachstum der Liebe als eine immer intensivere Partizipation an der in sich unveränderten forma caritatis zu sehen, und zwar gerade deshalb, weil jede augmentatio caritatis in seinen Augen auch immer eine reale Veränderung des Subjektes der Liebe ist.” BANNACH, Klaus: *Die Lehre von der doppelten Macht Gottes bei Wilhelm von Ockham. Problemgeschichtliche Voraussetzungen und Bedeutung* (= Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Europäische Geschichte Mainz 75). Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag 1975, 391–393.

<sup>11</sup> “Verumtamen, praeter istud donum, quod est Spiritus Sanctus, non vult negare Magister quod aliquid aliud datur quod est quidam habitus inclinans ad actum diligendi Deum.” *Ord.* I, d. 17; q. 3; OTh III, 477: 10–12. “Obiectum caritatis est hoc complexum ‘Deus et omne quod Deus vult diligi a me caritative.’” *Rep.* III, q. 9; OTh VI, 284: 4–5.

<sup>12</sup> “[...] nunc constat per Scripturam quod Deus vult inimicum meum pro statu isto diligi a me, tunc per habitum caritatis infusae cum caritate adquisita ego inclinor ad diligendum inimicum.” *Rep.* III, q. 9; OTh VI, 298: 16–19. See also *Rep.* IV, q. 11; OTh VII, 230: 11–17; *Quaest. variae*, q. 1, a. 3; OTh VIII, 24: 535–7; q. 7, a. 3; OTh VIII, 357: 381–382.

<sup>13</sup> See HIRVONEN, Vesa: *Passions in William Ockham's Philosophical Psychology* (= Studies in the History of Philosophy of Mind 2). Dordrecht: Kluwer 2004, *passim*.

<sup>14</sup> “Aliter accipitur ‘caritas’ ut est abstractum respectu istius concreti ‘carum’, connotando aliquem cui ille est carus.” *Ord.* I, d. 17; q. 1; OTh III, 466: 17–19. “[...] [‘caritas’ accipitur] alio modo, pro acceptatione divina.” *Quodl.* VI, q. 1; OTh IX, 589: 88.

<sup>15</sup> “Ita quod hoc nomen ‘caritas’ importat principaliter divinam voluntatem. [sic] connotando aliquem dignum vita aeterna, et ita principale significatum est Spiritus Sanctus. Et sic intelligit Magister quando vult caritatem esse Spiritum Sanctum. [...] dico quod magis conceditur quod caritas est Spiritus Sanctus, quia nomen caritatis principaliter importat Spiritum Sanctum et in recto, creaturam autem magis in obliquo.” *Ord.* I, d. 17, q. 3; OTh III, 476: 14–17, 478: 15–17. (See also the passage before, *ibid.*, 476: 2–13.)

in this connection referred using the term “uncreated charity” (*caritas increata*) or “uncreated grace” (*gratia increata*), is given in its proper person to a human being.<sup>16</sup> As such, its presence can be considered ontologically. Ockham states that the Holy Spirit coexists (*coexistere*) with rational nature, and accepts and effects the human being to be worthy of eternal life.<sup>17</sup> The present Holy Spirit is a partial cause of the merits of a human being.<sup>18</sup>

Taken “charity” referring to a habit, a human being could, through God’s absolute power, be dear (*carus*) to God or saved without charity. Instead, without charity as God’s acceptance, a human being cannot be dear to God or saved, since it would involve a contradiction.<sup>19</sup> When Ockham applies his analysis to the merits, he states that God could, in his absolute power, consider the acts of the will meritorious without charity referring to a habit. This would not, however, mean that the acts would be meritorious *ex puris naturalibus* (as is the case in Pelagianism) but *ex sola gratia Dei*, by God’s acceptance alone.<sup>20</sup> What about the Thomistic objection according to which only the acts elicited with the supernatural habit achieve God, so to speak? To this, Ockham replies that not even the acts elicited by the will with the supernatural habit exceed the human capacity.

