

**Revivals And Church History :: Revival of the Voice of CONSCIENCE****Revival of the Voice of CONSCIENCE - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/11/13 7:55****REVIVAL OF THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE**

Compiled by Robert Wurtz II

And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. (I John 3:19-22)

People all over the world express their faith in Jesus Christ if I might use the term on a 'religious' level. Some go to church and sing songs and listen to a sermon. Others attend mass or some other ritual. This is what we may call the 'religious' aspect of their faith. But the question is, do those same people walk before God obedient to what they are conscious of as the revealed will of God? Are they conscientious to the moral aspect of day to day Christianity? Does their heart 'accuse' or else 'excuse' their actions? Do they listen to the voice of conscience at all? Does that voice function properly in their lives?

**Defining The Conscience**

There is a faculty within the heart of man that is most mysterious and serves as the primary difference between man and beast; that faculty is the conscience. It is that which originates in eternity, which God has set in the hearts of men as a witness to Himself judging between what is believed as right and what is wrong. It is an unaffiliated member that speaks exclusively on behalf of God.

The term conscience is defined by some theologians as a 'judgment seat'. It does not legislate laws, it merely passes judgment on the individual based upon what it understands to be the will of God. The word 'conscience' is used many times in the New Testament, but the concept is revealed early in the Old Testament. Perhaps the best example is found when David had slipped into Saul's camp and cut off a portion of his robe. The scriptures says that it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD (I Samuel 24:5).

It was that piercing voice within that indicted and accused. It was that voice within that demanded an account. Later David would number Israel and afterward his heart would smite him again (II Samuel 24:10). Both incidents have a common link; the actions appear rooted in pride and self-exaltation. Both occasions brought the inward rebuke of his conscience.

**Knowing Together 'With'**

The word conscience has its roots in a word that means to 'see' or to know together 'with' something or someone. You become conscious that someone else knows something together with you. It is also a knowing together with a will that is over and above your own. This is simply illustrated, perhaps, by thinking of a small toddler that the parent has told not to touch something. The conscience in the child is aware that there is a will in effect that is over and above their own (the parent). When they 'attempt to' or 'contemplate' going against that known will, the conscience rises up and they react often by looking over their shoulder.

The will of God on the other hand is expressed as a moral law that is written in the hearts of ALL men. It does not need to be taught it merely needs to be uncovered. Deep down in the deep recesses of man is a moral law that he/she has been suppressing since they were children. The more this moral law is suppressed the more wicked the person becomes. The conscience uses this moral law as its code by which to judge whether the individual is doing the will of God. In this way the conscience does not just tell us what we are, but it tells us what we ought to be.

**Re: Revival of the Voice of CONSCIENCE - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2006/11/13 8:05**

Excellent, brother Robert. Thank you for this. Thank God for eternal conscience, the affiliate of God, the accuser of flesh . Oh brother, may we heed our consciences and obey the Spirit's reasonings and worship the Lord with hearts free of condemnation and guilt. How blest is the man or woman who can come before God with a pure conscience! How pleasant is prayer offered when unhindered by a tampered conscience!

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/11/13 8:51**

## **REVIVAL OF THE VOICE OF CONSCIENCE (PART 2)**

### Conscience in Contrast with Instinct

It is remarkable how God has given the animal kingdom instincts to preserve their well being. Animals as far as we know instinctively do not eat poisonous plants. This is a God-given faculty that gives them a sense of judgment with which to preserve their natural lives. The conscience on the other hand is the awareness of a supernatural law which addresses itself to man's conscious will, not in order to enforce its requirements, but to make the individual aware of them so they can choose free-morally what they wish to do in light of what God requires. In this way a person is actually able to step outside of themselves (as it were) and look at what they are doing from God's perspective. The person is able to look at its own attitude towards the will of God and then pronounces judgment on that attitude. This is a most amazing thing, as the conscience allows a person to take an unbiased and entirely objective look at ones own self. In this way the accused person passes the unprejudiced personal sentence on themself.

### If Our Heart Condemn Us Not

Our conscience at all times is making judgments on our thoughts, intentions, deeds, words, and overall being. It is constantly making a comparison to what it believes as the will of God. Conscience can express itself before, during, and after the act. Generally when folk are bent on doing something wrong they will disregard their conscience or distract themselves from hearing its voice and commit the act. After the deed is done and act is committed the conscience meets little opposition and the heart (as in the case of David) 'smites' the person.

The conscience can also work in harmony with the memory to counsel us to do some certain deed that we know to be needed done. It can also advise us NOT to do something.

It is during the transgression itself that the conscience is generally the weakest. This is more likely because the mind is most distracted by the action itself. Under the influence of some passion (anger, lust, etc.) the conscience becomes almost completely stifled. After the fact the conscience speaks the LOUDEST as it expresses satisfaction for what is done rightly or it protests the act creating tremendous anxiety and unrest.

In the above case we would call our good acts as having been done with a clear or 'good' conscience and the evil acts as with a 'guilty' or bad conscience. The heart approves or condemns based upon the ruling of the conscience. If our hearts do not condemn us then we have confidence towards God. If it does condemn us then a sense of needing to right the wrong weighs heavy upon us as we would approach God. We cannot conscientiously have confidence in our approach to God with pending controversies between us and Him.

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/11/13 8:52**

Quote:  
-----How blest is the man or woman who can come before God with a pure conscience! How pleasant is prayer offered when unhindered by a tampered conscience!  
-----

Thanks Paul. Hoping just to share from some studies and teachings I am doing on this subject over the next several weeks.

God Bless,  
-Robert

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2006/11/13 9:53**

Quote:

-----Hoping just to share from some studies and teachings I am doing on this subject over the next several weeks.  
-----

Very much looking forward to this bread, brother. May the Lord richly bless these studies to the hearts of all that glean from them.

Brother Paul

**Re: - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2006/11/13 11:43**

I'm looking forward to this study also. I've heard it said that the conscience is the gateway to the spirit of man, I believe it is important that we understand its function and keep it clear.

In Christ,

Ron

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/11/14 18:15**

EVERYONE HAS A CONSCIENCE

By manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. (II Corinthians 4:2)

Every person has a conscience. This is the plain truth of our text. If some men had no conscience at all then Paul could not appeal to it as he ministered. Man has a conscience just as sure as he/she is conscious. The voice of conscience in the hearts of men on certain occasions shouts with a thunder of a thousand batteries. Ten thousand voices without does not have the volume of that single voice within. And though men or angels should praise a person, lauding their righteousness unawares of their secret sins, the conscience would be making it all for nothing as it declares in God's stead their guilt before him. Likewise a thousand could stand up to condemn, but if the voice of conscience affirms the life and behavior, one may stand even as Luther and declare, "Here I stand so help me God. My conscience is captive to the word of God."

