Dispensation of Conscience

INTRODUCTION

1. The Conscience is an Inner Sense of Right and Wrong

The *conscience* can be described as an inner sense of what is right and wrong. This sense helps us govern the thoughts and actions. Commonly used metaphors for conscience include the "voice within" and the "inner light".

John 8:9— And they which heard it, being *convicted by their own conscience,* went out one by one… their conscience grew when they were tested with the truth; Conscience began when Adam knew that God is testing him to know He is true to His Word.

Every person has certain awareness or sense of what is right and what is wrong. This is something that God has built into man FOR MAN'S GOOD, just like the nerves in our body or like a set of scales to weigh things out, or even signal lights. (Gen. 6:5; Rev. 3:17)

God wants man to know when things are not right in his life and that they need to have God fix whatever is wrong. When man sins or does wrong, God wants him to feel bad about it and guilty about it. If man felt good about sin, then man would never feel it necessary to fix the problem!The conscience is something that all men possess. In every dispensation all are responsible to follow that which is good and avoid that which is evil.

Job 1:1—*… perfect and upright, and one that* ***feared God****, and* ***eschewed*** *evil.*

Romans 12:9—*….* ***Abhor*** *that which is evil; cleave to that which is good*

1Peter 3:11—*Let him* ***eschew*** *evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.*

It is never safe to do something that your conscience will condemn. Only do it if your conscience gives a green light. If your conscience gives a red light, *DO NOT DO IT*. If it gives a yellow light, *TAKE CAUTION*. It is very dangerous for a person to do what is wrong and to ignore the signals that come from your conscience.

Always be careful to follow this rule:

* NEVER DO WHAT YOU BELIEVE IS WRONG!

ALWAYS DO WHAT YOU BELIEVE IS RIGHT!

1. The Conscience is Aided by Knowledge
2. Personal Experience & Collective Human Experience

In the Garden of Eden, Adam experienced an almost limitless walk and relationship with God. Adam’s conversations and relationship with God were just as vivid and real if not more so than his conversations and relationship with Eve (Gen. 3:8). Man lost this “God-Consciousness” in the Fall and afterward was governed by the experience of his own “self consciousness.” This does not mean that Adam lost the knowledge that God exists or what God had said, but relationally Adam had become separated from God in the Fall and the extent to which Adam was “conscious” of God in Eden was lost.

In the first dispensation, Adam knew nothing of sin, he was innocent. Adam relied entirely on the knowledge and instruction that came directly from God. In the second dispensation, Adam now had the knowledge of his own experience concerning the effects of sin: paradise lost, physical and spiritual death, and separation from God. Adam’s eyes were “opened” in partaking of the fruit for sure, but Adam lost the great privilege of an intimate, unlimited walk with God.

1. The Holy Ghost and the Word of God

Receiving the Knowledge of Christ and partaking of His Divine Nature will correct a weak or defiled conscience. You may discover that what you thought was wrong was not wrong at all and what you thought was right was not right at all.

The Word of God and the Spirit of God (Bible Truth and the Spirit of Truth) **are our guides.** It is the Bible that tells us what is good and what is evil. It is the Bible that we should follow. Jesus said, "Thy Word is Truth”, but what man’s conscience may tell him is not ALWAYS truth.

John 17:17—*Sanctify them through thy truth:* ***thy word is truth****.*

John 7:17—***If any man will do his will, he shall know*** *of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*

John 13:15; 14:15-17; 15:26; 16:13

2 Peter 1:3,4—*According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the* ***knowledge******of him*** *that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious* ***promises****: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature,* ***having escaped the corruption*** *that is in the world through lust.*

That which is true and right needs to be added to our faith, heart and mind so that we can more and more weigh accurately right and wrong. If a person's conscience has been enlightened by God's Word, then it will approve what God's Word approves and condemn what God's Word condemns. In other words, it will send out the right signals. The scale of our conscience will be very accurate.

Romans 14:22-23—*Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. 23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*

How accurate is your conscience? How keen is your sense of right and wrong? When you need to weigh right and wrong, how accurate is your scale? Are you reading your bible daily to find out what is really right and what is really wrong? Are you giving your scale the kind of information it needs to weigh things accurately? May our scale be an accurate scale, and may we be careful to do what we know is good and avoid what we know is evil.

Acts 24:16—*And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence…*

Hebrews 13:18—*Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things…*

I Peter 3:21—*… the answer of a good conscience toward God…*

1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 1:3; Romans 9:1; Hebrews 9:9; 1 Peter 2:19

2Corinthians 4:2—*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.*

This is an exceedingly important principle in regard to preaching,

* The truth becomes evidence for every conscience
* The conscience is reasonable only by the truth

The gospel of Jesus Christ may be seen to be true by every man to whom He is preached. It should be the aim of every preacher so to preach the truth, to convict the consciences of his hearers. It is a fact that when the truth is spoken the conscience and reason of every man is in its favour, and they know that it is true even when it pronounces their own condemnation, and denounces their own sins.

This gospel must be preached to be seen to be true by all men. Men are capable of seeing the truth; and even when they do not love it, they can perceive that it is from God.

“*by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God”*

1. The Conscience is Limited.
2. It Can become Corrupted

It is possible that your conscience become weak in sending the right signals.

Titus1:15—*Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and* ***conscience is defiled.***

Hebrews 9:14—*… purge your* ***conscience from dead works*** *to serve the living God?*

Hebrews 10:22—*… having our hearts sprinkled from an* ***evil conscience****…*

1Cor. 8:12—*… wound their* ***weak conscience,*** *ye sin against Christ.*

1Tim. 4:2—*Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their* ***conscience seared*** *with a hot iron;*

Because the conscience is influenced by man’s knowledge, it is fallible. A man governed by his own experience and conscience can still grossly err. If the conscience is misinformed, it cannot properly work. Because of its fallibility and vulnerability to corruption, God does not want us to "let our conscience be our guide."

1. It Imparts No Power

In the dispensation of Conscience man’s conscience is tested. The question God is asking may be expressed, “Will man serve God properly if governed only by the dictates of his conscience.” By the end of this period of time the answer is a sad and resounding, “NO!” Man needs a right relationship with God in order to live right.

Conscience produces fear and remorse, but cannot keep men from doing wrong. Conscience imparts no power. Man’s conscience, just as a condition of innocence, is not enough to properly govern the heart and life of man. God in his wisdom and righteousness does not merely pass this judgment, but tests man’s conscience in this second dispensation.