<sup>16</sup> *Ord.* I, d. 14; q. 2; *OTH* III, 429: 10–432: 21.

<sup>17</sup> “[...] *caritas* in anima potest de potentia Dei absoluta non esse aliud quam Spiritus Sanctus coexistens, acceptans actum naturalem et impellens voluntatem per modum causae partialis ad actum illum eliciendum.” *Rep.* III, q. 9; *OTH* VI, 280: 3–7. “[...] de potentia Dei absoluta potest Spiritus Sanctus dari sine missione alicuius alterius doni creati, et hoc creaturae rationali, ita quod talis natura, cui donatur, acceptatur et efficitur digna vita aeterna.” *Quaest. variae*, q. 1; *OTH* VIII, 16: 321–324. “[...] competere naturae rationali per solam coexistentiam Spiritus Sancti [...].” *Quaest. variae*, q. 1; *OTH* VIII, 20: 442–443.

<sup>18</sup> “*Spiritus Sanctus* habetur a creatura rationali ut causa partialis – secundum istum modum loquendi – concurrens ad causandum actum meritorium.” *Quaest. variae*, q. 1; *OTH* VIII, 16: 334–336.

<sup>19</sup> “[...] accipiendo ‘*caritatem*’ pro aliqua caritate absoluta formaliter inhaerente et ‘*carum*’ pro omni illo cui praeparatur vita aeterna, sic de potentia Dei absoluta potest aliquis esse carus Deo sine caritate. Unde ‘*caritas*’ dupliciter accipitur. Uno modo praecise pro quodam habitu absoluto infuso, et sic non est nomen connotativum. Aliter accipitur ‘*caritas*’ ut est abstractum respectu istius concreti ‘*carum*’, connotando aliquem cui ille est carus. Sine caritate primo modo potest aliquis de potentia Dei absoluta esse carus, non sine caritate secundo modo dicta.” *Ord.* I, d. 17; q. 1; *OTH* III, 466: 12–21. “[...] ‘*caritas*’ dupliciter accipitur: uno modo, pro una qualitate animae; alio modo, pro acceptatione divina. Primo modo accipiendo ‘*caritatem*’, potest homo esse carus Deo sine caritate, non secundo modo.” *Quodl.* VI, q. 1; *OTH* IX, 589: 86–90. In this hypothetical model, the concept of original sin would probably be taken in its *de possibili* – meaning, that is, to mean being unworthy of divine acceptance, without referring to the absence of original justice as an absolute entity.

<sup>20</sup> “[...] non includit contradictionem voluntatem ex puris naturalibus ferri in actum meritorium. Non tamen erit ille actus meritorius ex puris naturalibus, sed ex sola gratia Dei; non formaliter voluntatem informantem, sed illum actum ex puris naturalibus elicitem gratuite acceptante.” *Ord.* I, d. 17, q. 2; *OTH* III, 470: 6–10.

The acts of love caused partially by the supernatural charity habit and the corresponding naturally caused acts have the same nature as acts.<sup>21</sup>

After all, Ockham thinks that God saves people and gives his acceptance to the acts of the will only when there is the charity habit as a partial cause of them. The hypothetical, logical possibility of being saved or having meritorious acts without the charity habit (that was sometimes called created charity or grace, *caritas* or *gratia creata*) is not realized:

[...] I say that a human being never is or can be saved, neither ever will elicit or can elicit a meritorious act according to the laws now ordained by God, without the created grace. And I hold this because of Sacred Scripture and what the Saints have said.<sup>22</sup>

On the other hand, Ockham makes it clear that God does not have any absolute necessity to accept a human being and his or her acts although there was the habit in him or her, but as far as his ordination is in force, he must give his acceptance to the human being who has received the habit.<sup>23</sup>

Thus, referring to Augustine's remark, Ockham says that it is the Holy Spirit – charity which necessarily separates the children of the Kingdom from the children of perdition. The created charity, that is, the charity habit makes the separation *de facto*, but not by necessity.<sup>24</sup>

