

demnation of sin, and a corresponding approbation of righteousness ; sin being reprobated with a moral force exceeding that which would attend the everlasting punishment of all sinners, and righteousness being vindicated with a glory that could hardly beam from rewarding a universe of righteous men. Here is one of the wonders of redemption, that even salvation can be made to satisfy justice. The Eternal Monarch, humbling himself to save rebels, accomplishes in his infinite condescension more for justice than if he had bared his right arm for justice without mercy. The loving heart, shrinking from the pain of punishing, accepts the pain of humiliation, and saves the lost.

Is not then God's so-called "obligation" to make atonement just this, that being able to satisfy his attribute of justice by the atonement, it cannot be that his other attribute of love should fail of the satisfaction of saving sinners? It must be that he who can, *will* make atonement. In other words, the atonement is God-like.

ARTICLE VII.

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CONSCIENCE, ITS RELATIONS AND OFFICE.

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WE are sometimes startled by the profound significance of words, by the precision with which they etymologically penetrate to the root of the idea indicated, and lay open its essential features. It seems, either as if those who first applied them must have possessed wonderful insight into things, or as if, by some force or law of growth in themselves, they had come to cover and hold with strange perspicuity the germs of knowledge. Thus the word "consciousness" expresses a sort of double knowing — a knowing with one's self, a knowing that one knows, which is the essential feature of what it designates. This two-sided character of knowledge, by which

it awakens the mind to the inner and the outer at once, by which, in the same act, it contains both the object and subject of thought, and is able thus to resolve the simple phrase "I know," into the two "I know," and "I know that I know," is the peculiar and subtle feature of mental phenomena. Herein are not two acts of knowing, but each act, that it may be an act of knowledge, implies the recognition by the mind of its own processes, a union of these inward to the centre of thought, as well as outward to its object — a knowing together, a bi-polar knowledge pointing in two directions.

From this word another, closely allied, yet radically distinct, has sprung by gradual separation — conscience. Designating the faculty by which we discern right and wrong, it also implies a second or double knowing, a knowing of action in its moral as well as in its natural qualities. There is here even more perfect accuracy of thought than in the word "consciousness." There is strictly no additional, no second act of knowledge in consciousness. We merely mark by the word one of the two aspects which belongs to every simple act of knowing or of feeling. The conscience, on the other hand, does give a second, a more penetrative perception; we know within ourselves, with ourselves, that an action, previously seen by the eye and recognized by the intellect in its motives and consequences, is right. This idea of conscience, testified to by the etymology of the word, as that of a power which imparts a direct knowledge of moral quality, we accept; and proceed to inquire into the relations and offices of this faculty.

The first of these relations is that of conscience to our moral nature. This power by which we perceive the right, is the foundation of morals in our constitution, — is that, and that only, which imparts moral quality to our actions and to our feelings. Without this perception, moral action or affection is impossible; with it, a moral element enters freely into our whole intellectual and emotional life. The perception itself, though simple, has both an intellectual and an emotional element. These are inseparable. The oughtness and

the rightness are but the two phases under which the one idea develops itself — the expression of the effect of the moral quality of action on the feelings and perception respectively. The sense of obligation cannot exist, cannot arise, without the intuition to which it is attached ; the intuition cannot be present without bringing with it the obligation. The only oughtness, the only coercion of law and interior pressure of authority, is that of conscience. The only intuition which reveals duty, declares what it is, and guides us into it, is that of right given by the conscience.

This faculty, so single in its perception, gives a law to action, and thus through disobedience, the occasion of the feelings of guilt, shame, apprehension, remorse ; and through obedience a sense of approval, of ineffable satisfaction. In the disobedience of another, it gives the occasion of contempt, dislike, indignation ; in the obedience of another, of admiration, trust, sympathy, love. So far as this quality is present, and it pervades all rational action, it furnishes the ground for a new, a moral element in our feelings ; and thus these become affections instead of mere passions. Love without the beauties of moral worth to call it forth and sustain it, is a passion ; with these, an affection. Our moral nature, our moral affections are not, then, so much a certain portion of our faculties as our whole nature made capable of a moral mood by the possession of the one faculty, the one power of perception expressed by conscience. This one faculty at once lifts our entire nature into a higher realm, makes it capable of new perceptions, new judgments, new feelings, brings it under a nobler law, lays upon it great responsibilities, and wraps up in its ordinary action issues of infinite compass and reach.

