

Lecture 2 - Moral Government

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The primary idea of government, is that of direction, guidance, control by, or in accordance with, rule or law.

All government is, and must be, either moral or physical; that is, all guidance and control must be exercised in accordance with either moral or physical law; for there can be no laws that are neither moral nor physical.

Physical government is control, exercised by a law of necessity or force, as distinguished from the law of free will, or liberty. It is the control of substance, as opposed to free will. The only government of which substance, as distinguished from free will, is capable, is and must be physical. This is true, whether the substance is material or immaterial, whether matter or mind. States and changes, whether of matter or mind, that are not actions of free will, must be subject to the law of necessity. They must therefore belong to the department of physical government. Physical government, then, is the administration of physical law, or the law of force.

Moral government consists in the declaration and administration of moral law. It is the government of free will by motives as distinguished from the government of substance by force. Physical government presides over and controls physical states and changes of substance or constitution, and all involuntary states and changes. Moral government presides over and controls, or seeks to control the actions of free will: it presides over intelligent and voluntary states and changes of mind. It is a government of motive, as opposed to a government of force control exercised, or sought to be exercised, in accordance with the law of liberty, as opposed to the law of necessity. It is the administration of moral as opposed to physical law.

Moral government includes the dispensation of rewards and punishments; and is administered by means as complicated and vast as the whole of the works, and providence, and ways, and grace of God.

The fundamental reason of moral government.

Government must be founded in a good and sufficient reason, or it is not right. No one has a right prescribe rules for, and control the conduct of another, unless there is some good reason for his doing so. There must be a necessity for moral government, or the administration of it is tyranny. Moral government is indispensable to the highest well-being of the universe of moral agents. The universe is dependent upon this as a means of securing the highest good. This dependence is a good and sufficient reason for the existence of moral government. Let it be understood, then, that moral government is a necessity of moral beings, and therefore right.

Our nature and circumstances demand that we should be under a moral government; because no community can perfectly harmonize in all their views and feelings, without perfect knowledge, or to say the least, the same degree of knowledge on all subjects on which they are called to act. But no community ever existed, or will exist, in which all possess exactly the same amount of knowledge, and where the members are, therefore, entirely agreed in all their thoughts, views, and opinions. But if they are not agreed in opinion, or have not exactly the same amount of knowledge, they will not, in every thing, harmonize, as it respects their courses of conduct. There must, therefore, be in every community, some standard or rule of duty, to which all the subjects of the community are to conform themselves. There must be some head or controlling mind, whose will shall be law, and whose decision shall be regarded as infallible, by all the subjects of the government. However diverse their intellectual attainments are, in this they must all agree, that the will of the lawgiver is right, and universally the rule of duty. This will must be authoritative, and not merely advisory. There must of necessity be a penalty attached to, and incurred by, every act of disobedience to this will. If disobedience be persisted in, exclusion from the privileges of the government is the lowest penalty that can consistently be inflicted. The good, then, of the universe imperiously requires that there should be a moral governor.

Whose right is it to govern?

We have just seen that the highest well-being of the universe demands, and is the end of moral government. It must, therefore, be his right and duty to govern, whose attributes, physical and moral, best qualify him to secure the end of government. To him all eyes and hearts should be directed, to fill this station, to exercise this control, to administer all just and necessary rewards and punishments. It is both his right and duty to govern.

That God is a moral governor, we infer:

1. From our own nature. From the very laws of our being, we naturally affirm our responsibility to Him for our conduct. As God is our creator, we are naturally responsible to Him for the right exercise of our powers. And as our good and His glory depend upon our conformity to the same rule to which He conforms His whole being, He is under a moral obligation to require us to be holy, as He is holy.
2. His natural attributes qualify Him to sustain the relation of a moral governor to the universe.
3. His moral character also qualifies Him to sustain this relation.
4. His relation to the universe as creator and preserver, when considered in connection with the necessity of government, and with His nature and attributes, confers on Him the right of universal government.
5. His relation to the universe, and our relations to Him and to each other, render it obligatory upon Him to establish and administer a moral government over the universe. It

would be wrong for Him to create a universe of moral beings, and then refuse or neglect to administer over them a moral government, since government is a necessity of their nature and relations.

