

THE PARSON'S CORNER

By Rev. B. J. Minort, Pastor of the First Baptist Church, Alliance

Is Conscience a Safe Guide?

The above question has been asked me so often lately that I thought it wise to write this article to answer it, for perhaps others have asked themselves also.

I shall not enter into an exhaustive discussion as to what conscience is; it is universally acknowledged that we have a conscience. Having a conscience is it safe to follow it?

In Romans 2:15, Paul speaks of heathen whose conscience bore them witness to right or wrong. People generally speak as if conscience is infallible and therefore safe. But while we admit it to have been originally intended as a guide, conscience in most men has been robbed of discerning power, and so scripture speaks of at least five consciences, four of which, all will admit, are not safe.

The first of these references is in First Corinthians 8:10-12, known as weak conscience. A weak conscience is the result of a lack of spiritual knowledge; under the guidance of this conscience one may be led to do many things conscientiously that are radically wrong. Paul, himself, though a student under the best of masters, labored under the impression that it was his duty to kill Christians and imprison them, even women and children.

The dark age that produced the inquisition was a time when men followed the dictates of weak consciences. Such people may be very sincere, but their sincerity does not alter right from wrong. Weak conscience within both the catholic and the protestant churches has been the source of unspeakable outrages in the name of religion. Weak consciences no doubt are to some extent responsible for the terrible European struggle. A conscience that leads men to kill and hate or be prejudiced against those who do not agree with you in religious things is certainly not safe.

Still further scripture speaks of a defiled conscience in Titus 1:15. A defiled conscience becomes such by reading or listening to error. Such a conscience may have been pure at one time, but through the reading of unclean and infidel literature it becomes defiled until the person is led to commit crimes under the impression that they render humanity a duty.

Just a few years ago a man was a faithful member of the church. He avoided all errors and served his church with zeal. However, the writings of Emma Goldman were placed in his hand and he began to lose interest in his church and became the victim of a defiled conscience that told him it was his supreme duty to kill President William McKinley. Leon Colgrove believed he was doing right. Schrenk, when he shot Theodore Roosevelt, cried out: "I have done my duty." Surely such a conscience is not a safe guide to follow.

Still again scripture speaks of an evil conscience—Heb. 10:22. An evil conscience is the conscience of the gambler and thief who will steal in order to pay his debts of "honor." A highway man owed a "pal" five dollars. They met in a saloon and he was asked to pay his debt. He thereupon went out and held a man up, robbing him of thirty-five dollars. When arrested he was asked why he committed the robbery; and he said he couldn't think of beating a man out of a five dollar loan. The society gambler who will gamble to pay an "honorable" debt is following an evil conscience as well as the highwayman. Such a conscience is not a safe guide.

Further still the scripture speaks of a seared conscience, First Timothy, 4:2. Seared with the hot iron of hypocrisy. A few years ago, a presiding elder of southern Illinois killed a girl and threw her body in a well. His guilt was well known, but he maintained to the last that he was innocent, notwithstanding that several eye-witnesses testified to his guilt. During his stay in jail, before his execution, he manifested great joy of salvation and went to his death singing "Happy Day," and denying his guilt. Such consciences are anything but safe guides. The hypocrite's conscience may enable him to put on an air of sanctity, but scripture teaches that the hypocrite's hope shall perish.

Lastly scripture speaks of one that can perfectly lead, a real safe conscience safe to follow, in Acts 24:16. A conscience void of offense toward God and man. Such a conscience is a safe guide because it enlists every faculty and element of the human soul

in one constant effort to lead a clean life before God and man. It places a higher estimate on character than upon reputation. It does not care what is said of it, but is very careful to be pure itself. It thinks it more honorable to suffer wrongly than to do wrong and avoid suffering thereby. "For this is acceptable, if for conscience toward God a man endureth grief, suffering wrongfully." Peter 2, 2-19. Such a conscience is a source of joy, 2 Cor. 1:12. It is such a conscience that enables the martyrs to die thanking God for the privilege of death. It is such a conscience that enabled Edith Cavell to die hopefully in Belgium.

But who has such a conscience? None save men and women who have their consciences purged by faith in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Having our hearts cleansed from an evil conscience we may draw nigh with a true heart in full assurance of faith and receive that joy unspeakable and full of glory.

But how get it? By elimination of sin, realizing your need of such a conscience and asking God in prayer, believing that He will give it you. "The blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin." Paul found it. I have found it. You may find it.

MEETING LOW FARM PRICES

C. H. Morrill, a wealthy banker and land owner of Nebraska writes in The Lincoln State Journal that prices of commodities must come down to meet the low prices of farm stuff. The Journal wants to do its share in the "Come-down" and is offering to mail the daily from now until Jan. 1, 1922 for only \$2.50, or including the big Sunday Journal with its magazine and colored comic sections for only \$3. This is really away below the present cost of production; but there's only one way to come down and that's to come down. The Journal is the best buy in the newspaper field and I hope you will prove your interest in lower prices by sending in your subscription for the remainder of this year at this cut price.