A second relation of this power is to our intellectual nature. The conscience is an intellectual faculty ; its action is one of knowing. Of it itself, little more needs to be said or can be said, than that it is the ability of directly perceiving a single, simple, original quality. It does, however, stand in peculiar relations to the other intellectual faculties, quicken-

ing and calling them forth in an unusual degree. The conscientious man, one in whom conscience finds full activity, cannot be otherwise than the thoughtful, reflective man. The action of conscience is, indeed, a second knowing, and must be preceded, therefore, by a first knowing. Right is not perceived in actions as actions, but in them as rational actions ; that is, as springing from certain motives and leading to certain consequences. As it is this rational element alone that makes them capable of the quality, right, and determines in each given instance its presence or absence, the perception, the intuitive action of conscience, must be preceded by a thorough inquiry into the motives and results of action before it can safely pronounce a verdict. This investigation is not the very act of conscience, but furnishes the knowledge preliminary thereto ; and, as it extends over the whole field of human conduct, over all the direct and indirect consequences of action, the theories and experiences of individual and social well-being, of present and future, of physical and spiritual good, conscience necessarily calls forth and greatly quickens the other intellectual faculties. Self-interest even is not so broad, persistent, and exacting in its inquiries as the fully aroused conscience. For the mind to fall short of faithfulness in the inquiries it prosecutes at the bidding of conscience is not loss merely, but sin. To neglect another's interest is equally fatal as the neglect of one's own. It is the conscience, above all faculties, which puts every kind and form of knowledge into immediate use in solving those problems of private and public good with which it is constantly compelled to busy itself. The conscientious mind is the most thorough, painstaking, and scrutinizing of all minds, since every faculty becomes at once and perfectly instrumental.

Even more intimate is the relation of conscience to the will. The presence of the perception of right implies, calls for, and helps to give, the concomitant power of choice. It implies it, since no action is capable of a moral quality that is not free. Freedom is the antecedent condition without

which no course of action comes under the supervision of conscience. No one, therefore, could use this perception as regards his own or another's conduct, except as the power of choice had preceded it. The moral law also calls for freedom, since it waits for adoption, and furnishes by the blessings attendant thereon a compensation for all the risks of liberty, for all the evils of sin. Still further, this perception of right in some measure gives liberty, or rather, the conditions of choice. Between things like in kind there is no opportunity for the exercise of choice. Five dollars cannot be chosen instead of ten dollars, considered simply as so much purchasing power, as commanding, the first, half, the second, twice, the pleasures of the other. To take the five in place of the ten would be caprice, not liberty. Thus all things which can be brought to the simple standard of pleasure, of sensibility gratified, admit of definite comparison, and therein exclude freedom. There is no possible motive for accepting the less in room of the greater pleasure, considered simply as a pleasure. A power to do this would be one of the most worthless and fortuitous of faculties. No wonder that those who accept happiness as the only aim of action usually deny true liberty to the will. Right, on the other hand, is able to present to the choice a real alternative. We may choose those actions which contain it, an indulgence of those affections which give play to it, as opposed to any and every other form of enjoyment. The two objects compared can no longer be brought to a common standard, and there pronounced upon as greater or less, thereby excluding a choice between them. We cannot compare odors by length nor colors by weight; no more can we measure obligation on the scale of the intensity of organic impression — the degree and duration of the accompanying pleasure. Right remains incomparable with all other things, unmeasured by them, unexpressed in them, and thus open to choice as opposed to less or more of them. The moral quality of a feeling separates it utterly from any appetitive and passionate pleasure, and enables it to present a true, a rational alternative of choice

to any and every form of indulgence. Thus right and liberty are reciprocally conditions of each other; each nugatory without the other, and together constituting the very centre and framework of our spiritual manhood.

It is through this connection with the will that conscience becomes the strength and support of character. A yielding to appetite and passion is, indeed, a surrender of the will. The power of choice is laid aside, and the mind is left the sport of impulses, carried whithersoever these bear it. Only is will, true choice, called forth when the moral alternative is presented. Herein is the true, the only exercise of liberty, and the conscience consolidates character, erects and guides the manhood, because it gives just and constant discipline to the will, and confers on choice the regency of the impulses. Only on condition of taking wisdom and virtue to its counsels can the will itself reign; otherwise its dominion is quickly lost amid the clamor of fitful appetites, dominant passions, and desires fortified by habit. The true foundations of strength, therefore, are found in the conscience.

A fourth relation of conscience is to our physical faculties. There is the semblance, and only the semblance, of human in brute action. Instincts and appetites, gauged with precision to the wants of the animal, constitute almost exclusively its impelling and governing powers. There is left little demand or play for reasoning. The laws of association do, indeed, seem to hold in the brute mind, enabling it to receive a limited measure of instruction, to form habits, and to present the appearance of reflection and judgment where these are not present. An oversight of the effects of this primary and simple law of mental phenomena leads to some strange misinterpretations and exaltation of the actions of animals. The fact that a dog, punished for an act, manifests on its repetition a sense of fear, skulking from the presence of his master, is made the ground on which to ascribe to it a sense of guilt with the shame consequent thereon. We might as well refer fear to the aspen, because its leaves tremble.

The incitements and checks of the animal organism are

mainly placed in itself, acting, if not mechanically yet spontaneously, for the government of its life. When, then, we find in man a moral law, with the power of choice to make it effective, we expect to see it superseding this pupillage of instincts and balanced appetites, and claiming for itself that guidance, that control, which is its primary function. There is, therefore, attendant on conscience a loss of instincts, a limitation of the organic guidance of appetite, the opportunity, and thus the necessity, of inquiring into and enforcing the laws of individual and social life. This regal power of conscience enters our constitution with displacement and modification of those blinder and more mechanical forces which hold sway in lower life.

But the immediate physical consequences of moral power are not less important than these its antecedent conditions. Habits are spoken of as constituting a second nature. The expression is apt, not merely as showing their force, but also their relation to ourselves. They are indeed a *second* nature. They are the settling down of government into fixed authoritative forms. By them we pass from an incipient to a completed, from a germinant to a developed, state. They take action out from the constant arbitrament of choice, from under the judicial decision of judgment and conscience, and, with an organic power like that of precedent, cause it to assume a constant, reliable form. The judgments of the mind, the lines of action it accepts, are thus issuing physically in those habits which assume the organic control of a second nature, not easily modified or resisted. We may thus say that conscience is making for us a new physical manhood, better or worse than our first nature, according as its authority is the lapse and defeat, or the victory of wisdom. If we add to this voluntary nature and increasing hold of habit the belief that the spirit is ultimately to receive new physical habiliments in keeping with its character and power, we arrive at the conclusion that the body that is here given us, is but a loaned capital, does but afford standing, by means of which our truer selves, our moral and voluntary faculties,

win and shape the instruments of a fuller, more enduring life. The body is said to outgrow disease. The purified spirit outgrows the body in its evils and limitations, and is ready by its own action under divine law for more perfect physical faculties. The life of the individual is not so short but that something of this tendency is often, in spite of physical decay, revealed; while a truly moral community, expounding and enforcing with thorough and conscientious inquiry all God's laws of life, would, in a succession of generations, exhibit physical results even in this limited field, revealing the close dependence of the lower on the higher.

Nor are the external relations of conscience less important than those now presented. From it arises that sense of justice which is the chief support of law. The adjective and the noun, just and justice, have a broader and a more limited meaning. In the first, they signify that which is equal, fit, right, and are essentially synonyms with right and righteousness. Thus the righteousness and the justice of God are spoken of as interchangeable ideas, and when the second term is felt to be somewhat more limited in its application, the nature and extent of the restriction are often not clearly seen. If we would assign each class of words a definite office, we shall be able to do it only in their connection with law. In addition to its scientific use, by which it signifies an order of action among natural forces, law has two allied but diverse meanings in morals. The law of conscience and the law of God have this in common, that each indicates and enjoins a certain line of action; and this difference, that the one makes no mention of penalties, and that the other is enforced by penalties and rewards, directly mentioned or tacitly assumed. In the stricter sense, law is a command enforced by sanctions; in the broader sense, a simple command, though left only to intrinsic rightfulness and natural results for its exposition and authority. Righteousness is the obedience of law in its broad, moral sense. Justice pertains to the establishment and enforcement of wise law in its more restricted, its governmental sense.

The strictly natural penalties of moral law, the rebuke of conscience, the sense of shame, of remorse, the obliquity and depravity of nature and consequent suffering which follows sin, are hardly thought of or spoken of as just or unjust. These consequences are looked on as inevitable. The connection is said to be one of nature, and is rarely regarded as such a direct ordination of God as to call forth the judgment of just or unjust. The word "justice," when we are seeking for its strict and peculiar meaning, is found to pertain to law in its limited sense as a command with declared sanctions. Concerning such a law the question of justice may arise at two points: as to the right of the lawgiver to command at all, to lay any penalty; as to the fitness of laying the very penalty laid. In answering the first inquiry, the rightfulness of the authority whose commands are under discussion, we are thrown back on purely moral grounds, on the decisions of our moral nature as to duty under the relations which we sustain to our fellow-men and to God. Here again, therefore, justice and righteousness mean the same thing, and to say of a government that it is just, is the same as to say of it that it is righteous — that its existence and claims are in accordance with our moral constitution, in accordance with individual and social exigencies, and that its action, therefore, has the sanction of conscience.

When we speak of the justice of a particular law, we refer to the wisdom of the end it proposes, and of the means, the penalties by which it seeks to reach that end. If it goes beyond the wants of the parties concerned, if it imposes a penalty disproportionate to the exigency, we say that it is an unjust law. Here evidently the question is one of wisdom; whether the particular government in itself just, has wisely settled its own province, defined its own duties, and sagaciously, with due moderation and severity, fitted its motives to the results to be reached, bringing sufficient incentives to the individual and sufficient safety to the community.

Here also, as in the previous case, the sense of justice rests back on the sense of right. We have not merely to do

with correctness or error, as in a mathematical solution, but with the moral obligation of the lawgiver to be wise, correct in his command. If the given law falls short of its office, or overpasses it, there is wrong with the ruler — that failure in duty to which we give the particular name of injustice; and the law which reveals this delinquency, we call an unjust law,

Our sense of justice, then, is nothing more nor less than our sense of right called into exercise in connection with law in its limited, civil meaning. When we evoke the authority of law, of immutable justice, of human or of divine government, we do but take an appeal under other words to our moral nature, — to that sense of right whose sanction it is that converts the wise into the obligatory way, gives to words new authority, and presses the mind with a feeling of unmeasured dangers and unescapable guilt.

Law and justice would be merely words with no more reverberation in them, no more searching power in awakening and multiplying the echoes, the responses of the spiritual nature, than the catchwords of the market, than price and profits, if it were not for their latent hold on the conscience, compelling us to feel that obedience is not bought or sold — is not measured by the attendant sanctions; that these are rather the signals lifted up, held forth, to indicate the sacred character of the law, of whose presence they warn us, and whose authority they bid us honor. They are regal insignia, not royalty itself.