Why does God not find the Holy Spirit received by a human being sufficient for the human being's salvation? In *Quaestiones variae*, q. 1, a. 3, Ockham argues for the position that God does not, in his ordained power, accept a human being, that is, give the Holy Spirit to him or her, without the habit of charity, as follows: From the will, as far as it is naturally perfectible, its natural perfection is not prohibited as a cause of acts. By consequence, a natural habit or an act elicited through that habit is not prohibited from it. In the same way, as far as the will is supernaturally perfectible, its supernatural perfection is not prohibited from it. By consequence, a supernatural habit or an act elicited through that habit is not

<sup>21</sup> “[...] omnis actus caritatis quem secundum communem cursum habemus in via, est eiusdem rationis cum actu ex puris naturalibus possibili, et ita ille actus non excedit facultatem naturae humanae.” *Ord.* I, d. 17, q. 2; OTh III, 472: 9–12. “[...] actus naturalis dilectionis quo diligit viator [Deum] super omnia et actus elicited mediante caritate sunt eiusdem rationis quoad substantiam actus, licet plures circumstantiae sint in uno actu quam in alio.” *Quaest. variae*, q. 1; OTh VIII, 20: 427–430.

<sup>22</sup> *Quodl.* VI, q. 1; OTh IX, 588: 74–78. See also *Ord.* I, d. 17, q. 3; OTh III, 475: 13–479: 8. The moral value of the acts of the will is another thing: “[...] in omni actu meritorio caritas est causa efficiens partialis. Tamen virtus potest esse moralis sufficienter quantum ad moralitatem naturalem si habeat circumstantias debitas tali virtuti secundum naturam. Sicut philosophi fuerunt virtuosi sine omni caritate; sed actum meritorium non possunt habere sine caritate.” *Rep.* III, q. 11; OTh VI, 374: 13–18.

<sup>23</sup> *Quodl.* VI, q. 2; OTh IX, 589–592: 4–81.

<sup>24</sup> “[...] patet quod caritas quae est Spiritus Sanctus necessario dividit inter filios regni et perditionis. Caritas autem creata dividit de facto, modo suo, non tamen necessario.” *Ord.* I, d. 17, q. 3; OTh III, 479: 5–8.

prohibited from it. Ockham continues that if the habit is denied, it is done because of either the (natural) perfection of the act of love or the assistance of the Holy Spirit. The charity habit should not, according to Ockham, be denied because of the previous reason, since the supernatural habit does not, according to him, oppose the act of love elicited through a natural habit and its being already perfect naturally. Neither should the habit be rejected for the latter reason, that is, by claiming that the assistance of the (present) Holy Spirit is sufficient, since, in the same way, the assistance of the Holy Spirit would suffice in respect to faith, and in that case, a supernatural habit is required.<sup>25</sup>

Anticipating later theology one could ask whether the case of Ockham's "hypothetical theology", that is, the case where God would accept the human being without the charity habit, represents some kind of *extra nos* – or forensic justification? It hardly would be a question of *extra nos* – justification since, according to Ockham, God's acceptance is not an effect or act distinct from God, but the Holy Spirit itself, given to the human being. Would it still be a question of non-effective justification? Not so, since Ockham thinks that even if God gave his acceptance, that is, the Holy Spirit, without the charity habit, which normally inclines the human being towards acts of love, the present Holy Spirit itself would impel the human being towards the acts of love.<sup>26</sup> However, one has to remark, being faithful to Ockham, that logically it is possible that there could be the Holy Spirit in a human being not effecting any love in the human being.