6. His happiness must demand it, as He could not be happy unless He acted in accordance with His conscience.

7. If God is not a moral governor He is not wise. Wisdom consists in the choice of the best ends, and in the use of the most appropriate means to accomplish those ends. If God is not a moral governor, it is inconceivable that He should have had any important end in view in the creation of moral beings, or that He should have chosen the most desirable end.

8. The conduct or providence of God plainly indicates a design to exert a moral influence over moral agents.

9. His providence plainly indicates that the universe of mind is governed by moral laws, or by laws suited to the nature of moral agents.

10. If God is not a moral governor, the whole universe, so far as we have the means of knowing it, is calculated to mislead mankind in respect to this fundamental truth. All nations have believed that God is a moral governor.

11. We must disapprove the character of God, if we ever come to a knowledge of the fact that He created moral agents, and then exercised over them no moral government.

12. The Bible, which has been proved to be a revelation from God, contains a most simple and yet comprehensive system of moral government.

13. If we are deceived in respect to our being subjects of moral government, we are sure of nothing.

What is implied in the right to govern?

1. From what has just been said, it must be evident, that the right to govern implies the necessity of government, as a means of securing an intrinsically valuable end.

2. Also that the right to govern implies the duty, or obligation to govern. There can be no right, in this case, without corresponding obligation; for the right to govern is founded in the necessity of government, and the necessity of government imposes obligation to govern.

3. The right to govern, implies obligation, on the part of the subject, to obey. It cannot be the right, or duty, of the governor to govern, unless it is the duty of the subject to obey. The governor and subjects are alike dependent upon government, as the indispensable means of promoting the highest good. The governor and the subject must, therefore, be

under reciprocal obligation, the one to govern, and the other to be governed, or to obey. The one must seek to govern, the other must submit to be governed.

4. The right to govern, implies the right and duty to dispense just and necessary rewards and punishments distribute rewards proportioned to merit, and penalties proportioned to demerit, whenever the public interest demands their execution.

5. It implies obligation, on the part of the subject, cheerfully to acquiesce in any measure that may be necessary to secure the end of government, and in case of disobedience, to submit to merited punishment, and also, if necessary, to aid in the infliction of the penalty of law.

6. It implies obligation, on the part both of the ruler and the ruled, to be always ready, and when occasion arises, actually to make any personal and private sacrifice demanded by the higher public good to cheerfully meet any emergency, and exercise any degree of self-denial, that can, and will, result in a good of greater value to the public than that sacrificed by the individual, or by any number of individuals, it always being understood, that present voluntary sacrifices shall have an ultimate reward.

7. It implies the right and duty to employ any degree of force, which is indispensable to the maintenance of order, the execution of wholesome laws, the suppression of insurrections, the punishment of rebels and disorganizers, and sustaining the supremacy of moral law. It is impossible that the right to govern should not imply this, and to deny this right, is to deny the right to govern. Should an emergency occur, in which a ruler had no right to use the indispensable means of securing order, and the supremacy of law, the moment this emergency occurred, His right to govern would, and must, cease: for it is impossible that it should be His right to govern, unless it be at the same time, and for the same reason, His duty to govern; and it is absurd to say, that it is His right and duty to govern, and yet at the same time, that He has not a right to use the indispensable means of government. If it be asked, whether an emergency like the one under consideration is possible, and if so what might justly be regarded as such an emergency, I answer, that should circumstances occur under which the sacrifice necessary to sustain, would overbalance the good to be derived from the prevalence of government, this would create the emergency under consideration, in which the right to govern would cease.

The limits of this right.

