

# The Reference Point



The State Highway Department in Pennsylvania once set out to build a bridge, working from both sides. When the workers reached the middle of the waterway, they found they were thirteen feet to one side of each other. Alfred Steinberg, writing some time ago in the *Saturday Evening Post*, went on to explain that each crew of workmen had used its own reference point.

There is a small bronze disk on the Meads' ranch in north central Kansas where the thirty-ninth parallel from the Atlantic to the Pacific crosses the ninety-eighth meridian running from Canada to the Rio Grande.

The National Ocean Survey, a small federal agency whose business it is to locate the exact position of every point in the United States, uses the scientifically recognized reference point on the Meads' ranch. So far, no mistakes have been made, and none are expected.

All ocean liners and commercial planes come under the survey. The government can build no dams or even shoot off a missile without this agency to tell it exact locations—to the very inch.

"Location by approximation," the article goes on to say, "can be costly and dangerous."

The Reference Point for the Christian is the Bible. All values, judgments, and attitudes must be gauged in relationship to this Reference Point.

Saturday, November 9, 1974

No. 194

*Norfolk*

CONSCIENCE

Text: Mark 6:14-28

Introduction:

*Ill. Death Penalty in the World*

Tell the story of Herod. *David*

- Conscience convicted Herod.
- Thought John the Baptist had risen from the dead.

ILL: Conscience Fund in every metropolitan city post office in the United States.

ILL: Man gives himself up a few weeks ago, after 30 years, for murder.

-- Conscience.

ILL: Charles the Ninth of Spain, the murderer of the Huguenots, said to his doctor:



## Conscience...2

"Doctor, for months I have been in a fever, physically and spiritually. If only I had spared the innocent, the weak-minded, and the cripples."

ILL: Charles the Second of Spain could not sleep except a priest and two monks were in his bedroom.

ILL: Richard the Third who murdered his two nephews often got up in the night, took his sword and fought with spirit foes.

ILL: Man cheated the government on income tax. Sent \$500 and said: "If I still can't sleep, I'll send the rest."

-- The Bible is full of examples of conscience.

## Conscience...3

1. Adam and Eve, smitten with shame and fear. They knew they were naked and hid themselves.
2. Esau -- sold his birthright with profane indifference, yet what he would not have given years afterwards, could he have changed his father's mind.

What bitter tears a few moments' pleasure cost him.

3. Ahab -- "Hast thou found me, Oh, mine enemy?" (1 Kings 21:20)

Why should Ahab address Elijah as an enemy when a short time before they had parted as friends?

The very spot where they met gives the answer. It was the vineyard of Naboth which Ahab had obtained by murder.



## Conscience...4

4. Judas -- in the very moment of his success found his bitterest remorse.
5. Felix, the judge -- trembling before the prisoner because he was the slave of a guilty conscience.

1. WHAT IS CONSCIENCE?

Romans 2:15 --

"Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another."

Someone has said:

"Conscience is a personal vigilant eye before which every imagination, thought, and act is held up to censure or approval."

## Conscience...5

~~God~~ God has placed within each one of us 'something' that cries aloud against us whenever we do anything that we know to be wrong.

Conscience is the detective which watches the trend of our steps and decries every conscious transgression.

ILL: An Indian's definition:

"It is a little three-cornered thing inside of me.

When I do wrong, it turns around and hurts me very much; but if I keep on doing wrong, it will turn so much that the corners become worn off and it does not hurt me anymore."

~~ILL:~~ Commercial airlines of the United States transport hundreds of thousands of pass-



Conscience...6

*Not Aiki Phn - Pansula*

engers, millions of miles  
each year, with very few  
disasters, due to a remark-  
able device known as the  
"radio beam."

-- We, too, have a beam of divine  
light and guidance, which we call  
conscience.

*(Loren)*  
ILL: Emmanuel Kant, in his "Critique  
of Pure Reason," said: There  
were just two things that fill-  
ed him with awe -- the starry  
heavens, and conscience in the  
breast of man.

Conscience -- the moral judiciary  
of the soul. Not sheriff, not law  
but judge.

Conscience -- does not lay down a  
law - but warns of the existence  
of a law

((( )))

## Conscience...7.

-- It is an ideal Moses thundering from an invincible Sinia.

-- It is like a magnetic needle -- indicates the existence of an unseen power.

Conscience is the great proof of God.

-- Conscience is our wisest counselor and teacher, our most faithful and most patient friend; and can be our worst enemy.

-- There are no punishments or rewards comparable to those of conscience.

-- The Psalmist said: "Man's conscience is the lamp of the eternal."

-- In other words, conscience is God's lamp within man's breast.



## Conscience...8

ILL: In Paradise Lost, at the creation of man, Milton puts into the mouth of the Creator these words:

"I will put my umpire --  
conscience -- in his breast."

*Lore 24*  
ILL: ~~Men, hundreds of years ago, used to talk about a magic ring, which~~ whenever an evil thought passed through the mind of him who wore the ring, or whenever he was tempted to do an evil deed, the ring pressed painfully upon his finger.

-- Each one of us wears a ring more wonderful than the fabled magic ring.

The magic ring is conscience.

-- ~~A~~ man may or may not obey, but conscience faithfully does its part.

## Conscience...9

-- It is a red light flashing in our souls.