#### THE TINDER OF SIN IN A CHRISTIAN

In the Middle Ages, the theologians made a distinction between original sin (*peccatum originalis*) and the tinder of sin (*fomes peccati*). According to Ockham, one can talk about original sin as it is in fact and as it could be. *De facto*, original sin is the absence of due original justice (*iustitia originalis*), which is an absolute entity added to a human being above what he or she has in a purely natural state (*superadditum*). *De possibili*, original sin would only mean that someone is unworthy of eternal life or divine

<sup>25</sup> "Quia sicut voluntati, quantum est perfectibilis naturaliter, non negatur perfectio sua naturalis tamquam causa quantum ad actum primum nec quantum ad actum secundum, et per consequens non negatur sibi habitus naturalis nec actus elicited mediante habitu, ita nec eidem voluntati, in quantum est perfectibilis supernaturaliter, negatur perfectio supernaturalis, et per consequens ut sic habebit habitum supernaturalem et actum. Cum igitur voluntas sic sit accepta Deo, sequitur ut sic habebit talem habitum. Item si negatur talis habitus, aut hoc est propter perfectionem actus dilectionis aut propter assistentiam Spiritus Sancti. Non propter primum, quia non repugnat huic actui de [sic] lectionis Dei nec eius perfectioni elici ab habitu naturali. Nec propter secundum, quia eadem ratio sufficeret respectu fidei, ubi tamen requiritur habitus, ergo etc." *Quaest. variae*, q. 1; OTh VIII, 23–24: 518–532.

<sup>26</sup> See footnote 16.

acceptance because of a previous fault in someone else.<sup>27</sup> The tinder of sin was generally thought to exist in those conceived in a state of original sin, inclining them towards actual sins. It was also referred to by various lust-terms, such as *concupiscentia*, *libido*, *cupido*. The tinder of sin occupies Ockham especially when he deals with the Blessed Virgin. In both major texts where Ockham deals with the tinder, namely *Quaestiones in librum tertium Sententiarum*, q. 5, and *Quodlibet* III, q. 11, Ockham discusses whether the Blessed Virgin had the tinder of sin. In the former, Ockham defines the tinder to be a corporeal quality inclining the sensory appetite pleasantly or distressingly (*delectabiliter vel tristabiliter*) towards acts which are more intensive than they would be if they were elicited according to right reason.<sup>28</sup> In the latter, Ockham states that the tinder of sin is a depraved quality of the flesh inclining the sensory appetite of one, who has the use of reason, towards wicked acts.<sup>29</sup>

In those statements, Ockham seems to give so-called “definitions by addition” (*definitio per additamentum*) for the term “tinder of sin”. The parts of such definitions import the thing but also something that is extrinsic to the thing.<sup>30</sup> The first part of the definition of “tinder of sin” is “quality” (*qualitas*). The tinder of sin, according to Ockham, is a quality due to the following reasons: It is evident that the tinder cannot be the human substance itself, and not even the sensory appetite (i.e., the sensory soul, since the appetite is not really distinct from it<sup>31</sup>), because otherwise it would also exist in Christ and in those who are blessed in heaven, and it would have already existed in Adam and Eve before the fall. But there is even a positive reason for thinking that the tinder is a quality: it admits of more and less since one human being is more inclined towards an act of the sensory appetite than another, and even the same human being is more inclined at one time than another.<sup>32</sup> However, is it an absolute quality, distinct from

<sup>27</sup> *Quaest. variae*, q. 6, a. 3; OTh VIII, 220: 2–221: 10; *Quodl.* III, q. 10; OTh IX, 240: 13–241: 24.

<sup>28</sup> “[...] fomes peccati est aliqua qualitas corporalis inclinans appetitum sensitivum delectabiliter vel tristabiliter ad actum intensiorem quam sit secundum rectam rationem eliciendus.” *Rep.* III, q. 5; OTh VI, 149: 7–10.

<sup>29</sup> “[...] fomes est quaedam qualitas carnis morbida inclinans appetitum sensitivum ad actum deformem et vitiosum in habente usum rationis.” *Quodl.* III, q. 11; OTh IX, 244: 11–13.

<sup>30</sup> For Ockham on definitions, see HIRVONEN: *Passions*, 9–12. The term ‘tinder of sin’ (unlike mere ‘tinder’) connotes sin; therefore it has to be expressed in its definition that the acts towards which it inclines are sinful. This appears when Ockham discusses whether the tinder of sin was totally taken away from the Blessed Virgin: “[...] fomes peccati fuit totaliter ablatum, quia fomes peccati connotat actum peccandi qualem non potuit habere. Sed fomitem simpliciter auferri potest intelligi tripliciter [...]” *Rep.* III, q. 5; OTh VI, 150: 13–15.