If man had no conscience, it would be impossible he should have the ideas of right and wrong, of good or ill desert, of virtue and of vice (C.Finney). Without a conscience there is no voice of affirmation speaking on behalf of God on issues of morality. It would be impossible to convey moral ideas if man had no conscience wherewith to apprehend and appreciate them.

In a later series of studies we will examine the conscience in terms of its need for instruction through the word of God, but suffice it to say that even the hardest of sinners, under the Divine light of God's Holy Spirit experiences the awakening of the conscience in such a way as if it were raised from the dead. That faint voice becomes a ROAR as the Holy Spirit awakens it. It is not THE voice of God in man- but it is surely 'A' voice for God in man. And that voice is as if man were standing before God at every moment. The thoughts the meanwhile continually accusing or excusing one another.

This is most important for ministers to realize. The conscience of the congregants is continually judging the words of ministers. Even impenitent sinners conscience will affirm the truth of God's word though their hearts may hate that truth. This is what led Finney to conclude that "God Cannot Please Sinners." What the impenitent heart loves (sin) the conscience CONDEMNNS and what the conscience AFFIRMS the impenitent heart rejects. For this reason a sinner is at war within themselves. There is no hope for ministers but to preach to the conscience and at least secure 'it's' AMEN.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/11/16 8:49

**The Conscience: a means of spiritual survival**

Matthew Henry once commented that, "it is a good thing to have a heart within us smiting us for sins that seem little; it is a sign that conscience is awake and tender, and will be the means of preventing greater sins." The conscience has the power to produce in us terrible anguish. Returning to our Old Testament example of David's heart smiting him we gain revelation into the severity with which the conscience can deal when we sin. The word "smite" in the Hebrew is very strong language. It means to smite, to beat, to kill, to slaughter, to slay, to strike, to lay stripes, to cast forth, and etc.

What better way to express the impact that the conscience has on the minds of men? When the conscience 'smite's there can be no rest. The heaviness is enormous. The conscience is not quick to forget either unless due repentance has taken place. The interesting thing is that the Hebrew word could mean anything from to 'strike lightly' to 'slay', but is mostly translated "to smite" (as in to "kill"). This is the sense in which one is left with the conscience when it is transgressed. The relationship with God has been smitten. The sentence is proportional to the crime. The worse the crime the worse the sense of judgment. One could arguably commit a sin and feel as if their relationship with God had almost been slain. Not that it had been slain, but the consciousness of the relationship in light of what has happened makes a tremendous feeling of death.

O. Hallosby the Scandinavian theologian in his classic work 'Conscience' gave an analogy that by way of progression we could say that if I were to burn myself I would suffer an intense physical pain. If I suffer the loss of reputation for something that happens I suffer pain on a completely different level. But if I do something against my own conscience I feel a sense of pain that is absolute, because the law that was transgressed is absolute. This is a pain on the highest level as it is the pain of having lost out with God.

Re: the problem of faulty consciences - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/11/16 10:15

Quote:

----- one could arguably commit a sin and feel as if their relationship with God had almost been slain. Not that it had been slain, but the consciousness of the relationship in light of what has happened makes a tremendous feeling of death.  
-----

Yes, our conscience is a powerful judge. However, it can, and often does, convict of "sin" that is not sin. We must always keep in mind that the conscience is not necessarily the voice of God. I share an episode to drive this point.

Two days ago, immediately after reading this thread, I was given a strong urge from the Spirit to drop in on a Christian lady in town. I arrived to discover her in a turmoil. (She had been thinking of calling me to come see her) So what was her trouble? Her conscience. It was condemning her so severely that it caused her entire body to shake.

Now, you ask, what was her crime? It was this: She had "seriously offended and enraged several people in town", and she felt dreadful about that. People had spread rumors accusing her of scandal, betrayal etc. People were shunning her business. I asked her to tell me what exactly she had done WRONG. As we unraveled the events, and got to the heart of the matter, it became clear that she had done absolutely nothing wrong. It was her conscience, not her deeds that had given her a death sentence.

Together we filtered through all the "stuff" to uncover her REAL CRIME: idolatry – trusting in self and in fellow man. She had unconsciously believed that, as a Christian, God held her responsible for a good testimony. And now she was standing, condemned in his court.

The accusations were spawned from jealousy primarily. Nevertheless, God had permitted it. We ended our visit with prayer and praise - she thanking God for sending the trials in order to set her free from the bondages of her conscience. She didn't need anyone to think well of her. She didn't even need a good reputation. God could bring success to her business if he wanted to, and give her a good standing. She didn't need man for that. She needed to depend on God.

Countless Christians are driven by consciences that are wired with this, and all kinds of faulty-programming, and they don't know it until trials come, and they find themselves bearing guilt that cannot be forgiven (Christ did not die for what is not sin in God's eyes)

I dare say that our consciences are in constant need of rewiring—becoming programmed to the mind of Christ. God instructs us how to develop a properly-working, healthy conscience:

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1,2

So just how do we transform our mind - that is, our consciences? Or rather, how do we let God transform us?

Thanks for posting a topic that we rarely talk about, yet profoundly affects our lives—and ultimately our eternal destiny.

Without considering the workings of the conscience, we focus on the intellectual, emotional, and behavioral levels, and never get to the root.

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/11/16 12:40**

Hi Diane,

Thanks for sharing this. I hope to get to some of these topics a little later in the study, but it is good to look ahead a bit.

Quote:  
-----Countless Christians are driven by consciences that are wired with this, and all kinds of faulty-programming, and they don't know it until trials come, and they find themselves bearing guilt that cannot be forgiven (Christ did not die for what is not sin in God's eyes)  
-----

I think sometimes we need to distinguish between even our conscience and the enemy bringing oppression. The enemy loves to jump in the middle of things and pretend to be God. I heard once a good way of telling the difference between a sense of condemnation (so-called) and true Holy Ghost conviction. Condemnation will make you want to turn and run from God while true conviction will cause you to run TO God and His mercy. Not a perfect saying, but I think it to be true in general. God is always working towards reconciliation with sinners and especially His children. The enemy comes to bring death (separation).

God Bless,

Robert

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/11/17 8:45**

### CONSCIENCE AS 'A' JUDGMENT SEAT

In our previous study we referred to the conscience as a judgment seat. The conscience does not legislate law it merely makes absolute judgments based upon what the individual believes to be the will of God. The conscience presses the mind towards unconditional obedience to that will. And since the conscience does not legislate laws it must have a code that it is using to judge. This 'code' as it were is of the utmost importance.