It is the prior existence of a moral law in our constitution, able to brand disobedience with guilt, to give an undeniable and inalienable character to moral action, which imparts to the precepts of parental, civil, and divine law, that authority whose existence we recognize in the word "justice." Without this the penalties of law, social and civil, would have only the character of that pain or pleasure which follows the violation or observance of a natural law. The punishments of the state would no more beget the sense of criminality, than do the sufferings of indigestion or the smart of a

wound. They would be looked on as simply artificial guards and guides to those laws of action which the social health requires, as the indications of our nerves of feeling are to those of physical well-being.

So strong is the claim which justice establishes, that some have supposed it an immutable one, not to be remitted without violence to our moral constitution. This is an error in exactly the opposite direction from that which regards it as merely a retaliatory impulse without peculiar authority. If the relation now pointed out between our conscience and justice is correct, if the sense of justice is only the approval which our moral nature gives the particular law, or the given penalty, then there is no such thing as an absolute, immutable claim of justice which must under all circumstances be met. The law, the penalty, are correct, because fitted by a legitimate authority to a desired end ; and it is the nature of the end, and the circumstances under which it is to be secured, which determines the wisdom of the law and of its penalties. A law is a method of meeting a moral, a social, a governmental exigency, and has no other intrinsic fitness or authority than that which springs from the office it discharges. Mercy not only may, but ought to, supersede its penalty, if this can be done in consistency with the interests protected, the objects aimed at.

The claims neither of justice nor mercy are imperative, undeniable. Both admit of consideration, are submitted to the exigencies of the particular case, interpreted by wisdom, and enforced by conscience.

That the sense of justice is only the sense of guilt springing from our moral constitution, brought in to aid the enforcement of law, removing the feeling of cruelty, harshness, hardness, in needful punishment, and giving the judicial process the sanction of profound approval and of great interests, is apparent when we look at the relation between guilt and punishment. There is no parity, no basis of comparison between them. A certain amount of physical or mental suffering, a year's imprisonment, or an hour's expos-

ure in the stocks, have no connection with one degree of guilt more than with another. Who can say what measure of crime finds a natural, a precise equivalent in forty stripes? The two elements of moral quality and suffering are unlike, are incomparable, not open to the judgment of equal or unequal. It is not till we introduce a third element that there is any combination between them, any expression of the one in the other. The moment we consider the end for which punishment is instituted, disciplinary or civil, we have that by which we may grade it to guilt. The fine of one hundred dollars may be a motive sufficient to restrain one class of crimes, while solitary confinement or death itself may be required to check another. The punishment is now regarded as a motive designed to act on the minds of a certain class of persons, and its efficiency or inefficiency admits of an adequate test. The penalty which is sufficient, and no more than sufficient, to accomplish the purpose for which it is instituted, is the just penalty, that is, the penalty whose infliction our moral nature approves, and comes in to soften to our feelings, to grace, to honor with the dread dignity of a moral necessity.

There now springs up the opportunity for a rough, numerical relation. If one year's confinement as the penalty of a given crime is taken as the unit of comparison, then we may affirm that six months or two years belong to other offences, as in our judgment they fall below or transcend in guilt the crime whose punishment has been already fixed. Yet this calculation, so pleasing to our mathematical faculties, which seems about to reduce justice to a standard of weights and measures, suffers speedy arrest even in the coarse exigencies of civil society.

It is found necessary to treat a crime like smuggling with great severity; not because of any peculiar moral obliquity it involves, but because of the unusual facilities afforded for it. Here again, the test of the adequacy of punishment afforded by the end in view comes forward, and severe penalties are threatened as the only sufficient motives to arrest

an action for which there are peculiarly inviting opportunities. The heavy penalty stands as a simple counterpoise in the mind to strong temptation.

If there were any such thing as accurate and absolute justice, a universal and constant claim on the mind for so much suffering as a compensation for so much sin, how must this great, exacting, and profound feeling be tortured by all that is occurring in the discipline and government found in the world; like penalties bestowed on parties of very diverse character and guilt, on the ground of a formal, external agreement of action; and the same punishment to the physical eye resting with very unequal weight on guilty parties, the callousness of repeated transgression enabling some to bear the infliction with little feeling, and the sensitiveness of comparative innocence leaving others to be touched to the very quick by the inflictions of law, and to fret into their very flesh its tough thongs. For a keen, precise sense of justice to deal thus in human pains, to match guilt and suffering in this gross way, would be as unfitting as to traffic in precious stones on the rough scales of the provision market. Such a sense in a world like this, would be, could be, only a sense of suffering, — an eye so laid open to coarse contact that, for the tears with which it was constantly bedewed, and the pain it perpetually felt, it could see to no practical purpose. Such an exact, absolute, and unyielding sense of justice is altogether fanciful, would stamp absurdity and iniquity on God's government, and present a most painful and impossible standard of excellence. Even the doctrine of limited atonement, while retaining a part of such an idea, yields the greater share.