<sup>31</sup> See HIRVONEN: *Passions*, 47–48.

<sup>32</sup> “Ex hoc patet quod iste fomes non est appetitus sensitivus: tum quia fomes non remansit in Christo ante resurrectionem nec post, appetitus autem sensitivus mansit; tum quia iste fomes non erit in beatis post resurrectionem nec erat in primis parentibus, sed infligebatur primis parentibus propter eorum peccatum, et per hoc consequitur in aliis.

its subject and other absolute qualities? Or is it just like "curvedness" or other qualities that are not absolute<sup>33</sup> but can be reduced to substances and absolute qualities? Ockham is not sure about this. The tinder is comparable with sickness, and being so, it may be certain humour or humours or an imbalance of humours or a quality distinct from humours. At any rate, none of the alternatives can be proved or disproved rationally, according to Ockham.<sup>34</sup>

As for the second part of the definition, there seems to be the subject and the effects of the tinder. The causes of the tinder can be considered as differential figures as well. What is the immediate subject of the tinder of sin in a human being? According to Ockham, the tinder has to be a corporeal quality since it cannot be a quality in the sensory or in the intellectual soul. In Ockham's sparse theory of the qualities of the souls<sup>35</sup>, it is enough to prove that the tinder is neither an act nor a habit in the souls. That the tinder is not an act of the sensory appetite is evident since it remains when there are no acts in the sensory appetite, nor can the tinder be any other act or any habit in the souls, which is evident by induction.<sup>36</sup> By this Ockham seems to mean that acts and habits in the souls are excluded since the tinder remains when there are no acts or habits in the soul.

How did the tinder originate? Ockham states that it may have been that because of the demerit of the sin, God delivered Adam over to natural

Appetitus autem sensitivus fuit in eis ante peccatum sicut post. Quod autem fomes sit quaedam qualitas patet, quia recipit magis et minus, quia unus homo plus inclinatur ad actum appetitus sensitivi quam alius, et idem homo plus inclinatur uno tempore quam alio ad illum actum, sicut quilibet experitur in se." *Rep.* III, q. 5; OTh VI, 149: 10–150: 3. "Quod sit qualitas patet, quia non est substantia, manifestum est, cum non sit in Christo nec in beatis. Nec est appetitus sensitivus propter eandem causam, quia appetitus talis est in Christo. [...] Similiter quod sit qualitas patet, quia recipit magis et minus, quia unus homo plus inclinatur ad actum vitiosum quam alius." *Quodl.* III, q. 11; OTh IX, 244: 13–16, 18–20.

<sup>33</sup> One can know in the following way that a quality is not absolute: If a predicable which cannot simultaneously be predicated truly of the same thing can successively be predicated of the same thing just by virtue of a local motion, it does not need to signify distinct things. GUILLELMUS DE OCKHAM: *Summa logicae*. Ed. Philotheus Boehner, Gedeon Gál et Stephanus Brown (= *Opera Philosophica* I). St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: St. Bonaventure University 1974, c. 55, 180–181: 20–35; *Quodl.* VII, q. 2; OTh IX, 708: 36–54.

<sup>34</sup> "[...] potest dici hic sicut de infirmitate, quia infirmitas aliquando causatur ex improportione humorum, immo est ipsa improportio, aliquando ex putrefactione humorum causatur aliqua qualitas vel humor corruptus, qui est infirmitas. Eodem modo potest dici quod ista qualitas [fomes peccati] est aliquis humor vel humores, qui generantur per causas naturales; puta quando Deus propter peccatum relinquit hominem causis naturalibus. Vel forte est improportio humorum, vel aliqua qualitas distincta ab humoribus. Sed nullum istorum potest probari vel improbari per rationem." *Quodl.* III, q. 11; OTh IX, 245: 41–50.

<sup>35</sup> For Ockham on the qualities of the souls, see HIRVONEN: *Passions*, 52–69.