When a person is born they are born in a fallen state and into a fallen world and to fallen parents. If those parents or the person's guardian(s) are Christians then the 'error' being introduced into the minds and hearts of the individual is minimized because they are trained up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Yet the limitation exists that the child's conscience then becomes effected by the teachings of the parents that are sometimes less than biblical. We will take this topic up in our next discussion, but first I wish to give ample recognition to the value and function of the conscience even in the unbelievers who were raised by unbelievers.

I wish first to demonstrate how the conscience in fact can still act as a moral voice of reason even among the Godless. I

will use two examples. One from George Fox and one of my wife who attended church for the first time as a teenager in High School.

George Fox (1624-1691) was believed by some to be as near to a true prophet of God than has arisen since the apostles. He believed that the light of God existed in all men. I make the argument, that what George Fox was referring to we would call the conscience. He was once told that the Indians did not have the light of God within their hearts. In an journal excerpt from his travels to Virginia and North Carolina dated 1672 we read:

Not far from hence we had a meeting among the people, and they were taken with the truth; blessed be the Lord! Then passing down the river Maratic in a canoe, we went down the bay Connie-oak, to a captain's, who was loving to us, and lent us his boat, (for we were much wetted in the canoe, the water flashing in upon us.) With this boat we went to the governor's; but the water in some places was so shallow, that the boat, being loaden, could not swim; so that we put off our shoes and stockings and waded through the water a pretty way. The governor, with his wife, received us lovingly; but a doctor there would needs dispute with us. And truly his opposing us was of good service, giving occasion for the opening of many things to the people concerning the light and spirit of God, which he denied to be in every one; and affirmed it was not in the Indians. Whereupon I called an Indian to us, and asked him, 'whether or no, when he did lie, or do wrong to any one, there was not something in him that did reprove him for it?' He said, 'there was such a thing in him, that did so reprove him; and he was ashamed when he had done wrong, or spoken wrong.' So we shamed the doctor before the governor and people; insomuch that the poor man ran out so far, that at length he would not own the scriptures.

Keep in mind that the American Indians at the time were not in reputation for a biblical morality, but yet, by the admission of this indian there was yet within him something that reproved him when he did wrong. Not a wrong against a code he had been taught, but against the law of God that (though marred by the fall and other influences) still reproved to some degree to do rightly.

My second example is that of my wife Anna. She was raised in a non-Christian home and cannot recall ever attending church until she was invited to church by a friend in High School. I have had this conversation with her often if she felt a sense of wrong when she did do wrong even when she had not been taught that the things she felt reproved about. She affirmed that she always knew, but did not know how she knew that certain things were wrong. As best as I could say, she was smitten of conscience as her own heart reproved her of what her upbringing did not. This has proved to be a most powerful proof for the existence of God in the life of a person who can not recall a single conversation about God that had any real revelation until her first attendance at church.

I can scarce think of a more powerful personal testimony than these two examples of the faithfulness of God and the rebellion of men. Imagine the power of a testimony of a person who could look the lost in the eyes and say, "I was raised contrary to the law of God that was written on my heart and yet my own heart reproved me when I did wrong when my upbringing would not." This was the testimony of the indian and this is the testimony of my wife. The truth is, folk know better when they sin no matter who they are. Each person is accountable to God for the light that they have and everyone has at least the light of conscience and the light of creation.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/11/20 8:39

#### THE DISCIPLINE OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE

But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void to offence toward God, and toward men. (Acts 24:14-16)

Paul had been taken by the Jews as he had returned to Jerusalem and would have already been killed were it not for the Romans and him having appealed to his Roman citizenship. The Jewish authorities were bent on condemning and killing Paul. He was taken first by Lysias and then later to Festus, Felix, and Agrippa. The ringleader of his condemnation was Ananias the high priest who had hired a certain orator Tertullus to speak against him at this hearing before Felix. In chapter 23 Ananias had given Paul opportunity to speak for himself in which he only had gotten one sentence out of his mouth before Ananias had him smitten; the sentence was thus, *Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before*



*efore God until this day. (Acts 23:1)*

You will notice that Paul appealed to the affirmation of his conscience in all that he did before the Lord. Ananias apparently felt, that if Paul's heart would not smite him for his preaching, then he would smite him. And such is the arrogance of men who seek to control others and force them to walk in a way that is other than their own good conscience. This is the way of religion that man cannot worship God according to the dictates of his/her own conscience.

Yet listen to Paul as he makes his defense again and adds a few thoughts to this 'good conscience' matter. Paul states *that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust*. Implied in this statement is judgment before God. For it is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment. As if Paul said, in light of the fact that we are ALL going to stand before God and give an account for our lives, I exercise myself (discipline myself) to always have a conscience that is VOID of offense towards God and man. This implies effort. This is a deliberate working. He was diligent about it. He attended to this fact. As if he was saying. "I must keep my conscience clear between me and God and me and men, because someday I am going to stand before a holy and just God and if my heart condemns me God is greater than my heart and knows all things." If our heart condemn us not then have we confidence towards God.

So what is a good conscience? It is a conscience that is functioning as God designed it. The law of God has been written upon our hearts and this is the 'code' with which the good conscience weighs the deeds and thoughts of men. This 'code' has to be constantly calibrated by the word of God if we expect it to be accurate. This is why we need to spend time before the Lord in the word of God searching the scriptures as good Bereans. Everyone has to be fully persuaded in his/her own mind (Romans 14).

Here is Paul again before Felix. He appeals to his own good conscience before them all. When he preached he preached in light of the consciences of the hearers. *But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.* (II Cor. 4:2) We must also understand this. Each person's conscience weighs the sayings and deeds of others; this is how we accuse or excuse one another.

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men. Persuade men to what? To walk in the light of the revelation that they have before God in a clear conscience. Not desiring to be deceived, but knowing that we all shall someday be resurrected and give an account to God for our lives. To take unto ourselves the FULL counsel of God and allow God to make us into 'PERFECT' believers. Not infallible or sinless perfection, but 'perfect' in the sense that we are a complete representation of the person of Jesus Christ. This is holiness. This requires much time in the word allowing God to mold and remold our hearts until we rightly represent Him. It involves being *conscientious*. It involves resigning ourselves to the will of God. To be ready to represent Him rightly and all of His majesty.

This was Paul's discipline. He disciplined himself to always keep a good conscience and to keep that good conscience clear before God and man. What an awesome thing! Sinners who never knew the Lord have no clear conscience. It is riddled with the woes of past transgressions that have never been purged by the Blood of Jesus Christ. Purging is a wonderful process. All the old sin has been purged from the conscience and it stands fresh and clear free from the weight of *past* sin and eager and ready to weigh the thoughts, intentions, deeds, and overall life of the believer. Why? That it might bear witness in us in the Holy Ghost that we indeed are walking in the Light as He is in the Light. What a wonderful thing!

