

Is Your Conscience A Safe Guide?

I. Definition:

A. Conscience is that "inner voice" which says to us two things:

1. This is right, or this is wrong.
2. "I ought, or ought not, to do this."

B. The activity of conscience involves all 3 of the faculties of a man's being.

1. By our intellect or reason we judge the difference between a right or wrong.
2. By our sensibility, or emotions, we are moved by right or wrong.
3. We have a free will to do the right or the wrong.

C. Conscience is based upon, and judges according to, a moral law or standard which is accepted by the intellect or reason as a good standard of right or wrong.

D. Conscience applies this moral law to particular cases in our personal experience, and proclaims that law as binding upon us.

1. Here is the emotional element of conscience — we feel the claim of duty.
2. There is an inner sense that the wrong must not be done.

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II. The VALUE of the conscience.

A. It gives to every person the sense of righteousness and sin.

1. Righteousness is generally thought of as conforming to the standard of right.

2. sin, as failure to conform to the obligations of that moral standard.

B. The Conscience "bears witness" - Rom. 2:15 by causing remorse or approval.

1. A good conscience is of great value, story of Jean Valjean, in Victor Hugo's great novel Les Misérables.

2. Conscience warns us as a lighthouse warns the sea captain of danger.

~~C. Sin will dull~~

III. The Limitation of conscience.

A. The moral ~~standard~~ ^{standard} accepted by the reason may be imperfect.

B. Therefore the voice of decision of the conscience may be proper according to its own standard but unjust according to the absolute standard of God.

C. Hindoo woman's conscience hurts her if she doesn't cast her infant baby into the Ganges.

D. Therefore there is the duty of enlightening and cultivating the moral reason, so that the conscience may have a proper standard of judgment.

E. The conscience can be dulled by sin.

1. I Tim. 4:2 "having their conscience seared with a hot iron."

2. This is why David missed the point of the parable of the rich man, the poor man, and the ewe lamb.

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