J. C. SEACREST, Publisher.

Mrs. Lou Lauer, the new Berea correspondent for The Herald, made this office a pleasant visit on circus day. With her husband she came from the east a year or so ago, and she is most enthusiastic over the country as she has found it. In her opinion, what Box Butte county needs most is a bunch of boosters. "Out where I came from," she said, "our farm, like the city of Rome, occupied most of seven hills, and here we have 160 acres that lies as flat as a table. There's a big difference in the price of land, and anything can be raised here that can be raised farther east." Mrs. Lauer thinks that as soon as the real estate men get their courage back, which was pretty well knocked out of them a few months ago, farm land will begin to change hands again, with very little let-down in the price. She has had previous experience in corresponding, and the first installment of the Berea items, printed in Tuesday's Herald, gives promise that she will make this one of the most interesting correspondence columns of the paper.

NOTICE FOR BIDS

Bids will be received until Monday, June 6th, for the excavation and removal of approximately eight hundred yards of dirt from basement of new M. E. church, Seventh and Box Butte. Bids should cover disposal of dirt by contractor or disposition of same within four blocks by building committee. Address all bids to A. S. Mote, City, 53-54

JUST ENOUGH

"Was there much of a gathering to see the ship start?" asked Colonel Edwards.
"Yassuh. Dey was a monst-ous lot o' folks."
"And was the crowd tumultuous or quiet?"
"Well, suh," replied Mose doubtfully. "Dey wasn't zackly too multuous, I shouldn't say. Noasuh, dey was just about multuous enough fo' de occasion."

Even the man who thinks he is too wise to get caught with wood alcohol will take chances on having his liquor doped with ether.

Report that the Turks are making marriage compulsory disabuses the mind of a traditional notion.

A safe doesn't live up to its name in this burglarious day.

Draft Dodgers Have Ready-made Alibis For the Newspapers

The draft deserters' lists are now being distributed by the war department and printed by many local papers. The American Legion has pledged to co-operate in clearing the names of men who saw honorable service, but whose names appear on the lists by reason of clerical errors, incomplete records, or because the men had already enlisted when the call was made. Headquarters of the seventh corps area, at Fort Crook, are calling the attention of legion posts and the newspapers to certain misrepresentations which may be made by men whose names appear, but who seem to be innocent of the charge made.

Attention is invited to the fact that all of the names on the printed lists of alleged draft deserters are on those lists because the war department found in the investigation of the selective service records that the proper officials had entered charges of desertion against them, and subsequent investigations have failed to produce any reason for removing such names from the lists.

Many cases will arise where the men whose names are on the published lists will attempt to show by certain evidence which they may produce that they are wrongfully on the list, and by misrepresentations to those not familiar with the provisions of the selective service regulations will cause the publication of this case in such a manner as to martyrize themselves and at the same time put the war department in the position of publishing men without just or proper cause therefor.

The following cases are typical:

(a) A man received an honorable discharge from the army in the early part of 1918. He then was called by his local board, failed to respond and was properly reported to the adjutant general of the army as a deserter. This man may now produce his honorable discharge of 1918 to a newspaper, make claim that he is wrongfully on the list, and have the alleged injustice done him very much advertised, whereas he became a deserter after the date of his discharge and he was rightfully published as such.

(b) Discharges from draft and deferments prior to December 15, 1917, also furnish many opportunities for misrepresentations. People falling in this class often display their discharges from draft or their classification cards and the average individual believes that they show full compliance with the selective service law, whereas the men may have become deserters subsequent to December 15, 1917, through failure to submit their questionnaires or report for physical examination or entrainments when they were called.

(c) Men who enlisted after November 11, 1918, the date of the signing of the armistice, and who have since that date been honorably discharged from the service, may now use such discharges in an attempt to prove honorable war service when they were really draft deserters before such enlistment. An enlistment after the armistice does not remove a charge of desertion incurred during the period of actual hostilities.

Newspapers are warned against being made the medium for such misrepresentations, and they are advised not to publish such claims without first having the report from the war department upon any single case.

The Great Western Cream separators at the Fairmont Cream Station. 53-56

Some hyphenates apparently believe that waving an American flag is an effective disguise.

A Long Head or a Short Head

It's queer how the thrift habit seems to reflect itself in people. Usually the more efficient, earnest workers have savings accounts. They are usually long headed—the ones who plan ahead. Are you of that type? Or are you short headed?

We Pay 5% Interest

Be long headed—plan for the future by opening that savings account here today.

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A pipe won't burn your tongue if you smoke P.A.!

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