Some folks conscience has never been 'recalibrated' by the word of God. Notice that I did not say by sermons or books or extra-biblical writings of respected ministers and professors. It's easy to take on the conscience of others that we respect as the conscience will often affirm their beliefs as it has no real basis to determine truth from error if one has no real steady diet of the word of God in personal devotion. So much is just regurgitated pabulum that has been processed through the bias of other men's conscience. We need to grow past the pabulum and get into the meat of God's word for the sake of our own GOOD conscience. No man or woman of God is balanced enough to speak to your conscience in the place of God's word and His Holy Spirit. You need what He wants to work out in YOUR life. It was Paul's discipline and we do well to make it ours also.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/11/21 7:52

### WHAT IS A 'WEAK' CONSCIENCE?

Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. (1 Corinthians 8:7)

A *weak* conscience is one that has an imperfect understanding of divine things. In the case of our text, there were those Greeks who did not have the knowledge that there was none but one True God. There were beliefs that carried over into their Christian experience that were false. Because they believed still in the possibility of many gods, for them to eat foods that had been sacrificed to idols was clearly an act of idolatry because their conscience affirmed the behavior as being done in worship of that idol. Other brethren who knew that there were no God's but one were not bothered in conscience as they knew that the idol was nothing more than a piece of stone. We may say that they had a 'good' conscience (because they had knowledge) and the other brother had a 'weak' conscience (because they were devoid of certain critical knowledge).

The one with the strong and well informed conscience must be conscious of the weak brother's weakness and not become arrogant in his liberty. I say liberty, because the one with the good conscience could eat the food without any transgression of conscience, but if the other 'weak' brother saw it, not having the full revelation of the truth, may be emboldened to eat the thing as a food sacrificed to idols. *And through your knowledge, he who is weak perishes, the brother for whose sake Christ died. Thus, sinning against the brothers, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will eat no meat forevermore, that I don't cause my brother to stumble.* (1 Cor. 8:11-13)

A conscience is therefore said to be weak when it lacks certain critical knowledge. This is a most important truth. Romans 14:2 tells us that *One man has faith to eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables*. This is another look at being 'weak'. Here it is implied that the person does not have sufficient 'faith' to eat the meats. This is caused by a person not yet being fully persuaded in their own minds that eating the meats is actually OK. The conscience will not give the green light because the mind is not convinced yet of the arguments for eating it. This is also a 'weak' conscience. *But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* (Romans 14:23 A SV) If the person cannot eat the food or do the deed proposed with a clear conscience they should not do it. If they do what they 'believe' to be sin it is sin to them.

In this truth we discover another critical aspect of the Gospel that is essential to our understanding; liberty comes through revelation of the truth. One does not have liberty simply because they were converted, though by and large this is somewhat true. The person has to be fully persuaded in their own mind by taking to themselves the revelation of the truth in such a way that the conscience will affirm what it once rejected. No one has the right to transgress their conscience just because they are believers. If you believe eating food sacrificed to idols is wrong and you regard the idol it is disastrous to eat. You must work out your own salvation in this regard and be a good Berean and search the scriptures prayerfully and honestly as to whether that thing be sin or not. Once you are CONVINCED and the conscience gives the green light - then you can move forward and eat or 'do'.

Spending time in the word, again, and being a good student of God's word will bring your conscience into a 'good' state. The Holy Spirit and the word of God always agree; we must study to show ourselves approved that our conscience and the word might likewise agree. This is the key to gaining a good conscience and strengthening a 'weak' one.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/11/21 8:36

### AN UNRELIABLE CAUTERISED CONSCIENCE

Speaking lies in hypocrisy and having their conscience seared with a hot iron. (1 Timothy 4:2)

To cauterise or 'sear' is to burn the skin or flesh of (a wound) with a heated instrument or caustic substance, typically to stop bleeding or prevent the wound from becoming infected (Oxford American). It is the use of a branding iron that has the effect of burning the skin and also the nerve endings until no pain is felt. For third degree burn victims, there is often no pain involved due to the fact that the nerve endings of the affected area have been destroyed. This is known as 'inse



nsate' skin. Our passage in I Timothy 4:2 is a most powerful illustration of what happens when a person 'sears' their conscience.

No pain in that 'area'. No sensitivity. The greater the extent of the burn the less able a person is able to regulate their body temperature as the nerve endings of the skin work in harmony with the bodies temperature regulation. This parallels the work of the conscience. Not only is it sensitive to areas of sin- but it gives us a 'feel' of the overall 'body temperature' (as it were). This prevents us from being in a lukewarm or cold state. But when the conscience is 'seared' and seared badly it is quite possible that the conscience would never make itself felt. This is what Paul refers to in Ephesians 4:19, *Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*

This is where the Holy Spirit comes in. The Holy Spirit will work together with conscience to keep us on track in our walk with God. Paul in Romans 9:1 makes an interesting statement, *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost...* This is a double appeal. Not only did he have the right witness of the conscience, but also being sensitive to the Holy Spirit he claimed no knowledge of self-deception in this matter. This is most important because the conscience could be 'seared' in an area and not give the right sense of what we are doing or have done. God will deal with you through the Holy Spirit even if your conscience becomes seared in an area. It is important NOT to quench the Holy Spirit or resist the Holy Spirit as He deals with us. What more hope have we once these have been silenced?

C. Finney has a lot to say about conscience and in many ways, I think, moves very much into his own personal convictions. However, I would like to share just a few of many of his points to give an idea of what having a conscience seared in some areas would look like. Here he writes from his 'seared conscience' message:

31. *When you can transact business upon selfish principles, take advantages in business, that shall put money in your own pocket at the expense of another--when you can enrich yourself by any employment, without regarding the interest of those with whom you deal, as you do your own, your conscience is seared with a hot iron.*

32. *When you can complain of a want of conviction of sin, this is evidence of a seared conscience.*

33. *When you can neglect to make confession of your sins to those who have been injured by them, and thus persist in your injustice and wickedness, without remorse, your conscience is seared with a hot iron.*

34. *When you can make excuses for not confessing--when you do not feel impelled by a sense of duty to make full confession--when you can satisfy yourself with a heartless, constrained, or partial confession--when you can be satisfied with a private confession, when it ought to be public--when you can be satisfied with confession, without repentance--your conscience is seared with a hot iron.*

