

*Subjective Feelings of the Conscience.*

It is well to remark at the outset that some subjective feelings of conscience have in their general character, a very close resemblance to those of the "Heart." All are not strictly feelings of "ought-ness," a class to which we shall specially refer, but all concern themselves with duty or obligation, and they are thus entitled to be classed among the feelings of conscience. Thus, the approbateness, shame, repentance, etc., attending a good or bad act, are instances of this kind.

There is no department of the human mind which has all its subjective feelings precisely uniform; otherwise, the various functions of that department could not be carried on without extraneous help.

It may however be affirmed that generally the subjective feelings of conscience differ widely in their character from those of the Heart, or of mere desire or aversion. Instead of a subjective impulse, attracting us to, or repelling us from, certain things which we love or hate, they come in the nature of "ought-ness," obligation or command.

Though differing in the character of their impulse, they are just as real in our nature as the sensations of heat and pain, while they possess an authoritative power far beyond these.

They are impulses of such a nature that when complied with, it is more correct to say "they are pacified" than that "they are gratified;" and the word pacification is the one which, in reference to them, we adopt in preference to the word gratification.

Every feeling of this class has a reference to duty; and it is clear that the subjective feelings of conscience were intended by our Creator to be the supremely rectoral or governing subjective senses of man's nature. Every other subjective feeling was to find its gratification within the scope which the rectoral or the higher ones permitted. And even now, in man's state of depravity or moral derangement, it is evident that the subjection of all other feelings to the legitimate sway of these, would lift a man into a state of happiness barely conceivable to the human mind, which is now the prey of the misrule and the anarchy produced by the usurpation of supreme power by principles or feelings which properly should have been subordinate.

The reason why this class are called feelings of positive and negative obligation, is because all duty resolves itself in that way. They prompt us, (1) as to what we should do; and (2) as to what we should not do.

It may justly be said that this class of feelings contains the very essence of all morality; conformity with their impulse is "good," violation of it is "evil."

They claim authority over every other class of subjective senses, a claim which, even in the grossest states of barbarism and heathen ignorance, they do not wholly relax.

If their behests are disobeyed, they do not neglect to punish the offender with the lash of their own subjective condemnation and remorse, as well as with the jar and discord of the subjective feelings of other classes. If, on the contrary, their promptings are complied with, they reward richly with their own approval and with the large gleanings from other harvest fields of feelings.

They minutely concern themselves with all the social relations of our being, and extend their authority into every possible ramification of life.

The conscience has correctly, we think, been called God's viceroy. The subjective senses of conscience are just the precepts of God's Law written by Himself, not with pen or graving-tool, but with His creative finger, in sentences of living, palpitating, subjective sense on the clean sheet of human consciousness.

*Excitement of the Subjective Feelings of Conscience.*

I am so constituted that the moment I know of myself doing a certain malicious act, there arises within my mind a subjective feeling of "ought-not-ness" that I should do so. The perception, inception, or knowledge of myself in this malicious relation, creates in my mind involuntarily at the same moment a subjective feeling of "ought-not-ness," which envelopes the whole conception of myself in this wicked relation. Were the act to be done by another person, my subjective feeling towards him would be precisely similar.

It is not, in this case, a mere feeling of like or dislike, desire or aversion, that influences me, that merely attracts or repels me, but an authoritative and inflexible sense of "ought-not-ness" that I should do so. The impulses of all feelings of mere desire or aversion, though powerful enough, may be made to yield to one another, or their claims be entirely set aside. Their impulse is the stimulus of petition. But the impulse of this subjective "ought-ness" or "ought-not-ness" is one of authoritative and inflexible command, that will neither submit to be set aside nor give precedence to any other.

Again, I hear that one neighbor has vilely slandered the character of another, and that