How inadequate also is such a form of justice for the ends of discipline. The sensitiveness of the individual may render punishment unnecessary, or his hardness require it to be greatly increased. It is the character to be acted upon, the diverse effects of diverse treatment on different temperaments, the motives to be overcome, that define the wise, the right way of discipline, of stimulus and restraint, and not the

inherent guilt of the action treated. An accurate sense of what is sometimes called justice, that is the notion of precise and measurable ill-deserts in every sin, requiring equally definite amounts of punishment, would tend, in a large measure, to dispense with wisdom, with mercy, patience, love, and make government a mechanical contrivance of exact compensations regularly and unscrupulously administered. The modicum of truth on which such a notion of law and justice rests is, that guilt, moral quality, is always one of the weighty elements to be considered in discipline, yet to be treated in each case according to the end proposed, and the means at hand for reaching it. To make the sense of justice exact and imperative, is as fatal a mistake as to ascribe the same quality to mercy, and insist on constant and absolute forgiveness. Every impulse must submit itself ultimately to the government of wisdom and conscience. An authority which should insist on its penalties after the occasion for them was past, would be as unjust and tyrannical as one which should in the first instance establish and inflict them without occasion. The first justification and the exclusive support of a penalty is the purpose it subserves in individual and social discipline, while the sense of justice is the approval which our moral nature gives to such penalties. That there must be fixed amounts of penal suffering because there have been certain amounts of sin, is a pure fiction of our logical faculties under a perverted rendering of our moral nature, and a notion as practically absurd and impossible to be realized as it is theoretically false. If such a virtue as this imaginary justice could exist, it would only be by the entire exclusion of our nobler affections and sympathies, and by the exclusive devotion of omniscience and omnipotence to its execution.

If, however, we look upon the administration of justice as a protective and disciplinary process sustained by conscience, its defects and irregularities, so far as they indicate no overlooking of crime, no disregard of it, are of little account. Very diverse portions of pain and pleasure enter into the

training of different individuals with such varying opportunities and liabilities, as often show the apparently more favorable position hardly, after all, to be chosen. The varieties of suffering, therefore, which come to us in a penal way are scarcely to be regretted, provided they express in a clear form the moral quality of conduct, and thus enter as healthy constituents into a course of training. Growth is not so delicate a process that a large variety of circumstances may not contribute to it, many minor conditions be overlooked by it, many unexpected compensations be developed through it. The granite foundations, then, of government, of justice, rest on conscience, yet foundations not so immovable that they cannot be shaped to the superstructure, broadened and contracted as the exigencies of the entire plan require.

Justice applies only to a portion of the acts that are righteous; namely, those which pertain to the enforcement of law. It is neither more nor less pliant than righteousness, being in its true form a phase of righteousness. Regarded as a simple impulse to execute righteous law, it must submit to correction and guidance, like every other impulse. Righteousness is an aspect of conduct most flexible, since it faithfully considers and suffers itself to be affected by every variety of circumstances and change of relation. To put out the eyes of justice, and fill its mouth with a stubborn clamor for blood, as for a debt incurred and impossible to be cancelled, is to divorce it from righteousness, in wedlock with which alone has it any authority.

A second external relation affected by conscience is that to God. It is his and our moral nature which is the ground of our intimate connection with God and our peculiar duties to him. It is this that lays deep in our very constitution a sense of the obedience which we owe to his law, and makes the accusation of guilt before him so appalling to us, an attitude so dread, so disastrous, beyond all compare of calamity. It is thus that the judgment rendered of God against us makes provision in our condemned hearts for its own fearful execution, becomes by its moral power like a

barbed and poisoned arrow rankling in the soul, piercing more deeply with every remorseful throe in our effort to escape, — with every burst of impatience in the sullen struggle of endurance. The sanctions of the divine law, without this hold on the conscience, without this ultimate appeal taken in the very soul against the soul, would resolve themselves into a simple series of physical disasters, pitiful, but not dreadful; miserable, but not execrable.

So also the moral nature of God, his holiness, is the ground of worship. Power, knowledge, wholeness of intellectual attributes may evoke admiration, but nothing save a still higher wholeness, save holiness, can call forth worship. It is the moral nature which gives character that absolute excellence, to which it is our highest duty, and most expressive of our worth, to bow the head in adoration. Wonder is displaced by love, admiration changes into adoration, reverence into worship, as the eye, passing beyond the attributes, rests on the righteousness of God.

Conscience also is a chief means of revealing God to us. Skill, contrivance, adaptation, might show themselves in his works; intellect might answer to intellect, but the weightier aims, methods, and discipline of his moral government would be hidden from us but for conscience. Sinai would have no thunder tone, and Calvary no still voice to move forever, like the breath of heaven, on the depths of the spirit. The deep and the gentle surges of the soul would fall to sleep, the whole nature be choked and shallowed by slimy and sensuous deposit. The voice of heaven is gathered and echoed in the chambers of conscience, and thus it becomes the ear opening outward and sending inward the sharp command and cheering approval.