35. *When you can neglect to make restitution, to the extent of your ability--when you can retain in your possession that which in equity belongs to another--in short, when you can hold on to possessions that were obtained by a violation of the great law that requires you to love your neighbor as yourself--when you can hold on to them, without restoring them to their rightful owners, when it is in your power, it is a demonstration of a seared conscience.*

36. *When you have no sense of moral obligation in respect to those habits of life, that have an influence upon your brethren, your family, the community in which you dwell, and upon the world at large, it is because your conscience is seared. For example--if you have no conscience on the subject of retiring to rest in due season, and rising in the morning also at such an hour as best consists with health--if you can habituate or allow yourself, on any occasion, without necessity, to sit up late at night and rise late in the morning--if you can have no system in this respect, no principle, no conscience about it--if these things are left without consideration or reflection, to the neglect and injury of your own health, the injury of your family, and of course to the injury of the Church and the world, your conscience must be seared with a hot iron. If you have no conscience in respect to observing these things, for your family's sake; and if you do not require them and all under your control to have system, principle and conscience upon these subjects, from which they will no more depart without imperative necessity than they would go without their necessary food, it is because your conscience is seared.*

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2006/11/21 9:18**

Great teaching, Robert. The cauterized conscience. Deadened nerves, spiritual pain receptors incapacitated. While reading, I couldn't help thinking that wounds are cauterized typically to stop bleeding. To keep blood in, to prevent outer flow and blood loss - the end of which being death. Could it also be that a sin-seared crust over the wounded conscience restricts a blood-washed confession (I John 1:9) from flowing out from the wound, leading, in turn, to a mortification of the flesh body and subsequent life in the spirit?

Something to chew on, anyhow. Thank you for engaging my thoughts this morning. God bless you for your time and heart in sharing these vital truths!

Brother Paul

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/11/21 9:47**

Quote:

-----Could it also be that a sin-seared crust over the wounded conscience restricts a blood-washed confession (I John 1:9) from flowing out from the wound, leading, in turn, to a mortification of the flesh body and subsequent life in the spirit?

Great point Paul! I thought when I read your post how it's almost like the scripture likens the conscience to our skin. What happens when the skin is gone or as you say it gets cut or something? The skin protects us from the disease and germs, etc. of this world. Without skin we would die of infection.

**Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/11/21 13:47**

### THE PURGING OF THE CONSCIENCE

The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: (I Peter 3:21)

It is solumn to consider that those who lived prior to the cross of Christ lived lives that *through fear of death were all their lifetime subject unto bondage* (Hebrews 2:15). It was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats could make those who came before the Lord perfect as pertaining to the conscience. So it seems that there was always this lingering 'fear' as it were. An apprehension caused by a conscience that would not rightly lie down because of sins that were past.

They needed their conscience purged from dead works to serve the Living God. Only the blood of Jesus Christ applied will make the conscience lie down in peace. It is the blood of Christ that was the price paid to remove the cause of the offense. What an awesome consideration! The conscience rejected the offerings of the blood of bulls and goats and even the ashes of the heifer (Hebrews 9:9). Only the shedding of His blood could ever take away sins. Yes, how *much more* shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God purge your conscience to serve the Living God?

Before there was an imbalance in the scales of justice (as it were) and the conscience was right to point this out to the comers there unto. But, Christ is the propitiation for our sins. Before there was a remembrance of sins made every year. But now, we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the Righteous and He is the propitiation for our sins. No need to put off until the yearly sacrifice to get the conscience to turn loose its hold upon our minds, even if then it was but knocking the edge off. How much more? How much more shall the Blood of Christ resonate within the conscience as the right price? The FULL price paid. No need to fear death- for the conscience can be purged clean of offense between us and God.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/11/21 13:57

## THE CONSEQUENCE OF A CALLOUS CONSCIENCE

Paul asks the question in Romans, "Shall we sin that grace may abound? God Forbid!" The conscience plays a crucial role in keeping us sensitive to our attitude towards sinning. This is a great indicator of where we really are in terms of our surrender to His absolute Lordship. Can you easily imagine yourself disobeying God? How does the thought strike you? Finney takes up the question with a pointed pen and probes into our hearts. Here we read...

*When you can think of sin without horror, something as they would feel at such a thought in heaven, it is because your conscience is seared. How think you an angel would feel if the thought should come over his mind--to-day I shall sin against God? How would a saint in heaven feel under the same impression?*

*Why, it would come over all heaven like the shock of an earthquake. They would all stand aghast and grow pale, would hang up their harps, and wail out with pain at the thought that one of their inhabitants should sin against God.*

*Now what state of mind must that be when you can expect to sin without the deepest horror, without feeling a chill come over you and your blood almost coagulate in your veins. What, sin against God! Why, if the thought does not shock and agonize you, if the expectation that you shall sin does not seem even more terrible to you than death, where is your conscience--in what state of mind are you?*

*Have you any sympathy with heaven? No, indeed. And perhaps I might and ought to say that if you can think of sinning without the most excruciating agony, you are even more callous than they are in hell.*

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/11/22 9:56

## THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CONSCIENCE

I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, (Romans 9:1)

Adam Clark when commenting on this verse writes: *This is one of the most solemn oaths any man can possibly take. He appeals to Christ as the searcher of hearts that he tells the truth; asserts that his conscience was free from all guile in this matter, and that the Holy Ghost bore him testimony that what he said was true. Hence we find that the testimony of a man's own conscience, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost, are two distinct things, and that the apostle had both at the same time.*

As we have said previously the conscience is a judgment seat. The Holy Spirit was sent into the world to reprove the world of sin. One translation of John 16:8 reads, *And he, when he comes, will make the world conscious of sin, and of righteousness, and of being judged*:. This is interesting as we view it in light of what Paul is saying in Romans 9:1. The Holy Spirit brings things to our remembrance that the Lord has said unto us (John 14). It would reason that He brings all things that we need brought to mind back to our minds as He wills. This is great support for the conscience. The conscience weighs what is before the mind and heart- but we tend to forget things. But Paul is saying here that even with that which the Holy Spirit has brought to mind- the conscience still affirms the sincerity in what he was saying.