The right to govern is, and must be, just coextensive with the necessity of government. We have seen, that the right to govern is founded in the necessities of moral beings. In other words, the right to govern is founded upon the fact, that the highest good of moral agents cannot be secured, but by means of government. But to avoid mistake, and to correct erroneous impressions, which are sometimes entertained, I must show what is not the foundation of the right to govern. The boundary of the right must, as will be seen, depend upon the foundation of the right. The right must be as broad as the reason for it. If the reason of the right be mistaken, then the limits of the right cannot be ascertained, and must necessarily be mistaken also.

1. The right to govern the universe cannot be founded in the fact, that God sustains to it the relation of Creator. This is by itself no reason why He should govern it, unless it needs to be governed unless some good will result from government. Unless there is some necessity for government, the fact that God created the universe can give Him no right to govern it.

2. The fact that God is owner and sole proprietor of the universe is no reason why He should govern it. Unless either His own good or the good of the universe, or of both together, demand government, the relation of owner cannot confer the right to govern. Neither God, nor any other being, can own moral beings, in such a sense as to have a right to govern them, when government is wholly unnecessary, and can result in no good whatever to God, or to His creatures. Government, in such a case, would be perfectly arbitrary and unreasonable, and consequently an unjust, tyrannical and wicked act. God has no such right. No such right can, by possibility, in any case exist.

3. The right to govern cannot be founded in the fact, that God possesses all the attributes, natural and moral, that are requisite to the administration of moral government. This fact is no doubt a condition of the right; for without these qualifications He could have no right, however necessary government might be. But the possession of these attributes cannot confer the right independently of the necessity of government: for however well qualified He may be to govern, still, unless government is necessary to securing His own glory and the highest well-being of the universe, He has no right to govern it. Possessing the requisite qualifications is the condition, and the necessity of government is the foundation of the right to govern. More strictly, the right is founded in the intrinsic value of the interests to be secured by government, and conditioned upon the fact, that government is the necessary means of securing the end.

4. Nor is the right to govern conferred by the value of the interests to be secured, nor by the circumstance of the necessity of government merely, without respect to the condition just above mentioned. Did not God's natural and moral attributes qualify Him to sustain that relation better than any one else, the right could not be conferred on Him by any other fact or relation.

5. The right to govern is not, and cannot be, an abstract right based on no reason whatever. The idea of this right is not an ultimate idea in such a sense, that our intelligence affirms the right without assigning any reason on which it is founded. The human intelligence cannot say that God has a right to govern, because He has such a right; and that this is reason enough, and all the reason that can be given. Our reason does not affirm that government is right because it is right; and that this is a first truth, and an ultimate idea. If this were so, then God's arbitrary will would be law, and no bounds could possibly be assigned to the right to govern. If God's right to govern be a first truth, an ultimate truth, fact, and idea, founded in no assignable reason, then He has the right to legislate as little, and as much, and as arbitrarily, as unnecessarily, as absurdly, and injuriously as possible, and no injustice is, or can be done; for He has, by the supposition, a right to govern, founded in no reason, and of course without any limit. Assign any other reason, as the foundation of the right to govern, than the value of the interests to be

secured and the necessity of government, and you may search in vain for any limit to the right. But the moment the foundation and the condition of the right are discovered, we see instantly, that the right must be coextensive with the reason upon which it is founded, or in other words, must be limited by, and only by the fact, that thus far, and no farther, government is necessary to the highest good of the universe. No legislation can be valid in heaven or earth no enactments can impose obligation, except upon the condition, that such legislation is demanded by the highest good of the governor and the governed. Unnecessary legislation is invalid legislation. Unnecessary government is tyranny. It can, in no case be founded in right. It should, however, be observed, that it is often, and in the government of God universally true, that the sovereign, and not the subject, is to be the judge of what is necessary legislation and government. Under no government, therefore, are laws to be despised or rejected because we are unable to see at once their necessity, and hence their wisdom. Unless they are palpably unnecessary, and therefore unwise and unjust, they are to be respected and obeyed as a less evil than contempt and disobedience, though at present we are unable to see their wisdom. Under the government of God there can never be any doubt nor of course any ground for distrust and hesitancy as it respects the duty of obedience.