<sup>36</sup> "Nec est actus appetitus sensitivi, quia fomes manet frequenter sine tali actu, patet tam in dormiente quam in vigilante. [...] Quod sit qualitas carnis patet, quia non est habitus nec actus intellectus vel voluntatis, nec appetitus sensitivi, sicut patet inductive." *Quodl.* III, q. 11; OTh IX, 244: 16–18, 20–23.

causes, and perhaps the natural causes induced the tinder.<sup>37</sup> Anyway, the quality is depraved (*morbidus*) since it has been inclining to acts only after the fall.<sup>38</sup>

What are the effects of the tinder? The tinder inclines a human beings' sensory appetite pleasantly or distressingly (*delectabiliter vel tristabiliter*) toward some acts. That it sometimes inclines pleasantly is evident since the authorities call it *libido, cupido, voluptas, concupiscentia*. That it sometimes inclines distressingly is evident, since while *concupiscere* is pleasurable, *irasci* is distressing.<sup>39</sup> The acts towards which the tinder inclines are contrary to the judgment of reason (that human beings still have). In *Quaestiones in librum tertium Sententiarum*, q. 6, Ockham seems to think that they are contrary so that they are more intensive than they would be according to right reason (*recta ratio*).<sup>40</sup> Through the acts of the sensory appetite, the tinder also inclines the acts of the will.<sup>41</sup>

37 "[...] post peccatum Deus forte reliquit Adam causis naturalibus, et illae forte induxerunt talem qualitatem. [...] potest dici hic sicut de infirmitate, quia infirmitas aliquando causatur ex improportione humorum, immo est ipsa improportio, aliquando ex putrefactione humorum causatur aliqua qualitas vel humor corruptus, qui est infirmitas. Eodem modo potest dici quod ista qualitas [fomes peccati] est aliquis humor vel humores, qui generantur per causas naturales; puta quando Deus propter peccatum relinquit hominem causis naturalibus. Vel forte est improportio humorum, vel aliqua qualitas distincta ab humoribus. Sed nullum istorum potest probari vel improbari per rationem." *Quodl.* III, q. 11; OTh IX, 244-245: 24-26, 41-50. "Ad auctoritatem Bedae dico quod loquitur de peccato primi parentis propter quod ipse pro omnibus posteris suis fuit vulneratus in naturalibus et spoliatus gratuitis. Quia ipse, secundum aliquos, accepit a Deo gratiam gratum facientem et multas perfectiones naturales et corporales, sicut bonam complexionem etc. Sed per peccatum suum tamquam per causam demeritoriam meruit spoliari gratuitis et vulnerari naturalibus per hoc quod corpus suum expositum fuit causis naturalibus ut in illud agerent et bonam dispositionem minuerunt." *Rep.* IV, q. 10-11; OTh VII, 224: 6-14.

38 "[...] [fomes] infligebatur primis parentibus propter eorum peccatum, et per hoc consequitur in aliis." *Rep.* III, q. 5; OTh VI, 149: 14-15. "Quod sit morbida patet, quia non inclinatur ad actum nisi post peccatum; nam non erat in primis parentibus ante peccatum sed post [...]" *Quodl.* III, q. 11; OTh IX, 244: 22-24. In this connection, it can be mentioned that even in the state of innocence, there would be in the human being (and there was in Christ), as it seems, in the sensory appetite, a kind of non-vicious natural rebellion (non-rationally-oriented desires) that could be perfectly tranquillized only by a supernatural *dos impassibilitatis*. See *Quaest. variae*, q. 6, a. 9; OTh VIII, 270: 422-272: 455; *Rep.* III, q. 5; OTh VI, 161: 3-6.