*1st. Red Light on Airplane*

In some social parlor, in some quiet study, in a crowded street, in a business office, or in a country lane -- temptation speaks its seductive whisper, and "there" conscience has flashed its warning.

## II. THE BIBLE SPEAKS OF SEVERAL KINDS OF CONSCIENCE.

### 1. An evil conscience.

Hebrews 10:22 --

"Let us draw near, with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure wa-ture."



Conscience...10

②

-- In another place the Bible talks about a defiled conscience.

Titus 1:15 --

"Unto them that are defil-  
ed and unbelieving is no-  
thing pure; but even their  
mind and conscience is de-  
filed."

-- Is it possible for the very  
thing that tells us when we  
are knowingly wrong to be-  
come itself debauched?

*9ll* -- Can a little bell that is sup-  
posed to ring and give us a  
clear note ~~become~~ cracked so  
that its note will be false?

This is true when you reject  
the voice of conscience.

Its voice will grow weaker and  
weaker until finally it will

Conscience...11

approve the wrong and become evil  
itself.

It will begin calling evil, "good"  
and it will call the good, "evil."

It will put darkness for "light"  
and light for "darkness."

It will say that bitter is sweet  
and that sweet is bitter.

ILL: ~~Gangsters and immoral men must~~  
~~have evil consciences.~~

ILL: Days of Noah when imaginations  
and thoughts of the hearts of the  
*Love 7a* people were evil continually.

The Bible says: "God gave them  
up."

2. No more conscience for sin.

Hebrews 10:2 --



## Conscience...12

"For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins."

- (1) You may have no conscience for sin because you have slain your conscience. *Id. Seared With a Hot Iron*
- (2) You may be given over to your own selfishness and sin that nothing you say, think, or do will seem to matter.
- (3) Your conscience has been driven away as a friend and a counselor and comes back in the form of remorse.

POEM:

"Goodbye," I said to my conscience,  
 "Goodbye, for aye and aye,"  
 And I put her hands off harshly, and

## Conscience...13

turned my face away;  
 And conscience smitten sorely returned  
 not from that day.  
 But time came when my spirit grew weary  
 of its pace,  
 And I cried, "Come back, my conscience,  
 I long to see thy face."  
 But conscience cried, "I cannot; remorse  
 sits in my place."

-- Many people ask: "What is the unpardonable sin?"

Matthew 12:31 -- *Leave 2*

Leave 2m

"All manner of sin shall be forgiven  
 unto men: but the blasphemy  
 against the Holy Ghost  
 shall not be forgiven unto men."

John 12:39 --

"There fore they could not believe."

- *Call it Be the Kelly; Come Kelly; g Con.*



1 John 5:16 --

~~—~~ "There is a sin unto death."

~~—~~ "My Spirit shall not always  
strive with man."

~~—~~ "Ephraim is joined to his idols;  
let him alone."

~~—~~ This sin is not some particular  
sin, like murder, adultery, or  
drunkenness.

It is a condition of the heart  
rather than a particular sin.

The Pharisees refused to believe  
Christ time after time. They  
had seen many evidences of His  
deity, but they refused.

After a while they had so hard-  
ened their hearts that they were  
saying that He was of the devil.

The condition of the heart, with

## Conscience...15

its dead conscience could be for-  
given, but they had no power to  
ask for forgiveness.

ILL: Put bandage on an eye, and after  
a while the eye cannot see.

ILL: Tie your arm, and after a while,  
you cannot lift your arm.

ILL: Put a stopper on your ear, and after  
a while you cannot hear.

~~--~~ Continue to refuse God's call,  
and after a while you cannot  
hear.

3. A convicting conscience.

John 8:9 --

"And they...being convicted by  
their own conscience, went out  
one by one."

~~--~~ The Holy Spirit uses conscience to  
convict.



Conscience...16

However, conscience cannot revoke its sentence or suspend its judgment.

It cannot heal the wound which it inflicts.

~~It~~ It cannot wash out the stain of the soul.

~~It~~ It cannot undo the past.

~~It~~ It cannot cover up the transgressions, for its business is not to cover up but to uncover.

~~Hence~~ Hence it is that we all need the great mercy of God in Christ, whose blood cleanseth us from all sin.

~~Christ~~ Christ alone can say to the conscience, "Be still."

*20* Come, then, to the foot of the cross--the cross where Paul, who persecuted Christ, found peace.

## Conscience...17

*PA* Where Peter, who denied Him, found peace;

*PA* And where the thief who reviled Him  
found peace.

"Though your sins be as scarlet, they  
shall be as white as snow."

ILL: Two men at Harringay.

One a pickpocket -- returns the  
pocketbook.

III. YOU CAN HAVE A GOOD CONSCIENCE.

Paul said in Acts 23:1 --

"Brethren, I have lived in all  
good conscience before God until  
this day."

~~Conscience~~ Conscience is not infallible in  
making a choice.

In fact, choosing is not the mission  
of conscience.



Conscience...18

Conscience merely tells us whether the choice which we make is according to our honest conviction. *Don't this relative.*

ILL: Cunard steamship thought it was within two hundred miles of Nantucket shores.

Suddenly the Lookout cried: "Land, Ho!"

They had miscalculated by 200 miles because a single nail driven before leaving Liverpool, by the carpenter in putting up a stove -- it had done its work steadily and surely upon the needle, and nearly hurled the ship into the rocks.

Conscience is the needle. Some secret sin is the nail.