MORAL OBLIGATION

The idea of obligation, or of oughtness, is an idea of the pure reason. It is a simple, rational conception, and, strictly speaking, does not admit of a definition, since there are no terms more simple by which it may be defined. Obligation is a term by which we express a conception or idea which all men have, as is manifest from the universal language of men. All men have the ideas of right and wrong, and have words by which these ideas are expressed, and, perhaps, no idea among men more frequently reveals itself in words than that of oughtness or obligation. The term cannot be defined, for the simple reason that it is too well and too universally understood to need or even to admit of being expressed in any language more simple and definite than the word obligation itself.

The conditions of moral obligation.

There is a distinction of fundamental importance between the condition and the ground of obligation. The ground of obligation is the consideration which creates or imposes obligation, the fundamental reason of the obligation. Of this I shall inquire in its proper place. At present I am to define the conditions of obligation. But I must in this place observe that there are various forms of obligation. For example, obligation to choose an ultimate end of life as the highest good of the universe; obligation to choose the necessary conditions of this end, as holiness, for example; and obligation to put forth executive efforts to secure this end. The conditions of obligation vary with the form of obligation, as we shall fully perceive in the course of our investigations.

A condition of obligation in any particular form is a *sine qua non* of obligation in that particular form. It is that, without which, obligation in that form could not exist, and yet is not the fundamental reason of the obligation. For example, the possession of the powers of moral agency is a condition of the obligation to choose the highest good of

being in general, as an ultimate end, or for its own sake. But the intrinsic value of this goal is the ground of the obligation. This obligation could not exist without the possession of these powers, but the possession of these powers cannot of itself create the obligation to choose the good in preference to the ill of being. The intrinsic difference between the good and the ill of being is the ground of the obligation to will the one rather than the other. I will first define the conditions upon which all obligation depends, and without which obligation in no form can exist, and afterward proceed to point out the conditions of distinct forms of obligation.

1. Moral agency is universally a condition of moral obligation. The attributes of moral agency are intellect, sensibility, and free will.

(1.) Intellect includes, among other functions which I need not name, reason, conscience, and self-consciousness. As has been said on a former occasion, reason is the intuitive faculty or function of the intellect. It gives by direct intuition the following among other truths: the absolute for example, right and wrong; the necessary space exists; the infinite space is infinite; the perfect God is perfect God's law is perfect, etc. In short, it is the faculty that intuits moral relations and affirms moral obligation, to act in conformity with perceived moral relations. It is the faculty that postulates all the a priori truths of science whether mathematical, philosophical, theological, or logical.

Conscience is the faculty or function of the intellect that recognizes the conformity or disconformity of the heart and life to the moral law as it lies revealed in the reason, and also awards praise to conformity, and blame to disconformity to that law. It also affirms that conformity to the moral law deserves reward, and that disconformity deserves punishment. It also possesses a propelling or impulsive power, by which it urges the conformity, and denounces the nonconformity of will to moral law. It seems, in a certain sense, to possess the power of retribution.

Consciousness is the faculty or function of self-knowledge. It is the faculty that recognizes our own existence, mental actions, and states, together with the attributes of liberty or necessity, belonging to those actions or states.

"Consciousness is the mind in the act of knowing itself." By consciousness I know that I am that I affirm that space is, that I also affirm that the whole is equal to all its parts that every event must have a cause, and many such like truths. I am conscious not only of these affirmations, but also that necessity is the law of these affirmations, that I cannot affirm otherwise than I do, in respect to this class of truths. I am also conscious of choosing to sit at my desk and write, and I am just as conscious that liberty is the law of this choice. That is, I am conscious of necessarily regarding myself as entirely free in this choice, and affirming my own ability to have chosen not to sit at my desk, and of being now able to choose not to sit and write. I am just as conscious of affirming the liberty or necessity of my mental states as I am of the states themselves. Consciousness gives us our existence and attributes, our mental acts and states, and all the attributes and phenomena of our being, of which we have any knowledge. In short, all our knowledge is given to us by consciousness. The intellect is a receptivity as distinguished from a

voluntary power. All the acts and states of the intellect are under the law of necessity, or physical law. The will can command the attention of the intellect. Its thoughts, perceptions, affirmations, and all its phenomena are involuntary, and under a law of necessity. Of this we are conscious. Another faculty indispensable to moral agency is:

(2.) Sensibility. This is the faculty or susceptibility of feeling. All sensation, desire, emotion, passion, pain, pleasure, and in short, every kind and degree of feeling, as the term feeling is commonly used, is a phenomenon of this faculty. This faculty supplies the chronological condition of the idea of the valuable, and hence of right and wrong, and of moral obligation. The experience of pleasure or happiness develops the idea of the valuable, just as the perception of body develops the idea of space. But for this faculty the mind could have no idea of the valuable, and hence of moral obligation to will the valuable, nor of right and wrong, nor of praiseworthiness and blameworthiness.

Self-love is a phenomenon of this department of the mind. It consists in a constitutional desire of happiness, and implies a corresponding dread of misery. It is doubtless through, or by, this constitutional tendency that the rational idea of the intrinsic value of happiness or enjoyment is at first developed. Animals, doubtless, have enjoyment, but we have no evidence that they possess the faculty of reason in the sense in which I have defined the term. Consequently they have not, as we suppose, the rational conception of the intrinsic worth or value of enjoyment. They seek enjoyment from a mere impulse of their animal nature, without, as we suppose, so much as a conception of moral law, obligation, right or wrong.

But we know that moral agents have these ideas. Self-love is constitutional. Its gratification is the chronological condition of the development of the reason's idea of the intrinsically valuable to being. This idea develops that of moral law, or in other words, the affirmation that this intrinsic good ought to be universally chosen and sought for its own sake.

The sensibility, like the intellect, is a receptivity or purely a passive, distinguished from a voluntary faculty. All its phenomena are under the law of necessity. I am conscious that I cannot, by any direct effort, feel when and as I will. This faculty is so correlated to the intellect that when the intellect is intensely occupied with certain considerations, the sensibility is affected in a certain manner, and certain feelings exist in the sensibility by a law of necessity. I am conscious that when certain conditions are fulfilled, I necessarily have certain feelings, and that when these conditions are not fulfilled, I cannot be the subject of those feelings. I know by consciousness that my feelings and all the states and phenomena of the sensibility are only indirectly under the control of my will. By willing I can direct my intellect to the consideration of certain subjects, and in this way alone affect my sensibility, and produce a given state of feelings. So on the other hand, if certain feelings exist in the sensibility which I wish to suppress, I know that I cannot annihilate them by directly willing them out of existence, but by diverting my attention from the cause of them, they cease to exist of course and of necessity. Thus, feeling is only indirectly under the control of the will.

(3.) Moral agency implies the possession of free will. By free will is intended the power of choosing, or refusing to choose, in every instance, in compliance with moral obligation. Free will implies the power of originating and deciding our own choices, and of exercising our own sovereignty, in every instance of choice upon moral questions of deciding or choosing in conformity with duty or otherwise in all cases of moral obligation. That man cannot be under a moral obligation to perform an absolute impossibility, is a first truth of reason. But man's causality, his whole power of causality to perform or do anything, lies in his will. If he cannot will, he can do nothing. His whole liberty or freedom must consist in his power to will. His outward actions and his mental states are connected with the actions of his will by a law of necessity. If I will to move my muscles, they must move, unless there be a paralysis of the nerves of voluntary motion, or unless some resistance be opposed that overcomes the power of my volitions. The sequences of choice or volition are always under the law of necessity, and unless the will is free, man has no freedom; and if he has no freedom he is not a moral agent, that is, he is incapable of moral action and also of moral character. Free will then, in the above defined sense, must be a condition of moral agency, and of course, of moral obligation.

As consciousness gives the rational affirmation that necessity is an attribute of the affirmation of the reason, and of the states of sensibility, so it just as unequivocally gives the reason's affirmation that liberty is an attribute of the actions of the will. I am as conscious of the affirmation that I could will differently from what I do in every instance of moral obligation, as I am of the affirmation that I cannot affirm, in regard to truths of intuition, otherwise than I do. I am as conscious of affirming that I am free in willing, as I am of affirming that I am not free or voluntary in my feelings and intuitions.