Conscience is the power which enables us to apprehend the holiness of God; to hold any doctrine, to entertain any belief concerning his character, decrees, actions, that violates our sense of right, is as wrong as to suppose that we understand his methods and government when they present themselves to us as unwise and irrational. Human reason enables

us to comprehend the rationality of divine action, conscience its righteousness. When his conduct seems to us unreasonable or his judgments unjust, we may be sure that the adjustments of the instruments of our vision are imperfect, that we have not brought the intellectual or the moral telescope to a perfect focus, and hence the obscurity and contradiction: To say this is God's way, while the traces of folly or of wrong remain in it, is to check inquiry and mar truth; is to exculpate God by the plea of omnipotence; is to suppose it among the immunities of Deity to be permitted to do less well than man; is to sanctify tyranny by its grandeur and power, or to atone for the laxity of justice by the generous prodigality of grace. Conscience is the only glass in which God's moral character and government can be mirrored; and in proportion as this is brought to a perfect surface and complete reflection will all his ways be found fit and proportionate. Divine wisdom and law will reveal themselves in the soul according as it holds to the heavens a pure and unsullied conscience.

The moral nature of God is also the condition of our faith and love. It is the characteristic of integrity that there is in it an implied pledge and promise of what will under all variety of circumstances be done. Physical forces hold in themselves, as causes, future results. So far as we are able to anticipate these effects, to read them in the agents now at work, we call our conclusions our belief. When, however, the ground of our judgment is not physical facts, but character, the trust-worthiness of an individual, we call the feeling of repose, faith. Faith, then, is an adjunct of our moral nature. It is the righteousness of God on which faith rests; the soundness of his moral health, on which he would have us pillow our spiritual hopes. Thus it is that faith is antecedent to love, to every perfect form of moral feeling, since it implies always the recognition of integrity, of that sound, moral life which is afterward ready to give complete and sympathetic play to every affection. Faith is the key-note of that harmony in which all pure spirits unite.

We only wish further to point out the connection of conscience with science and philosophy. There is a scientific spirit which, having made great conquests in the physical world, overlooks the impassable gulf which separates this from the strictly intellectual region, and expects, by kindred research, by investigation of the instruments and adjuncts of mind, of brain, nerve, and cranium, of organic development, to reach equally important and reliable results in philosophy. It is not within the scope of comparative anatomy or natural history to determine man's rank in the spiritual world. The scalpel, however skilfully plied, can neither lay open or approximate mental action; it is not in physiology to settle the problems of ethics and religion. It is a small step toward determining his true rank to classify man by physical characteristics in the genus *bi-mana*. In the lower kingdom of organic life he may fall there, but in the higher kingdom of spiritual powers he may rank a little lower than the angels.

The problems of mind can only be settled within their own province, in the metaphysical region to which they belong; and he is both blind and impotent who strives either to find or solve them elsewhere. They can no more be felt on the head, searched out in the physical framework, seen in the brain, laid open with nice dissection, picked up with delicate nippers, traced in embryonic growth, or discovered in the stages of organic progress, than can be thus treated the existence and attributes of God.

We might as well say that the inspiration of a prophet, or the divinity of Christ is a question of physical formation and scientific classification, as that the rank of man is thus to be assigned him. In claiming the heirship of faith, we simply laugh at the weapons of the anatomical room. In this regard, it matters very little whether we "have ever seen the human brain" or not, as in it is to be found neither the mind, nor any representation, map, or feature of it. Let the students of science cut away diligently, compare men and apes; it is pleasant to know the kith of the body and its

relations as a physical structure. This knowledge we appreciate; but let them not fancy that herein they answer, or even reach, the questions of philosophy. If metaphysics is an obscure and uncertain region, so much the worse for all of us, for here, and here only, can the questions most intimate to man be answered. The conceit of philosophy may be astonishing, but it is modesty compared with the conceit of science, which grazing the field of facts with prone face, neither looking inward nor upward, yet ventures to declare the laws and mode of the invisible mind and the infinite God.

More wisely and more fatally do those proceed who, like Mill, Bain, and Spencer, strive in the realm of mind itself to reduce its moral phenomena to reflection and association, to the conscious and unconscious results of purely perceptive, intellectual processes. The conscience, with its direct, indisputable, original authority, with its unique and weighty intuition, with its control and modification and exaltation and spiritualization of the entire intellectual framework, is thereby lost. It can serve no longer as the nucleus of an wholly new character, as the ground of a position in classification removed by a heaven-wide space from that occupied by every animal destitute of that faculty. Here lies the gulf between the brute and man, one not to be bridged over or gone round by a stroke of science, an estimate of the length of the arms, of facial angles, or the cubic inches of sand that can be poured into skull-cavities.

If the possession of conscience, with the power and relations now assigned it, can be established in philosophy, it affords the condition of a new and nobler being. It constitutes a difference not of quantity, but of quality, not of degrees, but of kind; cuts man off from the highest of sagacious brutes, and unites him to spiritual beings, those who inhabit the realms of duty and worship.

The intellect is simply instrumental, a noble instrument truly, yet working for earthly purposes, and giving no sure promise of anything beyond them. The conscience is not

instrumental, it lays an absolute and unqualified law on the soul, not based on present and transient conditions, not a mere adaptation of means to ends, but with a scope and stretch like that of eternity. Is it strange that that which is the central power of our spiritual constitution should afford the best argument for immortality? The moral kingdom is here and now incomplete, chaotic; hence the undeniable inference that we wait another, a moral creation. Nor is the argument less weighty, that the law of conscience is not fitted as instinct or interest for the brief circle of this life, but demands longer periods to bring round its results. It works with an authority and scope of method that would be both fatal and ridiculous if it contemplated only a few dozen of years. What sublimity of folly in the attitude of every martyr, if the law which compels death has in it no promise of life, if it simply supplies the soul with one mighty purpose wherewith to dash itself on annihilation, and have an eternal end! What an absurdity, a law whose very victory is extinction; which fortifies the mind with the sense of immutable necessity, of God-like obedience, only thereby to thrust it the sooner into nonentity. This is to suppose that the breath of holy and devout impulse, which fans the soul as from the presence of God, is here only to wreck it the more quickly on the rocks of time.

While the intuition of right is by no means the only point at which insight is claimed for the mind, it nevertheless is more influential and central in determining the nature and assigning the rank of man than any other original idea. Of the remaining intuitions, some do but complete and make rational our perceptive processes: Such are those of existence, number, space, time. Others accompany and give play to this intuition of right: Such are liberty and the infinite. Without the perception of right, all our higher intuitions would have no power radically to modify our constitution, or make of us new creatures with new objects and characters. Without the law of right, liberty would be aimless and worthless, the perception of beauty have no purifying influence,

the knowledge of God no redemptive power. Conscience, then, we say, is the central feature of philosophy, and the grand spiritual attribute of man. To assault this faculty from the physical world is absurd; to confound its perceptive with the reflective processes, its authority with the blind, irrational influence of association, the most grievous of philosophical mistakes, the most perverse of moral errors. All our faculties, thereby, like those of the brute, sink into simple instruments wherewith we provide our pleasures. The only difference is in the breadth of forecast, the diversity of resources, the variety of choices. Love no longer casts out fear, but sinks as a motive to a level with it. As it is equally just to save a dollar and to make one, so it becomes alike noble to shun the suffering of punishment, and to gain the pleasure of virtue. All that manhood requires is to keep the intellectual scales adjusted and dusted, weighing to a grain of happiness the pleasures of appetite, passion, and affection, of body and of soul, of conviction and of delusion, of love and revenge, of the present and the future, and, footing the columns and finding remainders, to make them the guides of life, till the fruits of some new experience, falling into the scale, give the lie to past calculations.

The chief advantage of this boastful mechanism of rational guidance over the simple, unerring instinct of the beaver, would seem to be in self-consciousness, yet a consciousness forever vexed with the labor, perplexity, and futility of its reasonings; a sensorium habitually pained by the processes that bring it into play, yet more often leave it baffled and disappointed.

Such is the nature, the internal and external relations of conscience; we have only to speak further of its office and method of cultivation. Beginning with that which is most obvious, yet, perhaps, less intimate and essential to the very faculty itself than those which remain, we mention guidance as its first office. Conscience does not take the place of wisdom, does not limit or render unneedful the fullest play of all intellectual faculties. Quite the reverse. It makes

thorough and sincere inquiry obligatory, as also its conclusions, and thus puts the processes and results of investigation under profounder motives and weightier sanctions.

Conscience neither renders wisdom superfluous nor is itself rendered superfluous by it. It is essential to wisdom, since it quickens thought, makes it a duty, and lends authority to its judgments. Thought is essential to conscience, as it does not discuss the quality of right in the dark, but in the light, in action unfolded in all its relations and bearings. The perceptions of conscience and the results of reflection more and more perfectly blend as the healthy mind grows in strength; and the wisdom and rectitude of action become as closely united in the spiritual life as light and heat in the sun's rays.

Yet conscience as a guide is not restricted in its penetrative power to the simple processes of reflection. Actions reveal their character to this faculty beyond the power of the mind distinctly to trace their consequences. The moral feelings, the affections, serve as delicate tests of the moral quality of courses of conduct. While we cannot see by our emotions, we can by means of them. There is a sympathetic echo and response of the affections to the qualities of an act which often constitutes a safe test of its character. The feelings may be likened to the mirror by which light is thrown on the object in the focus of the microscope, enabling the eye to penetrate it more deeply, and see what is in it more perfectly. The moral emotions light up the mind, and enable it, with less difficulty and more certainty, with an instinctive sympathy, to discern the moral quality of actions. Conscience, therefore, is a more correct guide than simple wisdom can be, though dependent upon the reflective faculties for all its steps of investigation.

The second office of conscience is to confer a high and peculiar pleasure, even that pleasure which is the chief reward of holiness, which is the full compensation for all that has been or can be endured in the pursuit of right. Without this moral faculty, we can have no transcendent

reward. Prudence will bring a prudential return, wisdom, the consciousness of skill, but only right, the sense of integrity, of moral soundness, of complete manhood. Sink the moral nature to an inquiry after the useful, after happiness, though in the broadest and best sense, and you can, as the result of the establishment and observance of the wisest precepts, only congratulate yourself on your sagacity. If there has been no transcendent law, then there has been no high-toned obedience. If there has been no voice like the voice of God urging you on, then there has been no heavenly virtue. The merit must correspond with, cannot in character surpass, the tone and authority of the faculty whose behests are obeyed. As wisdom is only means to the end of good, it can bring no other satisfaction than that of success.

