

against our own desires or actions. Gradually this narrow conception of Authority becomes wider, and when we see that others also, and notably our parents, masters, or friends, recognise equally some form of constraint and exercise self-control similar to that which they expect from us, the centre or seat of Authority moves away in our conception to a greater distance, describing, as it were, a larger sphere and defining a more general power.

The feeling of obligation grows or should grow into a general habit of responsibility for our actions: these actions are dictated and judged not only by their immediate result, but also by bringing in the question whether they satisfy or offend that feeling of responsibility which we call conscience, producing, besides the feeling of success or the reverse, also a feeling of self-approval and satisfaction, or its opposite, self-reproach, regret, and remorse.

It must not be supposed that this analysis of the origin, nature, and growth of the moral feeling of obligation is, in general, clearly experienced by the developing mind. Most children in the present day probably grow up with very indefinite notions as to the nature and location of that Authority which they more or less recognise when once they leave the stricter control of their younger days. Without some ever so vague conception of the existence of a higher command it is impossible to see how members of human society could live and act together; for self-control and self-limitation are the first conditions not only of peaceful intercourse with others, but even of such intercourse in any manner.