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CONSCIENCE.

Some have speculated about conscience. We take it to be the "mind of man having a particular reference to its own actions in censuring or approving them,"—or as it may be otherwise stated, "the testimony and secret judgment of the soul, which gives its approbations to actions that it thinks good, or reproaches itself with those that it believes to be evil." Among true christians there is no difference of opinion as to the existence of this monitor in the soul of man. Set there as a great preacher, its sermons are powerful, commanding attention so that it is often hard to sleep under the solemn appeals that are uttered, and forcing unwilling hearers to listen. Practical subjects are pre-eminently handled; the events of life are reviewed in this court, and sentences are carried out, for the executioner is at hand.

Conscience may be good or evil. In some respects, the operations of a man's conscience, even before he is truly converted, may be called good. When there are workings within which may issue in conversion. If a man has no sense of sin, he feels no danger nigh. Conscience however may be called into action, and from an event in providence, or some text of scripture, so press home a sense of sin on the attention, as to bring to true repentance. This is beyond question when the Divine Spirit is at work with the conscience. "The Spirit convinceth of the *fact* of sin, that we have done so and so; of the *fault* of sin, that we have done ill in doing so; of the *folly* of sin, that we have acted against right reason, and our true interests; of the *filth* of sin, that by it we are become odious to God; of the *fountain* of sin, the corrupt nature; and lastly, of the *fruit* of sin, that the end thereof is death." There are operations of conscience which may be viewed as good, but which are not to be trusted in as involving necessarily the salvation of the soul. It is a preparatory part of conversion, not the end. Care should therefore exist, lest an individual rests satisfied with the beginning of religious feeling, concluding that all is well with him, for his conscience has been troubled on account of sin. It is a voice of warning, urging to flight from the wrath to come; but for safety, shelter must be found in Jesus the deliverer. A conscience checking and condemning leads to enquiry. On the day of Pentecost, the multitude when pricked in their hearts, cried out, "What must we do?" Alas then, that any should tarry on the threshold and fail to press into the temple of truth, since they are content to linger, because they were once concerned about their eternal interests.

There are "sparks of celestial fire," which slumber amid the ashes of our ruined nature. The darkness that fell on the soul of Adam by transgression, was rendered visible by that light, and hence the confession, "I was afraid: