The Conscience
John Wycliffe
(1326-1384)
Jan Hus (John Huss)
(1369-1415)
Martin Luther
(1483-1546)
What is the conscience?
James 4:17

“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”
οιδα (oida) = I saw
γινωσκω (ginosko) = I know
What is this?

The *blind* man answers, “I don’t know”. The *seeing* man answers, “It is a scalpel”.

οιδα (oida) expresses a knowledge dependent upon sight or experience

γινωσκω (ginosko) expresses a knowledge which can be gained simply by the mind or the other senses
“conscience”

συνειδησία (suneidesis)

συν (sun) = together

+ 

ειδησία (eidesis) = sight

putting things together mentally, *i.e.*, understanding; implying a familiarity with the thing known.
“idol”
ειδωλον (eidolon)
lit. that which is seen
“image”

εἰκών (eikon)

lit. structure; i.e., image or form; whence we derive our Eng. word “icon”
Thus the word conscience denotes a knowledge, not based upon theory, but upon experience.

Therefore the word “conscience” is founded, not upon one’s opinion, but, upon one’s experience.
It is a gift
John 14:26; 16:7-8

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”
Genesis 2:7

“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”
Diverse Consciences
“good conscience” 6 times
“pure conscience” 2 times
“weak conscience” 1 time
“evil conscience” 1 time
“seared conscience” 1 time
“defiled conscience” 1 time
1 Corinthians 8:7, 10, 12

“... weak conscience, ...”

“weak” ασθενεω (astheneo) = sick, diseased
1 Corinthians 8:6-7a

“But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge . . .”
How do we get an “evil conscience”?
1 Corinthians 8:6-7

“But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.”
1 Timothy 4:1-2

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.”

“seared” = unfeeling, calloused, desensitized
Titus 1:15

“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.”
How do we get a “good conscience”? 
1 Timothy 1:5

“Now the end [Grk. goal, purpose] of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.”
Hebrews 9:14; 10:2

“How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”

“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 Timothy 3:9
“Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure 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 water.”
Closing Thought
“Sketches from the Life of Paul,” p. 252.1

God would have his people prepared for the soon-coming crisis. Prepared or unprepared, we must all meet it. Only those whose characters are thoroughly disciplined to meet the divine standard will be able to stand firm in that testing time. But when enemies shall be on every side, watching them for evil, the God of Heaven will be watching his precious jewels for good.
“Sketches from the Life of Paul,” p. 252.1

When secular rulers unite with the ministers of religion to come between God and our conscience, then those who cherish the fear of God will be revealed. When the darkness is deepest, then the light of a noble, Godlike character will shine the brightest. When every other trust fails, then it will be seen who have an abiding trust in God.
The stronger and purer the faith of God’s people, and the firmer their determination to obey him, the more will Satan stir up the rage of those who claim to be righteous, while they trample upon the law of God. In that coming emergency, rulers and magistrates will not interpose in behalf of God’s people.
“Sketches from the Life of Paul,” p. 252.1

There will be a corrupt harmony with all who have not been obedient to the law of God. In that day, all time-servers, all who have not the genuine work of grace in the heart, will be found wanting. It will require the firmest trust, the most heroic purpose, to hold fast the faith once delivered to the saints.
Acts 24:14-16

“But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: and have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.”
John 8:32

“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”
The End