Consciousness of affirming the freedom of the will, that is, of power to will in accordance with moral obligation, or to refuse thus to will, is a necessary condition of the affirmation of obligation. For example, no man affirms, or can affirm, his obligation to undo all the acts of his past life, and to live his life over again. He cannot affirm himself to be under this obligation, simply because he cannot but affirm the impossibility of it. He cannot but affirm his obligation to repent and obey God in future, because he is conscious of affirming his ability to do this. Consciousness of the affirmation of ability to comply with any requisition, is a necessary condition of the affirmation of obligation to comply with that requisition. Then no moral agent can affirm himself to be under obligation to perform an impossibility.

2. A second condition of moral obligation is light, or so much knowledge of our moral relations as to develop the idea of oughtness. This implies:

(1.) The perception or idea of the intrinsically valuable.

(2.) The affirmation of obligation to will the valuable for its own sake. Before I can affirm my obligation to will, I must perceive something in that which I am required to will as an ultimate end, that renders it worthy of being chosen. I must have an object of choice. That object must possess, in itself, that which commends itself to my intelligence as worthy of being chosen.

All choice must respect means or ends. That is, everything must be willed either as an end or a means. I cannot be under obligation to will the means until I know the end. I cannot know an end, or that which can possibly be chosen as an ultimate end, until I know that something is intrinsically valuable. I cannot know that is right or wrong to choose or refuse a certain end, until I know whether the proposed object of choice is intrinsically valuable or not. It is impossible for me to choose it, as an ultimate end, unless I perceive it to be intrinsically valuable. This is self-evident; for choosing it as an end is nothing else than choosing it for its intrinsic value. Moral obligation, therefore, always and necessarily implies the knowledge that the well-being of God and of the universe is valuable in itself, and the affirmation that it ought to be chosen for its own sake, that is, impartially and on account of its intrinsic value. It is impossible that the ideas of right and wrong should be developed until the idea of the valuable is developed. Right and wrong respect intentions, and strictly nothing else, as we shall see. Intention implies an end intended. Now that which is chosen as an ultimate end, is and must be chosen for its own sake or for its intrinsic value. Until the end is apprehended, no idea or affirmation of obligation can exist respecting it. Consequently, no idea of right or wrong in respect to that end can exist. The end must first be perceived. The idea of the intrinsically valuable must be developed. Simultaneously with the development of the idea of the valuable the intelligence affirms, and must affirm, obligation to will it, or, which is, strictly speaking, the same thing, that it is right to will it, and wrong not to will it.

It is impossible that the idea of moral obligation, or of right and wrong, should be developed upon any other conditions than those just specified. Suppose, for instance, it should be said that the idea of the intrinsically valuable is not necessary to the development of the idea of moral obligation, and of right and wrong. Let us look at it. It is agreed that moral obligation, and the ideas of right and wrong respect, directly, intentions only. It is also admitted that all intentions must respect either means or ends. It is also admitted that obligation to will means, cannot exist until the end is known. It is also admitted that the choice of an ultimate end implies the choice of a thing for its own sake, or because it is intrinsically valuable. Now, from these admissions, it follows that the idea of the intrinsically valuable is the condition of moral obligation, and also of the idea of moral obligation. It must follow also that the idea of the valuable must be the condition of the idea that it would be right to choose, or wrong not to choose, the valuable. It is, then, nonsense to affirm that the ideas of right and wrong are developed antecedently to the idea of the valuable. It is the same as to say that I affirm it to be right to will an end, before I have the idea of an end; or wrong not to will an end when as yet I have no idea or knowledge of any reason why it should be willed, or, in other words, while I have no idea of an ultimate end.