This opens the discussion into the individual dealings of the Holy Spirit in the lives of a believer and the conscience's role in pressing those issues. There is a term that is sometimes used known as 'personal convictions'. These are beliefs or restrictions that a person holds to individually that may not necessarily apply to everyone. The Holy Spirit often deals with us in our lives about things that He knows are going to present a problem down the road. This is why it is important to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. If you know you need to rid your life of things that some people admit- do it. Not everyone has to share your conviction, but you need to be obedient to what you feel the Lord is saying to you about these things. Your conscience weighs in on these topics also to remind you to walk in what the Lord has shown you. There is a balance to this also as the enemy will often oppress folk, but walking before the Lord and spending time with Him will keep these other influences to a minimum.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/12/4 8:49

## COMMENDING OURSELVES TO THE CONSCIENCE OF MEN

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. (II Corinthians 4:1, 2)

Implied in our passage is that every man's conscience has the ability to recognize truth when it hears or 'sees' it. Paul makes a remarkable statement here. Not only is he saying that he lives a life in which his conscience is clear in his secret life, but when his deeds and teachings are weighed in the conscience of 'every man' they affirm that what he is saying is true and that his life matches that truth. Paul taught and preached so that every man's conscience would bear it as testimony that what he proclaimed was the truth of God.

This is one characteristic of divine truth: every man's conscience will acknowledge it, though it speak decidedly against his/her own lifestyle. The apostles acted not like such persons as he describes (dishonest, crafty, deceitful, etc.), but they manifested the truth to every man's conscience, declaring nothing but what the hearer in their own conscience believed to be true. This served for the conviction of their own consciences who heard them. God gave man to judge for themselves, because they must give an account for themselves. Paul used this faculty in preaching.

It is a most sobering truth that our lives and our words are weighed in the conscience of those we encounter (Romans 2:15). It accuses or else excuses one another. Not only can we tell if our deeds and words are legit, but our conscience passes a sentence on everyone around us based upon what we believe to be God's will. Whether the person is 'liked' or 'disliked' is immaterial. This is a most simple form of discernment. The people we encounter's conscience renders a judgment of our actions and words *automatically* also. This is an involuntary reflex (it happens whether we want it to or not). This is because the conscience operates independent of our own will. We cannot summons it to make a ruling or influence it in any way. It weighs the evidence against what the person believes to be the will of God and renders an absolute ruling.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/12/4 10:12

## THE CONSCIENCE AND HEART IN CONFLICT

You will recall from previous studies that everyone has a conscience. This conscience acts independent of the heart. As Charles Finney has pointed out, this basically means is that the heart and the conscience may not always agree. This is especially true with impenitent sinners. The heart may *love* sin, but the conscience *rejects* it. The life that the conscience *affirms*- the heart *hates*. The conscience stands for righteousness and the evil heart desires sin; therefore the sinner is at war with themselves.

Returning to our previous text we see that Paul's objective was not to appeal to the sinners hardened hearts, but to the conscience. Their evil heart needed to be replaced with a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 11:19). Some preaching appeals to the heart and the other to the conscience. The one that appeals to the impenitent sinners hearts often seeks to befriend or 'please' them in some way. Our text describes those who do it by handling the word of God dishonestly, in craftiness, and deceitfully (II Cor. 4:1, 2). This is the opposite of what Paul would do.

The problem with appealing to sinful hearts is that the conscience stands by and judges the words and the lives of the professor of Christ (or teacher or minister) and when the life or the words do not line up, the conscience rejects the person *and* their message. Again, this is not something that the person chooses to do- it is an automatic reflex.

This is illustrated by what Jesus was talking about in Luke 7:31-34 And the Lord said, *Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? And to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!*

This passage led Finney to conclude that because the impenitent heart desires sin and the conscience righteousness- it is impossible to please a impenitent sinner. The message approved by the conscience was rejected by the heart and vis e versa. The one is too strict and the other is too merciful. This passage proves it impossible to please folk, as the pharisees, who were bent on rebellion.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/12/4 13:59

#### **LIGHT UPON A DARKENED CONSCIENCE**

In Proverbs 20:27 we read, *The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.* What is a candle? It is a light. God has given to every man a mind, which he so enlightens by His own Spirit, that the man knows how to distinguish good from evil; and conscience, which springs from this, searches the inmost recesses of the soul (Clarke). Men work against and 'sear' their consciences and it becomes 'darkened' and unable to do its job rightly (Romans 1:21). This is where the lives of others serve as a 'LIGHT' upon their darkened conscience and awakes individuals to reason.

This is what John the Baptist was and this is what Jesus was (and is). Jesus is 'THE' Light and John the Baptist was 'a' light. Both had an effect upon the *moral consciousness* of those around them. John the Baptist was a prophet to the conscience of the people. His life and his words, even as Paul testified, was commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. When he was around the people's moral conscience came to life. They may have been asleep in their sin before, but when he showed up their conscience came ALIVE.

And this is the question in our times? Does MY life effect the moral conscience of the society into which God has placed me? Does my manner of living pour light upon the darkened consciences of the people around me? What a powerful possibility! That our lives could effect the moral consciousness of everyone we come into contact with; thereby rendering our lives as the salt and light that it was intended to be. Folk who ordinarily may have went head long into sin now have the voice of conscience awakened in them preventing them from going deeper into sin than had we not been around. This becomes reality when we walk in a good conscience and let our light so shine before men.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/12/6 9:53

#### **SPEAK I THE TRUTH? WHAT SAITH YOUR CONSCIENCE?**

There were times in the New Testament when new workers were sent out to the churches that no one knew and it was necessary to write a letter or at least a few words of commendation to be sent with them so they would be accepted (Acts 15:25, 18:27, 1 Cor. 16:10, Romans 16:1, Colossians 4:10, etc.).

The word 'commend' means to stand together with. Paul and the apostles stood together with Apollos, Timothy, Phoebe, and others in their writings. In the case of our text Paul commended himself, not by boasting of his achievements etc., but by literally standing together with their consciences.

What was his claim? He claimed that he did not handle the word of God deceitfully. This is an interesting Greek word that could be rendered to *distort*. To distort something is to take something that is clear and make it fuzzy. It is to take it out of focus when the image before was sharp and crisp. The reason others would do this is for some 'gain'. The conscience picks up on this *distortion* and warns the hearers. Paul was saying to the people in effect, I stand alongside your own conscience, what saith it? If I preach not the truth let your conscience witness!

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/12/6 16:46

#### **Integrity and The Conscience**

Paul was careful not to give the consciences of men a cause to reject him. He was already rejected in the hearts of the impenitent, he dare not be rejected in their conscience also. And this is the challenge for believers; to commend ourselves to every man's conscience in such a way that no matter what the heart may feel the conscience always affirms our life and teaching. Not just our own consciences, but also of those who hear us.

Paul knew how easy it would be to distort his truth or twist that truth until he was accepted by those in rebellion. But that

would bring the indictment of their conscience. Paul wanted to be manifest in the consciences of men that he was indeed a man of God who spoke the truth and no lie. He knew that was the only place he could effectively do the work of the Lord. Paul was not a salesman. He was not a customer service representative. He was an Apostle of the Most High God and he had to walk in his calling in such a way that the conscience of men affirmed his ministry.

