

# Conscience

By Robert Turner

Conscience reveals what each man believes he "ought" to be (**Acts 23:1, 24; 24:16; 26:9-11**). It is indicative of his inward feeling of moral right, of the noble ideal for which he feels he should strive. It is his prod toward his conception of moral heights, and his brakes against doing what he believes is wrong. Conscience is not the ultimate standard of truth, for that must come from God via revelation; but conscience toward God tells the individual's attitude toward God. That is why man must do what he truly believes God wants him to do (**Rom. 14**).

While one is trying to do what he believes God wants him to do, (1) he may have an erroneous concept of what God desires (that was the case of Saul, in persecuting Christians), or, (2) he may, through weakness of the flesh, act contrary to his good intentions (**Rom. 7:22-f**). In this case, he is made miserable by his conscience -- is humbled before God, and appreciative of forgiveness in Christ. We are all imperfect creatures, and should, at times, feel these pangs.

But what of those who take part in, condone, and sup-

port that which is contrary to God's word, or without any divine authority?

They may know no better, and be acting in good conscience before God. In this case, further information from God's word is most welcomed. Because they truly want to do His will, they gladly open their Bible, investigate, and change their conduct to fit the evidence. In this way they maintain a good conscience before God (**I Pet. 3:21**).

Sadly, however, we must acknowledge that there are those who have no such noble character (**Acts 17:11**). They are angered if their practice is questioned. They love the praise of men more than the praise of God (**Jn. 12:42-43**). If their conscience toward God continues to function, they lead a miserable life, fighting with themselves, overwhelmed with feelings of guilt. Undesirable -- yes, but there is yet hope while the battle rages. How terribly sad to see some whose conscience is seared (**I Tim. 4:2**), and who can reject God without a qualm.

<b>Sunday 5:15</b> Kid's Class at the Building	<b>Sunday Night</b> College Devotion and Singing at Stephen Smith's	<b>Monday 7 PM</b> Ladies' "James" Class at the Hannah Alexander's	<b>Tuesday 8 PM</b> "Truth Seekers" at Student Center - Room 2310	<b>Thursday 10 AM</b> Ladies' "Proverbs" Class at the Laura Weldon's
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Sick			
Joey Stephens (Anna Stalling's Uncle)	Scott Penrod (Mary Ann Robert's stepfather)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Jeffery Miller (Friend of Walker Davis)
Emma Hettinger (William Herd's Mother)	Neal May (Manna Jones' Mother)	Roger Whatley (Daphne Whatley's son)	Andrew Hagewood (Friend of Sarah Norman)
Pat Webb (Friend of Jared Johnson)	Quinton Addison (April Jenkins Grandfather)	Diane Hudson (Josh Hudson's grandmother)	Arline Harkrider (Nichole Pender's Grandmother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	Emily Stallings (Anna's sister)	Madi Wise (Friend of the Robert's)
Marty Meeks, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Frances Fultz (Davis Fultz's grandmother)	Judy Nichols (Suzanne's Mother)	Owen Mauldin (Seth and Summer Mauldin's Son)

December Birthdays
1 - Holly Allamel
2 - Debbi Coleman
3 - Darla Hahn
6 - Lauren Ledford
6 - Troy Godwin
7 - Amy Godwin
7 - Leah Donahue
8 - Ashley Miller
11 - Davis Fultz
11 - Andrew Hahn
13 - Toni Herd
13 - Emerson Daniels
13 - Dylan Bartlett
15 - Rafia Qadeer
16 - Nichole Pender
20 - Andrew Smith
20 - Craig Bassett
23 - Mary Ann Roberts
24 - John Burns
25 - Silas Weldon
25 - Olivia Winslett
27 - Scott Fowler
28 - Will Harris
29 - Tyson Dembowski
30 - David Simpson

### News and Notes

☒ - There will be a OSH workshop for all ladies at the building next Sunday at 2.

☒ - There will be a meeting at the SE church in Montgomery with Tommy Holley November 8-11

☒ - Tonight we will appoint new deacons!

☒ - Tonight David Maxson will preach and then lead the college devotional!

☒ - We encourage all visitors to please fill out a visitors' card!

☒ - Audio CD's will be available in the foyer immediately after each service! Pass these out freely.

# The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (**Matthew 5:16**)

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### Thoughts to Ponder

I do not ask to walk smooth paths Nor bear an easy load, I pray for strength and fortitude To climb the rock-strewn road. Give me such courage I can scale The hardest peaks alone, And transform every stumbling block Into a stepping-stone.

**Elders**  
Walker Davis  
(334) 703-0050  
Larry Rouse  
(334) 734-2133

### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class .....9:30 AM  
Worship .....10:20 AM  
Evening Worship ..... 6:00 PM

**Wednesday**  
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

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Larry Rouse  
Evangelist and Editor

## Either/Or and Faith Only

By P. J. Casebolt

God made man a creature of choice, with the ability or power to choose, and for good or bad, to accept the consequences of his choice. In his dealings with man, there are times when God uses the either/or principle, and gives man only one choice that is right and good. At other times, man may be given more than one choice, either or all of which may be acceptable. But man often invokes this either/or principle when there is no need for it, and to his own destruction.

The doctrine of justification by faith only is a good example of this either/or principle. God has decreed that man is justified by faith and works, but man has decided that he must choose between faith and works. Martin Luther made this mistake, and ended up rejecting the Book of James as "spurious" because it contradicted his conclusion that works had nothing to do with salvation.

The Methodist Discipline states that "we are justified by faith only" (Art. IX). The Baptist Manual says that "the salvation of sinners is wholly by grace" (Art. IV), yet says that justification is "solely through faith in Christ" (Art. V). God saves man by

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grace, faith, repentance, confession, baptism, works - a combination of God's grace and man's obedience, but man decides that salvation must be by faith only or grace only, contradicts himself, confuses people, frustrates the grace of God, and deprives himself of the salvation which God offers.

God invoked the either/or principle with the first of the Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (**Ex. 20:3**). Joshua exhorted the people to make this

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choice (**Josh. 24:15**), and Elijah said, "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him" (**1 Ki. 18:21**). Jesus says, "No man can serve two masters ... ye cannot serve God and mammon" (**Mt. 6:24**). The Lord told the Laodiceans, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (**Rev. 3:15, 16**).

The hypocritical scribes and Pharisees were practicing the either/or principle when they paid tithes, but "omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (**Mt. 23:23**). There is no limit to the number of things we can do under the heading of "the fruit of the Spirit." We will have to use the either/or principle when it comes to the works of the flesh or the fruit of the Spirit, but we can practice "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (**Gal. 5:16-23**).

When God has limited us, we need to abide within the bounds of that limitation. The Israelites were taught to circumcise their male children "on the eighth day" (**Lev. 12:3**), not the seventh or ninth day. Naaman was commanded to dip "seven times" in the Jordan River (**2 Ki. 5:10**), not six or eight times. Yet, when Elisha told Joash to "smite upon the ground" with the arrows, the king "smote thrice, and stayed. And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldst have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice" (**2 Ki. 13:18, 19**).

Some brethren misapply the either/or principle. They tell us that "it is better to do something wrong than to do nothing," implying that we must make one of only two choices: do nothing, or do something wrong. They ignore a third choice: do something, but do it right. And by following the scriptures, we will be "thoroughly furnished unto

all good works" (**2 Tim. 3:16, 17**). Paul condemned the idea of "let us do evil that good may come" (**Rom. 3:8**). We need to refrain from that practice, and reprove those who teach or practice such.

Some have insisted that we must believe that Jesus was either human or divine while on earth, but that we cannot believe both, or else our secular education in mathematics and spiritual knowledge becomes suspect. Now, some are conceding that Jesus was both fully God and fully man, and to this the scriptures agree: he was of the seed of David according to the flesh, but at the same time he was "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (**Mt. 1:23**).

In order to satisfy the doctrines of men, the premillennialist and others have invoked the either/or principle with respect to Christ and the church, and the church and the kingdom. Some say that salvation is in Christ, but not in the church, yet the Bible says that "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (**Acts 2:47**). Christ purchased the church with his blood (**Acts 20:28**), "he is the savior of the body" (**Eph. 5:23**), God's wisdom is made known through Christ and the church (**Eph. 3:10, 11**), and God is glorified through Christ and the church (**Eph. 3:21**).

Neither do we have to choose between the church and the kingdom as separate entities established at different times with separate identities, for the same terms are used interchangeably in the scriptures (**Mt. 16:18, 19; Col. 1:13, 18; Heb. 12:23, 28**). The term kingdom is simply one of several metaphors (house of God, flock/fold, body, etc.), by which God's called-out people (the church) are designated.

Bible language is not confusing when the principle of either/or is discussed. The matter only becomes characterized by confusion and strife when man is not content to abide by the ways and thoughts of God (**Isa. 55:8, 9**), and when man is guilty of "intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind..." (**Col. 2:18**). If God invokes the either/or principle, let us abide by it; if he does not, let us not bind it upon ourselves or on others.



## Oh Boy! It's Allowed!

By Bill Hall

Older Christians ought to be constantly aware that they are being watched, watched by newer converts who are looking to them for examples. Part of the teaching those new converts are receiving is coming from the pulpit; the other part is coming from the lives of the other Christians around them.

How many times have new converts received sound instructions concerning the life of a Christian, only to have the instructions nullified by the example of older members? A brother in Canada recently told me of his first trip south after his conversion. Struggling to overcome his tobacco habit--because he had been taught that he ought to do so--he watched with delight as the men of the "down south" congregation went out between Bible study and worship to enjoy their cigarettes. "O boy!" was his immediate reaction; "It's allowed!"

The same thing happens in other areas of teaching. "Attend every service," new converts are told, and sound reasons are given to back such instructions. But Brother Smith only attends the 11:00 o'clock service, and he is accepted as a faithful member. "One service a week must be sufficient," they say to themselves. "O boy! It's allowed!"

"Study your Bible daily, and prepare beforehand for every Bible class," they are wisely told. But they see little evidence of Bible study on the part of others, and some of the comments in Bible classes definitely betray a lack of preparation. "Ignorance of God's word must not be too bad," they conclude. "O boy! It's allowed!"

"Modesty of dress is essential for Christians," they hear repeatedly. But then they hear of mixed swimming among the members and see Sister Jones wearing the tightest pants in town. "O boy!" they think; "It's allowed!"

Older Christians ought to be constantly aware that they are being watched, watched by newer converts who are looking to them for examples. Part of the teaching those new converts are receiving is coming from the pulpit; the other part is coming from the lives of the other Christians around them.

What are they seeing? What are they learning? How so-

bering to think that some new convert might have been discouraged and led astray by something he saw in my life! Let each live in every aspect of his life so as to be able to say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (**1 Cor. 11:1**).

Newer converts, though, must learn that God's word is the standard of authority, not the conduct of other Christians. Loyalty in a kingdom is determined by loyalty to the king rather than to the subjects of the king. It is to Him that one pledges his allegiance when he becomes a Christian, and he must be faithful to Him whatever others around him may do or fail to do.

One's "O boy! It's allowed!" then must be limited to those things which God allows in His Word. But even then he would anticipate a certain reserve in one's expression, for the true Christian's greatest delight is not in some activity that just happens to be "allowed," but in serving the Lord. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is Life and peace" (**Romans 8:6**).

