

## SYLLABUS OF DR. N. W. TAYLOR'S TREATISE UPON MORAL GOVERNMENT IN THE ABSTRACT.

As the sole object of this Article is to bring Dr. Taylor's views within convenient reach of those who, for any reason, do not learn them from the treatise itself, a *syllabus* of the argument is now added, that the reader may the more readily perceive the relation of its various parts, and of the whole to the final conclusion.

(The figures on the left, refer to the page of the Treatise.)

## VOL. I.

## 1, 7. Preliminary.

The various existing forms of moral government.

Man knows what a perfect moral government is.

## Definition :

*A perfect moral government is the influence of the authority, or of the rightful authority, of a moral governor, on moral beings, designed so to control their action as to secure the great end of action on their part, through the medium of law.*

I. Is an influence on moral beings.

II. Implies a moral governor.

III. Is designed to secure the *great end of action*.

This is to secure the highest well-being, and to prevent the highest misery of all.

10 IV. Is the influence of *authority*.

Authority is the influence of that right to command which imposes an obligation to obey.

16 V. Is administered through the *medium of law*.

## Definition of law :

The law of a perfect moral government is the promulgated will of the moral governor, as a decisive rule of action to his subjects, requiring benevolence on their part as the best kind of action, and as the sum of obedience, forbidding selfishness on their part as the worst kind of action, and the sum of disobedience, expressing his preference of the action required to its opposite, all things considered, his satisfaction with obedience and with nothing but obedience on the part of subjects, and his highest approbation of obedience and highest disapprobation of disobedience ; and including the appropriate sanctions of the moral governor's authority.

(1) Must be *promulgated*, and is *decisive*.

18 (2) Requires benevolence as the *best* and forbids selfishness as the *worst* kind of action. Proved :

(a) By their influence on *other* sentient beings than the agent.

19 (a<sup>b</sup>) Because both are *supreme* and *voluntary*.

- 23 (b<sup>1</sup>) Both are *intelligent*.  
24 (c<sup>1</sup>) Both are *morally free*.  
26 (d<sup>1</sup>) Both are *permanent*.  
28 (e<sup>1</sup>) Both are *predominant*.  
30 (b) By their relation to the agent himself.  
This appears :  
(a<sup>1</sup>) From the tendency of the objects of action in each case.  
(a<sup>2</sup>) Benevolence seeks an object fitted to give the highest happiness.  
31 This is shown by an appeal to human consciousness, and from the nature of *good, value, etc.*  
32 (b<sup>1</sup>) Selfishness seeks an object fitted to secure the highest misery.  
This is shown in like manner as (a<sup>1</sup>).  
(b<sup>1</sup>) Because each is intelligent action.  
(c<sup>1</sup>) Because each is the agent's own action.  
(d<sup>1</sup>) Because each is free action.  
36, 46 (e<sup>1</sup>) Because each is predominant action.  
47 (3) Requires benevolence as the *sum* of obedience, and forbids selfishness as the *sum* of disobedience.  
52 (a) One of these is the only action possible to moral beings in all the circumstances of their existence.  
62 (b) These alone are right or wrong. This appears :  
63 (a<sup>1</sup>) From the established meanings of the words *right* and *wrong*.  
66 (b<sup>1</sup>) From the nature of subordinate action — the only other kind possible.  
69 (4) Must express a preference of the action required, *all things considered*.  
71 (5) The lawgiver can be satisfied with obedience and *nothing but obedience*. This appears because the law is an expression of his will, and requires the best action, and because obedience alone can sustain the authority of the governor.  
78 (6) Must express the lawgiver's *highest* approbation of obedience, and *highest* disapprobation of disobedience.  
82 (7) It *involves sanctions*. This appears because the authority of the governor depends upon the proof of his benevolence ; such proof is specially demanded in the form of the manifestation of proper feelings toward right and wrong moral action ; such manifestation can only be made by legal sanctions.  
95 Definition of legal sanctions :

The sanctions of the law of a perfect moral government, consist in that natural good promised to obedience, and in that natural evil threatened to disobedience by the moral governor, which establish or ratify his authority as the decisive or necessary proof of it, by manifesting his benevolence in the form of his highest approbation of obe-

dience, and his highest disapprobation of disobedience, and which for this purpose include the highest possible degree of natural good in each case of obedience, and the highest possible degree of natural evil in each case of disobedience.

(a) They *ratify* the authority of the governor, and thus *sanction* his right to rule.

96 (b) They consist, exclusively, in *natural good and evil*.

98 (c) They are the *decisive* proof of authority.

99 (d) They are decisive proof, by manifesting the highest approbation of obedience, and the highest disapprobation of disobedience.

At this point of the argument, the presumption against the promulgation of such sanctions is removed, and a presumption in its favor established.

106 (e) They are the *necessary* proof of authority.

(a') They are necessary in *some* respects or under *some* relation.

This appears :

(a') From the import of the phrase "legal sanctions."

107 (b') From the nature of the law of a perfect moral government.

(a'') Such a law requires an expression toward obedience and disobedience, fully proved to be sincere.

110 (b'') It must be an authoritative rule of action.

111 (c') Law without sanctions, is not law ; but only advice.

(c'') From the fact that a law without sanctions is a decisive proof that the lawgiver is unable or unwilling to execute them.

112 (a'') From the fact that conformity and non-conformity to a law without sanctions, equally disprove and subvert authority.

114 (b'') Legal sanctions are necessary, as the necessary proof of his *benevolence*.

116 (a'') Such proof cannot be given by mere professions of proper feelings toward right and wrong.

119 (b'') Nor in certain other supposable ways.

(a') Not by securing a greater amount of obedience without legal sanctions than with them.

122 (b') Nor by promising reward to obedience but threatening no penalty to disobedience.

At this point in the argument, we see why attempts to prove the benevolence of God from the light of nature have so often failed.

127 (c'') They are necessary as proofs of his *highest* approbation of obedience, and *highest* disapprobation of disobedience ; because,

128 (a'') Natural good and evil cannot become legal sanctions in certain other supposed modes :

(a') Not as the mere dictate of individual kindness or unkindness ;

- 129 (b<sup>4</sup>) Nor as moral discipline;
- 130 (c<sup>4</sup>) Nor as the payment of a debt from the governor to the subject;
- 131 (d<sup>4</sup>) Nor as the payment of a debt from the subject to the governor;
- 131 (e<sup>4</sup>) Nor as mere motives;
- 135 (f<sup>4</sup>) Nor because they are, abstractly, right;
- 138 (g<sup>4</sup>) Nor as the dictate of *justice* as distinct from benevolence.
- 139 (b<sup>5</sup>) The nature of legal sanctions requires this.
- (c<sup>5</sup>) It is utterly in-supposable and inconceivable that natural good and evil can become legal sanctions in any other way; for,
- 139 (a<sup>6</sup>) When employed in the manner advocated, they are the most significant and appropriate expressions of these feelings of the lawgiver, for which reason he is bound to employ them.
- 139 (b<sup>6</sup>) If the supposition be admitted, then they must become legal sanctions either by showing no feeling in regard to obedience or disobedience, or by showing a less degree than the highest.
- (a<sup>7</sup>) It cannot be the former, from the nature of things.
- 141 (b<sup>7</sup>) It cannot be the latter; for,
- (a<sup>8</sup>) A benevolent being will always entertain and express the *highest* degree of these feelings.
- 143 (b<sup>8</sup>) A deficiency of expression in the sanctions cannot be made up in other ways, even though the possibility be admitted of securing a greater amount of right moral action and consequent happiness, in the case supposed; for,
- 144 (a<sup>9</sup>) The governor could furnish no proof, to his subjects, that such results would occur;
- (b<sup>9</sup>) The probabilities would be strongly against their occurrence; and,
- (c<sup>9</sup>) By the omission, the governor would disprove his benevolence and subvert his authority.
- 144 (c<sup>10</sup>) Moreover, if the best conceivable results should follow the supposed lower expression in the sanctions of law, it would still be impossible to prove the perfect benevolence of the lawgiver.
- (a<sup>10</sup>) Finally, in the case supposed, no evidence would be given that the lawgiver would annex the highest sanctions to his law, even though the greatest good required it.
- 147 (a<sup>11</sup>) The truth of the proposition (c<sup>2</sup>) further appears from the view which men entertain of the supreme law of the state.

- VOL. II. Distinction between the supreme law and various subordinate regulations, *malum in se* and *malum prohibitum*. The penalty attached to former, alone a legal sanction. The penalty attached to latter, only an inducement. Death — the supreme evil to man — the only proper penalty of former, and the only penal sanction in human law.

Thus is the proposition (e) established.

- VOL. I. At this point in the argument, it is shown that Christianity is not a selfish system, and that those who deny the sanctions advocated, cannot prove the benevolence of God.

(f) The legal sanctions of a perfect moral government include the highest degree of good and evil.

- 160 The reward includes the highest possible good; still admits of degrees; is continued only while obedience continues.

- 164 The penalty includes the highest possible evil; by no other can the *highest* abhorrence be shown; by not inflicting it, the lawgiver shows that he esteems transgression a less evil than the infliction.

Objections :

- 167 (1) Since reward ceases with obedience, penalty should cease with disobedience.
- 175 (2) Should all rebel, benevolence would forbid their endless punishment.
- 177 (3) Incredible and impossible that benevolence would adopt a moral government involving the penalty of eternal death.