We could suppose that some would reject him at first and later peradventure would repent and come to him for the truth. He knew he could not please an impenitent heart and a good conscience at the same time. This is a most powerful truth. To please the sinful heart is to disqualify ourselves from helping them if that day ever comes they truly wish to get right with God. This conscience will have already rejected us. Standing with the conscience may not win the friendship of the sinner, but it will win their respect.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/12/7 8:51

### THE CONFOUNDED AND CONFUSED CONSCIENCE

Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them. (Ezekiel 22)

I have marveled to see a thing under the sun in these days of declension and wholesale iniquity and it is that of so many of the gate keepers having so little discernment. A generation seemingly willing to pass off anything as good as if there were no test or discernment to be passed. A people that it would seem have no conscience of evil and good and pass off both as if they were one and the same.

The cry from the land is, "DON'T JUDGE! DON'T JUDGE" or "DON'T JUDGE ON OUTWARD APPEARANCE!" My friend if a man is walking down a dark alley with a machete in hand do you keep walking or turn around? If he comes off as threatening and evil he most always is. If he or she flaunts their wickedness and the marks of sin then what more need you to discern? As an old timey preacher used to say, "If it looks like a duck and it quacks like a duck then you can believe it is probably a duck."

But not so in our times. The conscience of many in our generation is utterly confounded. Some so distorted that they actually believe that the way to preach Christ is to look and act like devils. What confusion? What twistedness? What confounding of the conscience? We see it all around. The enemy has come in to make a mockery of the church. Men posing to minister before the Lord dressed as the prophets of Baal. And again, what do we hear? "DON'T JUDGE! DON'T JUDGE" or "DON'T JUDGE ON OUTWARD APPEARANCE!" Why not?

As revivalists we tell folk they must die to our Old Man. As repentance preachers we tell folk that we must be clothed in the righteousness of Christ. The enemy has made such a mark on people's lives that it is almost unreal. As if a billion legions were walking the earth. And what a wonder? Legion is freed from his chains- clothed and in his right mind and then to reach the other 'legions' of his day he strips naked and puts the chains back on. What are you DOING legion? Well, didn't you hear? Hear what? You have to look like them to set them free? What folly?

And what has happened? The very thing that folk are supposed to be being led out of they are being led BACK in to! And all in the name of Jesus. What ever happened to RENOUNCING the former lives? Not today- we just use the lifestyle we used to live slap Jesus on it and use it to market the Gospel. What did God say? *Son of man, say unto her, Thou art the land that is not cleansed, nor rained upon in the day of indignation. There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof. Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane....* NO DIFFERENCE between the HOLY and the PROFANE.

What deception? What love of the world? What mixture? What wanting to hang on to the old life in the name of ministry! COME OUT! COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM AND BE YE SEPERATE saith the LORD and TOUCH NOT the UNCLEAN THING and I will receive you. Where is it more seen than in popular youth ministry? Even the highest and brightest are succumbing to the temptation to *compromise*. Secular bands playing in our most powerful meetings! Youth pastors t



hat look more worldly than the world itself- bent on beating the world at their own game. And we wonder why hell hath enlarged herself to swallow this generation. The lyrics of much modern music has been utterly dummed down.

What does it yield? A generation that confounds the fire of hell with the fire of God. A generation that cannot discern the difference between a soul moving rift and the unction of God or a good bass line and the anointing. Are the leaders any better? Can they tell the difference? Do they even know what is moving them? I have felt some of the same 'feelings' in rock concerts when I was in sin and I'm sure that was not the fire of God!

How do we turn the tide? How do we confront the madness? Like blind leaders of the blind the masses are heading for the ditch. Who will have the **BOLDNESS** in our times to say ENOUGH! Who will have the holy jealousy of God for His name RISE up in them to proclaim that we must make difference between the holy and the profane?

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/12/7 13:04

### CULTIVATING A GOOD CONSCIENCE

Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. (I Peter 3:16)

A good conscience is one that is working properly and utilizing the law of God written upon our hearts as it's guideline. To work properly it must make accurate judgments. To make accurate judgments the conscience must have accurate law to work with. You will recall that we have said previously that the conscience does not legislate laws- it merely makes judgments based on what the individual believes to be the will of God (right and wrong).

A good conscience also requires a submissive will. The conscience has no real power to enforce its judgments other than the 'feeling' it presses upon the mind. This makes the conscience totally dependent on our submission. It speaks with total authority, but it does not exercise *total control*.

We are told in Romans 6 that we are servants to the things we yield our members to. The word 'yield' means *to present ourselves to*. There is a readiness implied here- ready to do the will of the one we present ourselves to. It is the same word as is used in Romans 12:1 to present our bodies as a living sacrifice. We become slaves to the 'one' or 'things' we indulge. When we submit ourselves to things we increase the ease with which we will submit in the future. In time submission becomes easy and resisting becomes difficult.

This is why some folk seem to be bound to certain sins after they were once saved. They yielded to some sin over and over until they are bent towards yielding. In other words, they became 're-entangled' in that sin. Likewise if a person resists over and over- one will be bent towards resisting. This is true for resisting our conscience or resisting sin.

A person who has chosen to resist their conscience and yield to sin has suffered a double effect. They have shut down the power of the conscience to control the actions and have given that control to the sin they are indulging. If a person is used to resisting the devil and submitting to conscience then the struggle against temptation is *minimized*. Struggle begins when the conscience is resisted and the sin is yielded to.

Control of one's life can quickly shift from righteousness to sin if we were to *indulge* in some besetting sin we have struggled with in the past. The key to control is determined by what we stand beside (yield to). The more we submit and indulge in something the greater the tendency to yield to the thing.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/12/7 14:38

### CONSCIENCE AND CONTROL

A person who is used to yielding to their conscience and has given much control of their life to conscience is what we might call a *conscientious* person. They pay great attention to their conscience. Other folks give little attention to conscience and it has almost no control. This can be illustrated by looking at the life of a child. A child may know his/her parents will and be totally absent minded about it to the place that one may wonder if they have a conscience at all. They can disregard the known will of their parents without feeling the pains of conscience. It speaks, but it is ignored.

The parents may well be in complete authority in the home, but the child does not readily *yield* to that authority. A parent may use discipline to correct this as does also God Himself (Hebrews 12:1-11). Parents discipline their children among other reasons to cause them to regard their conscience. A parent that warns and warns and never follows through will likely cause the child to see no penalty for disobeying conscience.