The most central and essential office of conscience is to construct, to constitute character. Without authoritative law, there can be neither obedience nor disobedience, sin nor holiness. The trial and development of character can only be instituted at this point. Some command somewhere must spring up to call the choice into action, and compel the determination of the man, freely and understandingly, in what we term character. The prohibition of an apple may be sufficient, but some injunction at some point must be found to reveal the soul to itself, and show what it will do. Now, there can be no such law without conscience. There may be commands with threats, but these can offer no other than prudential considerations till they secure a hold on the mind through the conscience, grapple it with moral force, and put distinctly before it in the simple, profound, and unmistakable meaning of the words, the question of obedience or disobedience, right or wrong.

And herein, we think, we see that the accuracy, the absolute correctness of conscience as a guide, is a point, not only not to be insisted on, but one of no great intrinsic moment. If conscience is a mere means, like knowledge, of reaching ends, then, so far as I am misdirected by it, the mistake is calamitous and without compensation; but if it is the primary office

of conscience to give a law to all my faculties, to put them in the compact embrace of character, and under the handling of a moral personality, then the precision and accuracy of each step are of little moment. If my sole object is to get wealth, then every blunder in business is by so much a pure loss; if it is an equal, a superior object to enlarge personal power and develop character, then my errors may be as fruitful to me as my best judgments, and the end of manhood be pursued as prosperously amid disappointments as successes. The entire accuracy of a moral judgment is not the consideration of moment, but that such a judgment has been made, the soul been put under its authority and its discipline, and been started on the career of correction and growth. Indeed, we do not see how it is either possible or desirable that a faculty perfect in its judgments should be associated with faculties imperfect and nascent. The eye even cannot see to purpose till it has been taught by developed scientific thought how and what to see. The conscience cannot discern perfectly the qualities of actions but partially known. Nor does the soul require, nor could it well use, a faculty absolute and complete in its guidance, since, between the partial defective judgments of conscience and its ultimate, its complete decisions lies all that path of growth which every faculty of man's nature requires. That the mind should be put under obligation so to unfold actions as to make its moral decisions correct, perfect, is of infinitely more value to it, than the immediate possession of an accurate conclusion without the growth and discipline of its attainment. Look at literature, look at life, — wherein lies its dramatic power, its liabilities, its hopes and fears, its convergence of motives, but in the moral forces everywhere at work, requiring skilful, adroit, faithful handling? Life is not a primary school under the simple rigor of plain law, following by rote the rule of virtue, but lays upon its pupils the further claim of honesty and thoroughness in their every step of reasoning, of responsibility and growth in the exposition of the very law itself, thus making the response to duty intelligent and

spontaneous. This is the great office of conscience. It puts man upon proof, and gives him the possibility of character, of moral manhood. It tests him by the presence of a command, uncovers sin and defect, pursues him momentarily with the sense of duty, compels him to feel the need of strength, rewards and encourages him in obedience, gives play and firmness to the will, imposes the claim of faithfulness and honesty, supplies the conditions of growth, and, a schoolmaster, leads the harrassed and fretted soul to the bosom of Christ.

The means of cultivating conscience need detain us but a moment. They are indirect. All those inquiries which reveal the results of action, which follow out the ramifications of influence, and trace in detail the consequences, direct and indirect, of conduct, prepare the way for the just decisions of conscience. It is a large part of the office of ethics to establish those principles which enable us with rapidity and precision to determine the bearings of specific acts, and readily assign them to their class. All intellectual discipline, then, and more especially that which reveals the relation and consequences of human conduct, is disciplinary to this faculty.

From the connection of the affections with conscience, we see that all which promotes their health and activity will aid its judgments. Perverted feeling is sure to lead to unfair and partial statements of the bearings of actions, and thus to an unsound estimate of their moral quality. Those affections which make us alive to the interests of others, truly sympathetic, at one with every just and generous impulse, so direct and quicken the intellectual eye, as to enable it to discover readily and certainly the significant features in the solution of moral problems.

The chief discipline of conscience, however, is its constant use in connection with those perfect precepts wherewith the word of God guides and stimulates it. Thereby the faculties instrumentally necessary to it are trained, the heart purified and made to transmit clear light, and the will strengthened

to bring into easy and habitual use the powers in their moral action. The conscience is the centre of the soul and grows with it. No part of our nature can be impaired without throwing weakness in on this seat of life ; no part find development under its own law without furnishing strength and light. It belongs to secondary powers and faculties to suffer detached training ; the conscience is cultivated by all that develops the soul ; it has an interest and a part in the entire circle of growth and discipline.

Such are some of the connections of conscience — of that second, that inner, higher knowing, which rises above the plane of sense, opens to us the spiritual world in the great law of its life, and makes us a part thereof by putting us under the same bonds of duty, partners of the same hopes and fears, with the sons of God, able like them to obey, love, and worship.