

If the conscience is not good, the Holy Spirit is grieved, and some, having put it away, have even made shipwreck concerning faith. If a child has offended his father, he is no more at ease before him, and cannot open his heart.

In the history of Paul we see his conversion in verses 3-16. Then he is in a trance or ecstasy (vs. 17-21), in which the Lord commands him to depart from Jerusalem. It is for Him to regulate these things. Paul in his answer says to the Lord that he is precisely the man suited to bear witness for Him at Jerusalem. I have persecuted Thee, and they know it ; will they not see in me the efficacy of Thy grace? Such was the reasoning of Paul. But the Lord takes no account of it.

That which strikes one most is that Paul recalls to the Lord all his iniquity ; and this, because his conscience was perfectly purged before God. It is necessary that it should be thus if one would dare to speak to God in detail of all our offences, of all our sins. There is a false repose in a child of God when the conscience is not perfectly good and opened out before God. Paul replaces before the eyes of the Lord all the detail of his sin. He does not confine himself to saying, Thou knowest all ; he puts all before God, without having the idea that anything can be imputed to him. He talks about his sins as of an affair irrevocably settled. He can even present these sins as being a motive for an apostle, for bearing testimony to Jesus in Jerusalem. Paul reasons with the Lord as a person with his intim-