The child disobeys, but are the parents in authority? Is God in absolute authority when people disobey Him? The answer is yes, ultimately. There may be a time of resistance to that authority, but in time it will be exercised. The conscience like wise can be ignored over and over until it is awakened or the person is lost in hell in eternity. Circumstances have a way of awakening the conscience. When a person is faced with the consequences of their actions they often hear a double affirmation from a freshly awakened and 'loosed' conscience.

What about those who end their lives in rebellion? What will the conscience do then? I think it reasonable that conscience is part of the human make up and will be with us for eternity. For those who are lost to the flames, the conscience will no doubt exercise itself with a volume of a thousand thunders and lashings. With no blood of Christ with which to purge a conscience (Hebrews 9:9), and it be loaded down with the enormity of its sins and the full knowledge of the extent of their own sinful actions; how shall one escape if they neglect so great salvation (Hebrews 2)? The torments of conscience have to be unthinkable in their horrors. Folk spent their lives ignoring their conscience as it warned them of the consequences of their sin until it is resigned itself to just keep track of the offenses until judgment. Now it will stand as witness and open up as it were a battery of accusations against them from within. As if an army of Nathan the prophet's had in unison pointed their finger at our chests and declared, "THOU ART THE MAN." Who will stand in that day? What a wonder it will be for the unsaved when their own conscience will testify against them?

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/12/8 10:57

#### A MISGUIDED CONSCIENCE

It is not always because the conscience is ignored that it does not function rightly. Sometimes it is due to a lack of knowledge. Other times it is due to wrong beliefs.

We must understand that the *law of love* must be the supreme basis for all our actions because on it hangs all the law and the prophets (Matthew 22:40). Some can justify their actions from scripture in one way or another; but do not take into account the law of love.

The Pharisees are said to be able to prove a false doctrine from scripture, so their conscience was totally untrustworthy. A conscience fitted with this kind of knowledge base could fall victim to the impenitent heart concocting persuasive arguments to justify its own compromise while condemning others for the same thing (See Romans 2:3-11). This is why they could bring a woman taken in adultery and not recognize their own sins. Some apparently had the idea that so long as they 'taught' that the law did not apply to them. In reality the teachers are under a stricter judgment. That should be the rule of the teachers conscience- not that they are above the word they preach and teach.

Before the religious leaders brought the woman in adultery they felt no pain of conscience, but when Jesus started writing in the sand they went out convicted by their own conscience (John 8:9). The word *convicted* here could be translated rebuked.

Their own personal deception effected their attitude towards people, business practices, living habits and a host of other things. They could *stone a woman to death with sin in their own lives* with no pain of conscience.

Paul the Apostle was persecuting Christians believing he was doing God a service (John 16:2, Acts 8, 24). Jesus said this would happen. As a dear brother in England once said, he was not crazy, he was a fanatic. He was fanatical in his beliefs and those beliefs were terribly wrong. He could kill Christians with the praise of his conscience- believing he was doing God a favor.

This demonstrates how the conscience is *limited* in its ability to lead a person. It is only a judgment seat and if the person has bad beliefs- 'junk in' will result in 'junk out' (as we say). It is akin to the saying "computers don't make mistakes- people make mistakes." The conscience can only go on what you and I believe to be God's will. What Paul would soon find out is that love is the most important thing of all. If we have not love we are nothing. Love does not take advantage of people or their condition. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law (Roman

s 13:10).

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/12/8 12:33

### THE LAW OF LOVE MUST BECOME THE LAW OF CONSCIENCE

A conscience that does not take into account the law of love is of the meanest sort. Imagine the strict requirements of perfection without the undergirding of the love of God. Some folk have consciences that make them perfectionists. This is noble only when balanced with God's mercy.

The conscience must take into account the full counsel of God. This is the only way we will walk in the law of love. A person can actually do their neighbor wrong and yet be in compliance with much of the scriptures (and conscience). Notice I say 'much' and not 'all'. Romans 13:10 tells us that whoever loves his fellow-man will never work 'ill' towards them (never do them wrong). The word for 'ill' is almost always translated as *evil*. This means harm or injury.

Simply put, when we are walking in love we do not bring evil upon people. A conscience that takes into account the law of love asks the question, "Will this that I am about to do harm my fellow man?" Am I 'taking away' or 'adding to' their life by what I am about to do or say? Am I taking advantage of them in some way? Am I mistreating them and causing injury? Is what I am doing promoting good towards their well being? And perhaps the best question, "Is this how I would want to be treated?" If the answer is NO the conscience should reject the behavior. If it does not, the conscience is seared.

Re: - posted by RobertW (), on: 2006/12/8 13:56

### UNCONSCIONABLE BEHAVIOR

Sometimes folk can act in the most unChristlike of ways and feel little or no pain of conscience whatsoever. Their conscience is seared when it comes to the golden rule.

Some folk have 'selective' conscience sensitivity. They treat their family and those they love one way and strangers and enemies another way. Some people come home from a hard days work and kick the dog and scream at the kids while treating everyone all day with the highest level of courtesy. Others come home and kiss the wife and kids after a day of having been unconscionably rude and harsh to those in their workplace. This is a 'selective' conscientiousness. In truth, our conscience should be pressing us into a consistent Christlike behavior.

Sometimes the setting dictates how the conscience reacts. Certain settings lend to sharp and even rude Christian behavior. This thing ought not so to be. An example of this in America is Sunday afternoons at the local diner or cafe. If Christians knew their reputation on that day in those settings they would be shamed to enter the place. I have known waitors and waitresses speak of Sunday as the worst day to work. The most demanding and rude folk they are and then leave them the worst 'tips'. This is a consistent testimony from the many folk I know personally who work in this field. It is a horrible witness.

What caused this? I suppose we could say that people in public service are at their customers bidding. Nothing more easily demonstrates how a person really 'is' than how they handle *authority*. Some people never get a chance to 'give orders' and when they do- they can't handle it. They talk sharp and demanding at the check-out counter, to the waiter or waitress, or the bank teller. People who work in the public deal with this all the time. A Christian should never contribute to the woes and troubles of these people and their already difficult jobs.

You may ask, where is the conscience in all this? It had to have been seared at some point. That is all we can say. The people you come in contact with in society are still part of those whom we are to treat as we would want to be treated. They are not a separate class of people or something. These are but a few examples of how a Christians actions can become *unconscionable* in certain areas.

The conscience needs to be in effect 24/7/365. Not just 'here' or 'there', or with 'this' person or 'that' person; but everywhere and with everyone. Our former text implies that if we are to be accused of being evil doers- it should be a false accusation. We ensure this by making sure we have a good conscience at all *times* and at all *places* (I Peter 3:16).