

274. Avoid Sinning Against Conscience.

Sanctify the Lord God In your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear, having a good conscience.
1 Pet. 3,15.16.

Always be conscientious! Do what your conscience, taught by God's Word, approves of. Cultivate conscience, and it will learn to respond instantly. It will become a faithful monitor, and if you have been instructed in the truth and continually hear it, you will know at all times what to do – and do it. You cannot remain a moral being and act against your conscience. If, for example, you know that you ought to do more for the Church, but you put down that feeling by vain excuses, or if you refuse to separate from the world, – you know these things, you have heard them time and again, – then you stifle your conscience. What are you therefore? A moral wreck!

When a man who is not a Christian acts against his conscience he does not actually lose a good conscience, because he had none before; he only loads his conscience with still greater guilt; but when Christians act against their conscience, their good conscience is gone, their faith has been wrecked. They know it is wrong not to obey the voice of their Scripture-taught conscience; it has often been told them. Their conscience reproves them, too, but they always put it down. In consequence of this the voice of their conscience becomes feebler and feebler and finally is quieted altogether, and the poor unfortunate souls think they have a good conscience because the preaching no longer hurts them. The apostle admonishes all Christians to have a *good* conscience. A good conscience is one that is in true working order, voicing approval of whatever is done in the Lord. To sin against conscience is to stifle the voice of conscience. Here sins of weakness are not included, that is to say, when a man is overtaken in a fault. A man may grow angry before conscience can even raise its warning voice, and that is not putting away conscience. If an evil thought or desire arises in you and you put that evil lust down, that is heeding the voice of conscience; but if you are about to use profane language and the voice within you says, It is sin, and you nevertheless do it, then you stifle the voice of conscience. Spots in the conscience are troublesome things. They can be washed away only by the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Prayer.

O holy Trinity, Thou hast kindled a new life within me. Let not, I pray Thee, any of my future days be marred by mortal sin. Grant patience in sufferings and trials. Comfort me in every misfortune and distress. Daily grant me, I beseech Thee, forgiveness of sins and a steadfast faith that I may serve Thee unto the end with a good conscience. Let me never sin against my conscience, make shipwreck of faith, and cease to be a Christian. Amen.

O God, Thou faithful God.
Thou Fount that ever flowest,
Without whom nothing is,
Who all good gifts bestowest–

A pure and healthy frame
O give me, and within
A conscience free from blame.
A soul unhurt by sin.

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