

## FOUNDATION OF MORAL LAW

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*(A section from the booklet "Free Will & Conscience")*

God's commandments are ultimately derived from the intrinsic value of His well-being, seeing that His well-being is naturally and eternally of intrinsic value, whose likeness we were made in the image of (Gen. 1:26). Treatment is determined by value (Lk. 12:7). God commands that which promotes the highest well-being of all, and condemns that which demotes the highest well-being of all (Deut. 6:3, 24; 10:12-13; Jer. 7:23; 32:39; Lk. 6:9), commanding the means that are relatively good and condemning the means that are relatively harmful (Matt. 22:37; Mk. 12:30; Lk. 10:27; Rom. 13:8; Gal. 5:14; Jas. 2:8), in relation to or in accordance with the end which is intrinsically good (well-being) and the end which is intrinsically evil (ill-being) (Lk. 16:25).

All moral agents necessarily presuppose the intrinsic value of well-being, their consciences condemning that which is harmful to others while commanding that which is helpful to others. God morally requires of men that which is good for all, and forbids that which is harmful to all, except in those cases when a moral agent forfeits that right by disregarding the intrinsic value of the well-being of others, therefore bringing upon himself the deserved punishment of torment. Because God commands the good and forbids the evil, we can never question the wisdom and goodness of God's moral commandments without questioning the character and intelligence of the Commander.

God's will acts voluntarily in accordance with His intelligence, His character being derived from His will, which voluntarily declares and determines His public and universal commandments. So while the ultimate foundation of God's commandments is found in His eternal nature, that is, in the intrinsic and eternal value of His well-being, as demanded by His Divine Intelligence, it is still properly true that "God's character determines God's commandments," that is, God's character ultimately determines what He voluntarily, publicly declares, and universally requires, of all moral agents. Therefore, to attack the goodness and reasonableness of God's commandments is to directly attack the character of God; it is to accuse God of not being good and reasonable in His moral government.