39 "[...] fomes peccati est aliqua qualitas corporalis inclinans appetitum sensitivum delectabiliter vel tristabiliter ad actum [...] Quod autem [fomes] inclinet delectabiliter patet, quia ideo vocatur a Sanctis et doctoribus: libido, cupido, voluptas, concupiscentia. Quod autem inclinet tristabiliter patet, quia sicut concupiscere est cum delectatione, sic irasci est cum dolore. Ideo dicit Augustinus, *De Baptismo Parvulorum*: 'Languor iste tyrannus est qui movet ad mala desideria.'" *Rep.* III, q. 5; OTh VI, 149: 7-9; 150: 3-9. In *Quodlibeta septem*, Ockham does not say this.

40 "[...] fomes peccati est aliqua qualitas corporalis inclinans appetitum sensitivum delectabiliter vel tristabiliter ad actum intensiorem quam sit secundum rectam rationem eliciendus. [...] Ideo dicit Augustinus, *De Baptismo Parvulorum*: 'Languor iste tyrannus est qui movet ad mala desideria'. Et ex ista auctoritate patet quod inclinatur appetitum contra iudicium rationis." *Rep.* III, q. 5; OTh VI, 149: 7-10; 150: 7-10. "Quod inclinatur ad actum

Can the tinder of sin be taken away from a human being or at least prevented from inclining to sinful acts? It remains in the body, but by habits of the will, it can be prevented from inclining to the acts of the will.<sup>42</sup> Ockham does not here elaborate the various habits and qualities in a human being which may hinder the tinder of sin, but both infused and acquired charity must be among them. Probably also good bodily qualities may prevent the bad effects of the tinder of sin.<sup>43</sup>

When it comes to the original question of whether the Blessed Virgin ever had the tinder of sin, Ockham gives, after pondering, an answer which is not a typical of him. He admits that he does not know how it was. If she had it when she was born, it was either totally extinguished in her second sanctification, when the Son of God was conceived, or at least diminished to the degree that it could not incline her towards any evil acts.<sup>44</sup>

To summarize, Ockham seems to think that a human being is saved when God gives him or her the Holy Spirit (God's acceptance) with its gift, the supernatural charity habit. The free will together with the Holy Spirit and the supernatural and natural habit causes acts of love, and those acts God considers merits. The supernatural habit is given for the perfection of the human will. Through God's absolute power, the Spirit would still be sufficient for salvation. The inclining aspect of sin remaining in the human being, the tinder of sin, is a corporeal quality inclining the human being to perform acts contrary to the judgment of reason. It cannot be destroyed, but by habits of the will, its effect on the will can be nullified.

vitiosum patet, quia inclinatur ad actum contra iudicium rationis in habente usum rationis, licet non in pueris." *Quodl.* III, q. 11; OTh IX, 244: 26-28.

<sup>41</sup> "[...] [fomes] inclinet voluntatem per passionem sive actum elicited respectu cuius fomes dicitur principium contra iudicium rationis." *Rep.* III, q. 5; OTh VI, 159: 13-15.

<sup>42</sup> "[...] quando quaeritur per quid potest auferri fomes, dico quod per aliquem habitum informantem voluntatem potest sic auferri ut nullo modo inclinet voluntatem per passionem sive actum elicited respectu cuius fomes dicitur principium contra iudicium rationis. Et si sic auferatur, tamen manet illa qualitas in se." *Rep.* III, q. 5; OTh VI, 159: 11-16.

<sup>43</sup> For Ockham's conception of the virtues, see WOOD, Rega: *Ockham on the Virtues* (= Purdue University Press Series in the History of Philosophy). West Lafayette, In.: Purdue University Press 1997.

<sup>44</sup> *Quodl.* III, q. 11; OTh IX, 246: 55-67.

*Abstract*

*Ockham thinks that a human being is saved when God gives him or her the Holy Spirit (God's acceptance) with its gift, the habit of supernatural charity. Free will together with the Holy Spirit and the supernatural and natural habit causes acts of love, and those acts God considers merits. The supernatural habit is given for the perfection of the human will. Through God's absolute power, the Spirit would still be sufficient for salvation. The inclining aspect of sin remaining in the human being, the tinder of sin, is a corporeal quality inclining the human being to perform acts contrary to the judgment of reason. It cannot be destroyed, but by habits of the will, its effect on the will can be nullified.*