THE BIBLE AS SOURCE OF MORAL WISDOM

Pauline Inspirations for the Theological and Ethical Discourse on Conscience Today

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A theological analysis of a biblical text calls for the employment of proper modern methods of historical-critical exegesis and biblical theology. It does not follow, however, that only professional exegetes and Bible scholars are entitled to take on such a task. After all, the Bible is the source of inspiration for all theological disciplines, including moral theology, represented by the author of this article.

The objective of the article is to examine those passages from the letters of Saint Paul about conscience that can be utilized in the moral and theological discourse on conscience today. Of course, one has to analyze Paul's texts very carefully first, taking notice of their meaning and placement within other New Testament writings, and within the Bible at large. Conclusions from the analysis are treated in a thorough way in the context of contemporary theological and moral reflections on conscience.

Biblical Understanding of Conscience

The moral value of human acts was of great interest to biblical authors. It is apparent already in the oldest texts, where the problem of good versus evil is a recurring theme in various stories and admonitions. The idea of conscience, however, which is so central to Christian ethical reflections today, seems to have occupied the minds of the ancient authors much less than we would expect.

Most ancient writers did not know the *concept* of conscience. There is no Hebrew equivalent of the word in the Old Testament. The main reason for this was that the Old Testament writers entertained different anthropological convictions from their Greco-Roman, and later Hellenistic, counterparts, who were focused

on reason and self-awareness. Their reflection was radically theocentric, concentrated on the covenant with Yahweh and Yahweh's most important gift to Yahweh's people, which governed their lives and defined their entire moral universe: the Torah. Today, the idea of law invokes an image of a written codex, a rigid prescription of behavior. But for a faithful Israelite it was something vastly more than a code; it was one's "home," an environment where one breathed and was nourished, a signpost giving direction to the true life. Every member of God's chosen people was supposed to listen to the Torah attentively and be obedient to it. In doing so, everyone could be put in a direct relationship with the Creator. Thus the Torah, in a way, replaced the role of the conscience as the mediator.[1]

Nonetheless, the *phenomenon* of conscience was not entirely unknown. Many protagonists of the prehistoric biblical stories feel ashamed of the bad things they have done (Gen. 3:7), experience painful consequences of their sins (Gen. 42:21), are "repulsed" by the thought of having transgressed God's command (1 Sam. 42:6, 25:31), and feel anxiety for having done wrong (2 Sam. 24:10). Very important in this context is the concept of the heart (Hebr. *lēb*), which appears no less than 858 times.[2] Heart is the center of the person, where all dimensions of human existence are brought together. It is the source of the intellectual, emotional, and volitional spheres of the person. Modern readers of the Bible will probably relate the Old Testament phrases, describing the state of the human heart in the context of human acts, to the states of conscience. For instance, a hardened heart, a rebuking heart, a throbbing heart, a broken heart, and so on. It is evident also in the Septuagint, where phrases such as *katara kardia* (a pure heart) or *agathe kardia* (a good heart) seem to contain certain elements of the Hellenistic philosophy. The classical idea of conscience, *syneidēsis*, appears three times in the Septuagint (Wis. 17:10; Eccles. 10:20; Sir. 42:18), where it has a moral connotation, on the one hand, and indicates knowledge about a certain fact, on the other.[3] In classical Greek, the word *synoida* implied a shared knowledge, in the sense of possessing knowledge about something as an eyewitness to it, along with other witnesses, as well as a self-knowledge. Self-awareness of one's decisions and acts usually involves not only remembering—which is one of the faculties of the human spirit—but indicates the presence of a certain assessing element. It clearly implies a moral dimension.[4]

That out of the thirty places in the New Testament in which the term *syneidēsis* appears[5] it is fourteen times in the letters of Saint Paul (only in Rom. and 1 and 2 Cor.) clearly indicates that it was Paul who introduced it into the Christian theological reflection.[6] Because it makes an especially prominent appearance in the context of the disagreement in the First Letter to the Corinthians over eating meat sacrificed to idols, some scholars conclude that it must have existed in Corinth prior to Paul's arrival, who later only referred to it in his correspondence with the Corinthian community.[7] More likely, however, he borrowed it from the popular Hellenistic philosophy, because neither during the Corinthian dispute, nor on any

other occasions, did he consider it necessary to explain this concept to his readers, probably assuming their familiarity with it.[8]

Strangely enough, the term *syneidēsis* never once appears in the canonical Gospels, except for the later version of the story about the adulteress (John 8:9). Authors of many manuscripts introduce it to explain the motive of her accusers to drop the charge, after they had been challenged by Jesus to go ahead with the stoning on condition of their being absolutely convinced of their own sinlessness. They left the place of the would-be execution "accused by their conscience" (*hypo tēs syneidēseōs elegchomenoi*). This commentary, though thoroughly proper, does not appear in authoritative manuscripts. That is why it did not make its way into the canonical text.[9] It seems that it presupposes a more mature, later reflection on conscience.

Despite the absence of the concept of conscience in the Gospels, it would be difficult to deny that they describe experiences relating to conscience by invoking the classical (also for the Old Testament) idea of the heart (*kardia*). For the authors of the synoptic Gospels, it concerns not only emotions, but thoughts and motives, too. Jesus blesses the pure in heart (Matt. 5:8, 6:21) because only they are able to experience God's presence. At the same time, he warns that heart may be a source of serious sins and may lead to constraining oneself to worldly affairs and away from God (Mark 7:21).[10] Jesus' description of the human heart growing coarse (*sklero-kardia*), known already in the Septuagint, is a warning that one can become so used to the rejection of God's inspirations that he is no longer able to tell good from wrong (Matt. 13:15, 19:1–9). Protagonists of Jesus' stories experience states that today are classified as the voices of conscience. The prodigal son comes to his senses so that he can return to his father, even if initially his motives were influenced by considerations of personal advantage (Luke 15:17).

The concept of conscience was also used in some later New Testament texts, when the expected Second Coming did not materialize and Christians needed clear norms of behavior in the pagan world. In the Acts of the Apostles, it appears in the speeches of Saint Paul, when he argues for his honesty (Acts 23:1, 24:16). In the pastoral letters it is usually clarified by an adjective (1 Tim. 1:19; 2 Tim. 1:3; Titus 1:15; 1 Pet. 3:16). It can be good and clean, or bad and stained.[11] In the Letter to the Hebrews, conscience is strictly connected to the cult and faith. Only the one whose conscience has been purified from dead actions by the blood of Christ is able to render a proper homage to God (Heb. 9:14, 13:18). In his polemics with the cult practices of the Old Covenant, the author of the letter states that: "None of the gifts and sacrifices offered under these regulations can possibly bring any worshipper to perfection in his conscience" (Heb. 9:9). Only the knowledge of Christ's sacrifice enables the faithful to approach God, sincere in heart and filled with faith, their hearts "free from any trace of bad conscience [*apo syneidēseōs ponēras*]" and their bodies "washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:22).

All these subtle shades of meaning in the texts of the New Testament differ from Paul's understanding of *syneidēsis*, which is chronologically first.

References to Conscience in the Letters of Saint Paul

Even though the concept of conscience does not occupy a central place in Paul's anthropology, it can nevertheless be safely said that he inherited it from popular Hellenistic ethics and molded it into an unmistakably Christian one. Conscience, besides allowing its owner an access to a shared knowledge (about an event or state, along with others), enables one to recognize the moral value of one's own acts.

"The secrets of human hearts" (Rom. 2:16)

Paul connects the inner workings and decisions of conscience with the depths of a person's innermost being, unknown to all others (*ta krypta tōn anthrōpōn*), which will be revealed and ultimately judged by God (Rom. 2:16). This is the key passage in Paul's thought on conscience, because it brings together the above-mentioned biblical concepts about the human's moral actions and anthropological terms originating in popular Hellenistic philosophy: law, nature, heart, thoughts, and conscience. Exegetes maintain that one cannot recognize in it a fully developed concept of conscience, or a theology of the natural law. They argue that it should be viewed in the context of the leading theme of this particular part of the letter, that is, the dispute over the salvific value of the Torah. Some even think that Paul did not mean all pagans in general, but only those who fulfill the demands of the Torah.[12] But it would be hard to deny that Paul describes a phenomenon that concerns all, not only believers. He does it using the terms known to Hellenistic philosophy.[13] Pagans too invoke the "voice" of conscience in their struggles to reach good decisions. Conscience is connected with "various considerations [*logismoi*], some of which accuse them, while others provide them with a defense" (Rom. 2:15b).[14] In this way, conscience participates in bearing witness (*symmartyrein*) to a person's deeds; it is incorruptible; it can discover and reveal the moral truth about one's good or evil deeds (what Paul calls: "the secrets of human hearts"), whether one wishes it or not. It works in this way: it enables a person to make a correct assessment of any given situation, on the one hand, and informs one about the requirements of the Torah, on the other, the content of which is engraved on all human hearts, including those of the pagans. Paul supports his reasoning with a well-known Greco-Roman ethical premise that human-made law (*thesis*) should comply with certain unalterable norms, engraved on human nature (*physis*).[15] The knowledge of the requirements of the Torah, according to Paul, is invoked precisely by conscience, which then applies it to a concrete situation.[16]

The connection between the workings of conscience and cognitive processes (*logismoi*) is not a mere logical statement of facts. Knowing right from wrong urges one to act according to that knowledge.[17] Paul appeals to testifying qualities of conscience again in Romans 8:16 and in 9:1, where he employs it in defense of his truthfulness. He is proud of his conscientious conviction, which, like an impartial judge, confirms his words (2 Cor. 1:12). The universal applicability of conscience is demonstrated in Paul's appeal to the judgment of consciences of other members

of community (cf. 2 Cor. 5:11) and his readiness to commend himself to "every human being with a conscience" (2 Cor. 4:12).[18]

Generally speaking, conscience reacts to what has already been done. Classical moral theology calls it *conscientia consequens*. In this, Paul faithfully renders the then-popular meaning of conscience in Hellenistic moral philosophy, where he actually borrowed it from in the first place. Nevertheless, it seems that he expands it toward *conscientia antecedens*, that is, anticipative-predictive capabilities of conscience, which binds and urges future acts.[19] Conscience ought to be a guarantor of Christians' loyalty to the rightfully established authorities. This admonition refers also to future attitudes toward the state (cf. Rom. 13:5–6).[20]

"Conscience in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 9:1)

Notwithstanding the universal applicability of conscience, Paul never doubts that the decisive factor for its proper performance is the faith. Even though he did not elaborate on it as much as many authors after him, he clearly did have it in mind. When he invokes his conscience, he is fully aware of its close association with the Holy Spirit (Rom. 9:1). Only the connection of *syneidēsis* with *pneuma hagion* provides conscience with ultimate credibility.[21]

The admonition that "every action which does not spring from faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23), which sounds like a generalized moral rule, should be viewed in this context. Though Paul does not use the concept of conscience here, that is what he means. In the later exegesis of the Letter to the Romans, this sentence evolved into a maxim according to which every action contrary to the firm judgment of conscience is sin. The fact that Paul uses here the word *pistis* indicates that he does not mean a strong conviction in general, but a conviction grounded in faith, cleansed by faith and ensured by faith. In order to arrive at such a conviction, Paul insists on the need to examine oneself (*dokimazein* or *peirazein*), that is, in the modern parlance, examination of conscience (Gal. 6:4; 2 Cor. 13:5). He makes it clear that the aim of such an examination is to see if one remains steadfast in faith.[22]

Though Paul lays great stress on the theological aspects of conscience, he is clear that it is not simply "God's voice" in us. He is remarkably realistic about the potential influence of external factors on concrete judgments of conscience. Despite its testifying qualities, conscience is not the highest court of justice. This prerogative belongs to God alone, when all will be revealed: "It is true that my conscience does not reproach me, but that is not enough to justify me. It is the Lord who is my judge" (1 Cor. 4:4). Paul seems to perceive here a very important truth, which the theology of later centuries will develop into the concept of the misguided conscience.

"For conscience's sake" (1 Cor. 10:25; Rom. 13:5)

The phrase *dia tēn syneidēsin* has no equivalent in other texts of the New Testament. Paul, however, uses it on several occasions in—as it seems—a fixed form. It usually refers to the relationship between believers within community, as well as

their attitude toward nonbelievers—for instance, civil authorities. It stands for a general sense of moral responsibility for one's actions. Paul encourages his listeners to stay loyal to the state authority, which comes from God and, if it is just, rewards the good and punishes the wicked on behalf of God (Rom. 13:1–4). They must be obedient to it not only because of fear of punishment, but also for conscience's sake, that is, out of a sense of responsibility. The term "for conscience's sake" denotes not only an external obedience, but also an internal obligation. Remarkably, conscience judges not only the deeds done, but anticipates future, everyday activities like paying taxes.[23]

The term *dia tēn syneidēsin* occupies a special place in the context of the disagreement over eating meat sacrificed to idols (1 Cor. 8:7–13, 10:23–30). Paul expands his array of adjectives by saying that conscience can be "weak" or "strong." The "strong ones" are those Corinthians who, acting on their knowledge (*gnōsis*) grounded in faith, are convinced that the gods, whom the sacrifice has been offered to, do not exist; therefore, they think that they are allowed (they possess *exousia*) to eat the food offered to them, whether found in a market or distributed at a banquet. The "weak ones" are those who are afraid that eating such food amounts to idolatry. Perhaps they are driven by fear of the pagan cults in which they may have participated.[24]

On the one hand, Paul takes the side of the "strong ones." The witness of their own conscience is enough; they should follow it and the rest of the community should not condemn them (1 Cor. 10:29). But the witness of the conscience of the "weak ones" is also binding on them, even if unaware that it is misguided. Acting against it would be sinful (1 Cor. 8:7, 10:12). Paul qualifies his advice with a serious admonition that the solution to this conflict should be governed by sibling love. Love must overrule everything, even one's rights derived from his or her freedom in Christ, lest they cause their sibling's downfall. The "strong ones" should be guided more by sibling love (*agapē*) than their knowledge (*gnōsis*) grounded in faith. If one hurts one's sibling in the name of the freedom of one's conscience, that one sins against Christ himself (1 Cor. 8:12).[25]

Inspirations for Modern Theological and Moral Reflections

Two thousand years after Saint Paul, readers of his letters may have a hard time deciphering his message about conscience, as they attach quite a different importance to it than he did. For one thing, the concept of conscience was never at the foreground of Paul's teaching on morality, whereas today it occupies quite a central place in moral theology. Development and better understanding of the concept of conscience, especially during the process of greater recognition of the autonomy of the subject, triggered by the Enlightenment, justified appeals to individual conscience as expressions of personal and inalienable moral responsibility. It also made it synonymous with personal independence. Totalitarian systems in the twentieth century demonstrated that nobody can shed or reduce personal responsibility

for one's acts. Modern democracies respect it, too. However, demands of respect for the judgments of individual conscience have, in fact, reduced its pronouncements to mere personal opinions and convictions, with no reference to objective moral values. If conscience is sometimes respected by society, it is rather as a personal fancy than anything else. Instead of a greater appreciation of the role of conscience, one can often hear it branded as a long, historical burden that should be discarded.

It seems that two particular elements of Paul's concept of conscience may significantly enhance and inspire various opinions on the matter within contemporary moral theology.

Personal Relationship with Christ

The first of these is a close connection between conscience and faith. Even though Paul admits that unbelievers too enjoy the capability to know the moral law in their conscience, he never wavers from his conviction that the content of that moral law is God's Law: the Torah. If one wanted to refer modern moral concepts of conscience to that of Paul, he would certainly have to describe it as the theonomic one. Neither the concept of ideal autonomy, nor that of social heteronomy, does full justice to the Christian vision of conscience. Though Paul stresses the universal nature of conscience, his letters do not lend support to the view that conscience can be appealed to as the highest judging authority, independent of faith.[26] Conscience is the unquestioned center of the person; it is the person's "heart," where one is confronted with the truth about one's outward deeds and hidden motives and intents.[27] Hence, if one acts against the clear judgment of one's conscience, one acts against one's own moral integrity. Having said that, however, it must be remembered that conscience is not infallible. It is an extremely sensitive property of the human spirit, which must be nourished and developed. For the Christian, the key element in this development is one's faith in Christ and relationship with him. Only as the person redeemed is one able to accept the requirements of the Torah in full, just as Jesus explained them in his ultimate, messianic interpretations of God's commandments (cf. Matt. 5:17–20). In this sense, conscience remains the obligatory norm of conduct for Christians.

Faith nourishes good deeds and influences moral obligations. It relieves Christians of unnecessary burdens (cf. disagreement in Corinth over eating of meat sacrificed to idols) and sharpens their moral sensitivity "in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best" (Phil. 1:9–10). "Strong conscience"—to recall what has been said above—does not mean a liberal conscience, but one enlightened by faith. Using the dispute over eating sacrificial food as an example, Paul demonstrates a strict connection between conscience and knowledge grounded in faith, and between conscience and a sense of responsibility before God for one's conduct toward one's neighbors.[28] Paul illustrates this new, faith-based sensitivity with a criticism of the popular Corinthian saying "Everything is permissible" (*panta exestin*). Paul advises his readers that instead of using

this as an excuse for indulging in their old vices, they better discern whether what is permissible builds other people up and does not bring about their spiritual enslavement (cf. 1 Cor. 6:12, 10:23).[29]

The criterion of the living faith constitutes a significant supplement to the contemporary concept of autonomous conscience. It challenges this particular interpretation of moral autonomy that grants it total freedom from all external instructions and neglects the need for self-improvement. Christian morality is not dramatically different from the universal sense of morality. But the mere universality of the models of behavior cannot be hailed as the moral norm until tried by the requirements of the Gospel. It is telling that in many important spheres of life today one can hardly discern any difference between Christians and non-Christians. Of course, one can assume—optimistically—that universally used moral norms and evaluations comply with the Gospel standards. Another, more likely explanation is that Christians have already uncritically accepted and internalized moral standards that are alien to the Gospel; perhaps their consciences have grown so accustomed to making various accommodations that they no longer see any discrepancy between their behavior and the requirements of the Gospel.

The Role of the Ecclesial Community

Although Paul says that faith, as a close, intimate relationship with Christ, is a very *personal* matter, he nevertheless makes it crystal clear that it is not a *private* matter. It is not a *private* faith, but faith in the community of believers. Paul knows that there are such things as personal inspirations, and knowledge of one's own motives, and one's own spirituality; he knows that they manifest themselves precisely in one's own conscience and enable each one to formulate one's own opinions (cf. 1 Cor. 10:29). But he also knows that there is such a thing as *typos didachēs* (cf. Rom. 6:17), the form of teaching, providing a pattern of conduct in accordance with the faith in the Good News about the liberating and transforming power of God. And he knows how to remind those who transgress it. He does so by recalling the very words of Jesus on a given subject (if he knows them), whose authority is unquestionable and beyond dispute (e.g., on divorce: 1 Cor. 7:10), or referring to his own apostolic authority, by virtue of which he can prescribe and appeal to the consciences of the believers (1 Cor. 7:25).

It does not mean a heteronomy, in the sense of a total obedience to an external court. It rather means that one must seek God's will always. The possibility of going astray means that no decision of individual conscience may be accepted as "self-sufficient, absolute, or definitive" (cf. 1 Cor. 4:4).[30] The importance of conscience's capacities for making critical assessments and issuing recommendations in no way diminishes God's commandments, or the importance of the community of believers.

Today, in the midst of ethical individualism, consultation with the ecclesial context—to which, according to Catholic moral theology, belongs the entire

tradition and the teaching authority of the Church—is very important. Processes of globalization in the world lead to a globalization of morality too, and a wide dissemination of certain moral standards. Christians should not withdraw to their own communities and separate themselves from external influences. God acts outside the visible church too. Common moral awareness and common moral standards may become a sort of *locus theologicus* for Christian ethical reflection. Nevertheless, the primary and fundamental environment of the believers is the community of people living out their faith. Only there can Christians know for sure if the urgings of their consciences agree with the requirements of the Gospel. Only there can they learn how to respect the personal, conscientious responsibility of others. Paul's insistence on the role of the community in the search for answers to moral challenges is extremely relevant even today.[31]

Notes

1. Eberhard Schockenhoff, *Wie gewiss ist das Gewissen? Eine ethische Orientierung* (Freiburg: Herder, 2003), 73–76.

2. Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropologie des Alten Testament*, 6th ed. (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1994), 68.

3. Cf. H. Ch. Hahn and Martin Karrer, "Gewissen," in *Theologisches Begriffslexikon zum Neuen Testament*, ed. Lothar Coenen and Klaus Haacker (Wuppertal: Neukirchen, 1997), 1:775; S. Szymik, "Starotestamentowe: Judaistyczne i grecko-rzymskie pojęcie sumienia," *Forum Teologiczne* 15 (2014): 8–12.

4. Cf. Hahn and Karrer, "Gewissen," 774.

5. The verb *synoida* appears in the New Testament only two times (1 Cor. 4:4; Acts 5:2). The term *syneidos* does not appear at all. Cf. H. Ch. Hahn, M. Karrer, "Gewissen," 775.

6. G. Lüdemann, "Syneidesis," in *Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, ed. Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, vol. 3, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992), 721.

7. Michael Wolter, "Gewissen II: Neues Testament," in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie: Studienausgabe*, part 1 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1993), 214.

8. Ceslas Spicq, "Gewissen," in *Bibeltheologisches Wörterbuch*, ed. J. B. Bauer (Graz: Styria, 1962), 509–10. For more examples of *syneidēsis* in the non-Christian ancient literature see Gerhard Pfeiffer, *Das Gewissen in geistesgeschichtlicher Sicht* (Daader: Saarbrücken, 1990), 9–11.

9. Cf. Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel according to Saint John* (London: Continuum, 2005), 533. Cf. Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Das Johannesevangelium* (Freiburg: Herder, 1971), 2:230.

10. Volker Stolle, "Herz," in *Theologisches Begriffslexikon zum Neuen Testament*, ed. Lothar Coenen and Klaus Haacker, 1:950–51.

11. G. Lüdemann, "Syneidesis," col. 724. Cf. Wolter, "Gewissen II: Neues Testament," 217.

12. Wolter, "Gewissen II: Neues Testament," 216.

13. Cf. Hans-Joachim Eckstein, *Der Begriff Syneidesis bei Paulus* (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1983), 156–58.

14. Cf. Walter Klaiber, *Der Römerbrief* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 2009), 38–39; Heinrich Schlier, *Der Römerbrief* (Freiburg: Herder, 1977), 79–80; Robert Jewett,

Romans (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 215–17. To some authors, the struggle between the thoughts accusing or defending is tantamount to the very mode of conscience's working (cf. Eduard Lohse, "Die Berufung auf das Gewissen in der paulinischen Ethik," in *Neues Testament und Ethik*, ed. Helmut Merklein [Freiburg: Herder, 1989], 212; Michael Wolter, *Der Brief an die Römer*, part 1 [Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 2014], 187). Other scholars understand it as an additional, confirming authority, along with the righteous deeds, demanded by the Law, and the witness of conscience (cf. Colin G. Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 132–33; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8* (Dallas: Word, 1988), 105.

15. Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, 4th ed. (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 2008), 133–35. For more on Paul's appeal to nature see also Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 135–36.

16. Cf. Hahn and Karrer, "Gewissen," 776.

17. Spicq, "Gewissen," 510.

18. Cf. Lohse, "Die Berufung auf das Gewissen," 213.

19. Spicq, "Gewissen," 510–11. For more on the relationship between *conscientia antecedens* and *conscientia consequens* in Paul's letters see Eckstein, *Der Begriff Syneidesis bei Paulus*, 172–73.

20. Margaret Thrall, "The Pauline Use of Syneidesis," *New Testament Studies* 14 (1967–68): 124.

21. Schockenhoff, "Wie gewiss ist das Gewissen?" 83; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 543–44.

22. The practice of daily examination of one's conduct was known to the popular Hellenistic ethics, as well as to Judaism influenced by it; the latter employed it as means of comparing one's conduct with the requirements of the Torah. Cf. Michael Theobald, *Römerbrief: Kapitel 1–11* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1992), 77–78.

23. Cf. Schockenhoff, "Wie gewiss ist das Gewissen?" 87–88.

24. Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010), 390–94; Lohse, "Die Berufung auf das Gewissen," 216.

25. Wolter, "Gewissen II: Neues Testament," 214–15.

26. Cf. Hahn and Karrer, "Gewissen," 776–77.

27. Cf. Theobald, *Römerbrief*, 58–60.

28. Cf. Schockenhoff, "Wie gewiss ist das Gewissen?" 88–89.

29. Hans-Josef Klauck, *1. Korintherbrief* (Wurzburg: Echter Verlag, 1984), 75–76; Lohse, "Die Berufung auf das Gewissen," 217.

30. Cf. Wolfgang Schrage, *Ethik des Neuen Testamentes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 185.

31. Ibid., 188. See also Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Die sittliche Botschaft des Neuen Testaments*, vol. 2: *Die urchristlichen Verkündiger* (Freiburg: Herder, 1988), 58.