Let it be distinctly understood then, that the conditions of moral obligation, in the universal form of obligation to will the highest well-being of God and of the universe, for its own sake, are the possession of the powers, or faculties, and susceptibilities of a moral agent, and light or the development of the ideas of the valuable, of moral obligation, of right and wrong.

I have defined the conditions of obligation in its universal form, i.e., obligation to be benevolent, to love God and our neighbor, or to will the universal good of being for its intrinsic value. Obligation in this form is universal and always a unit, and has always the same conditions. But there are myriads of specific forms of obligation which relate to the conditions and means of securing this ultimate end. We shall have occasion hereafter fully to show that obligation respects three classes of the will's actions, viz. the choice of an ultimate end the choice of the conditions and means of securing that end and executive volitions or efforts put forth to secure the end. I have already shown that moral agency, with all that is implied in it, has the universal conditions of obligation to choose the highest good of being, as an ultimate end. This must be self-evident.

Obligation to choose the conditions of this end, the holiness of God and of all moral agents, for example, must be conditioned upon the perception that these are the conditions. In other words, the perception of the relation of these means to the end must be a condition of the obligation to will their existence. The perception of the relation is not the ground but simply the condition of obligation in this form. The relation of holiness to happiness as a condition of its existence, could not impose obligation to will the existence of holiness without reference to the intrinsic value of happiness, as the fundamental reason for willing it as a necessary condition and means. The ground of the obligation to will the existence of holiness, as a means of happiness, is the intrinsic value of happiness, but the perceived relation of holiness to happiness is a condition of the obligation. But for this perceived relation the obligation could not exist, yet the perceived relation could not create the obligation. Suppose that holiness is the means of happiness, yet no obligation to will holiness on account of this relation could exist but for the intrinsic value of happiness.

Conditions of obligation to put forth executive acts.

Having now defined the conditions of obligation in its universal form, and also in the form of obligation to choose the existence of holiness as a necessary means of happiness, I now proceed to point out the conditions of obligation to put forth executive volitions or efforts to secure holiness, and secure the highest good of being. Our busy lives are made up in efforts to secure some ultimate end, upon which the heart is set. The sense in which obligation extends to these executive volitions or acts I shall soon consider; at present I am concerned only to define the conditions of these forms of obligation. These forms of obligation, be it understood, respect volitions and consequent outward acts. Volitions, designed as executive acts, always suppose an existing choice of the end designed to be secured by them. Obligation to put forth executive effort to secure an end must be conditioned upon the possibility, supposed necessity, and utility of such effort. If the end chosen does not need to be promoted by any efforts of ours, or if such efforts are impossible to us, or if they are seen to be of no use, there can be no obligation to make them.

It is important, however, to observe that the utility of ultimate choice, or the choice of an object for its own sake, is not a condition of obligation in that form. Ultimate choice, or the choice of an object for its own sake, or for its intrinsic value, is not an effort designed

to secure or obtain that object; that is, is not put forth with any such design. When the object which the mind perceives to be intrinsically valuable (as the good of being, for example), is perceived by the mind, it cannot but choose or refuse it. Indifference in this case is naturally impossible. The mind, in such circumstances, is under a necessity of choosing one way or the other. The will must embrace or reject it. The reason affirms the obligation to choose the intrinsically valuable for its own sake, and not because choosing it will secure it. Nor does the real choice of it imply a purpose or an obligation to put forth executive acts to secure it, except upon condition that such acts are seen to be necessary, and possible, and calculated to secure it.

Ultimate choice is not put forth with design to secure its object. It is only the will's embracing the object or willing it for its own sake. In regard to ultimate choice the will must choose or refuse the object entirely irrespectively of the tendency of the choice to secure the object. Assuming this necessity, the reason affirms that it is right, fit, suitable, or, which is the same thing, that the will ought, or is under obligation to choose, the good or valuable, and not refuse it, because of its intrinsic nature, and without regard to whether the choosing will secure the object chosen.

But executive acts, be it remember, are, and must be put forth with design to secure their object, and of course, cannot exist unless the design exist, and the design cannot exist unless the mind assumes the possibility, necessity, and utility of such efforts.