

Conscience.

By Rev. D. F. Lamson.

The question often arises, Is Conscience always reliable? Can it always be trusted? Paul speaks, Titus 1:15, of some whose "mind and conscience is defiled;" he speaks also, 1 Cor. 8:7, 12, of a "weak conscience," i. e. one whose standard of judgment is imperfect; and of some whose "conscience is seared with hot iron," i. e. those whose standard is wholly perverted or destroyed by disobedience and lawlessness. "A good conscience" is spoken of, implying that there is a conscience that is not good; Acts 23:1, 1 Tim. 3:19, 1 Pet. 3:16.

The truth seems to be that the moral nature may suffer much degradation, that the night be, comes darkness and conscience ceases to be a trustworthy guide. There may be a deceiving conscience, a conscience that has become warped by evil habit, by false training, by passion or prejudice, so that like an unjust and partial judge, it delivers false judgments. Conscience is not infallible; it partakes of the infirmity of human nature, and may therefore lead astray.

To recur to the illustration of the magnetic compass: the needle may be deflected from its true bearing by some extraneous attraction, and then the more closely it is followed the greater will be the danger. As a matter of fact, an ocean steamship once came near being wrecked by a bar of iron being carelessly left near the binnacle. Conscience may be turned aside from the polar-star of truth, and then it becomes as great a power for evil as in its right and normal action it is for good. We are bound not only to "follow conscience," but to have a right conscience to follow; a man must not only live up to his moral judgment, his moral judgment must be one that it is right to live up to.

The fact that Conscience may be perverted explains how it is that good men have been persecutors, as when our fathers were made to suffer disabilities, imprisonment and the spoiling of their goods, at the hands of a dominant hierarchy of a state church. It explains how men have "thought they were doing God service" in putting his faithful servants to death; how such a man as Paul "verily thought that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth." Many of the apologists of slavery and other evils have been not bad men, but misguided men. Such men have often had conscience enough, but it was not a "good conscience."

In fact, the more conscientious a man is, to greater lengths will he often be led in wrong-doing if his conscience is a misdirected and perverted one. Some one asked the celebrated Dr. Emmons how certain men could be so ill-tempered and cross-grained; he replied, "because they are conscientiously ugly."

Conscience is like a railroad switch; if it is misplaced it will send the train off on a side-track, and perhaps to destruction. Paul exhorts us to have "faith and a good conscience;" which i. e. conscience, "some having put away, concerning faith have made shipwreck;" 1 Tim. 1:19. Some have conscience without faith, and are mere formalists; some have faith without conscience, and are mere emotional Christians; their lives are not consistent with their professions. What God has joined together, we are not to put asunder.

The practical question is, How may a "good conscience" be secured? (1) The conscience must be enlightened by God's word. Psalm 19:7-9 119-130. (2) By obedience; if neglected or disobeyed, like an alarm-clock its voice soon ceases to be heard. The conscience should be kept sensitive to the truth like the photographer's plate to the light; then it will be a trustworthy guide, the "vice-gerent of God in the soul."

An Open Letter to Clergymen.

We are told in the Bible that God created every winged fowl after his kind; and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

It is a sad fact that man is not permitting the birds of the air to multiply as God directs; they are wantonly killed for sport by men, and boys destroy thousands of eggs and nestlings each year. Fashion decrees that women must wear the plumage of wild birds for ornaments. Glance at the bonnets worn at any church service and note the large number of graceful plumes known as "Aigrettes." There is not a woman that does not know that these plumes are obtained only by the most cruel and barbarous methods. How can she kneel and partake of the Holy Communion while wearing them?

Can the children of the Sunday Schools grow to be good men and women unless they are taught that kindness to all God's wild creatures is a part of Christian life? The Saviour says a sparrow "shall not fall on the ground without your Father." This certainly means that human beings will be held responsible for all cases of cruelty to even the most humble of God's creatures.

Birds are a check on insect life and so lessen the labor of the tiller of the soil. Scientific study during the past two decades has demonstrated the fact that birds are the most valuable friends the agriculturist has; they destroy insect pests and noxious vermin; they also eat thousands of tons of weed seeds which if left to propagate would soon overrun the land.

Birds require no pay for their labors, they only ask to be let alone to enjoy in peace and safety the life the Creator gave them, the same right that every good citizen enjoys.

Are clergymen doing their duty if they do not call the attention of the people to the rights of the birds?

WILLIAM DUTCHER.

Married.

MILLER MILTON.—At the home of Mr. C. F. Milton, bride's father, Aug. 24th, by Rev. S. Erb, Manning Miller to May E. Milton, all of Dawson, N. B.

ALLEN ALLEN.—At the home of the bride's parents, Sept. 7th, by Rev. Frank P. Orsinger, Harry Allen of Toronto, to Nellie Mae Allen of West, Co.

BARTLEY McGRATH.—At Lower Knoxville, Car. Co., on Aug. 31st, by Rev. C. Stirling, Austin H. Bartley of Knoxville, to Minnie M., daughter of Daniel McGrath, of Lower Knoxville.

MORRHENSE SUSTIN.—At the parsonage, in Deak town, Sept. 7, by Rev. C. P. Wilson, assisted by Rev. C. O. Howler, Alexander Morrhenso of Blissfield, to Gertrude Austin of Deaktown, N. B.

HARPER JACKSON.—At Pastor's home, St. John West, on the 7th September, by Rev. B. N. Nobles, Roy Charles Harper of Havelock, Kings Co., and Bertha Jackson of Lusk Lynd and St. John Co.

HARRIS LEAVITT.—At the parsonage, St. George, N. B., Sept. 18th, by Rev. M. E. Fletcher, Orben Harris to Aledia Ethel Leavitt, both of Black Bay N. B.

McADAM DEAGLE.—At St. George, N. B., Sept. 21st, by Rev. M. E. Fletcher at the home of the bride's father, Stewart McAdam to Ella Deagle, both of St. George.

DUNLOP GORDEN.—At the Baptist church Springfield, York Co., N. B., Sept. 7th, by A. A. Rutledge, Burt Dunlop of Upper Caverhill, to Mina Gordon of Springfield.

HUESTIS STANIS.—At the home of the bride's parents, Southampton, Sept. 14th, by A. A. Rutledge, Preston L. Huestis of Nackawick, to Nellie Blanch Stairs, of Southampton, York Co., N. B.

FULTON DICK.—At St. John, N. B., Oct. 21st, by Pastor Christopher Bunton, Stuart Gordon Fulton, of Turro, N. S., to Addie Dick, of St. John.

FULLERTON-WILBAND.—At the home of the bride, Riverside, Sept. 7, by Pastor J. W. Brown, Jas. Alex.

Fullerton J. P. of Albert, and Lena Pauline Wilband, all of Albert Co.

LIVINGSTON-WOODWORTH.—At the Parsonage, Hopewell Cape, Sept. 15, by Pastor J. W. Brown, Charles Harry Livingston of Albert Mines and Rosie L. Woodworth of Woodworth Settlement, all of Albert Co.

STEVENS JAMIESON.—At the home of the bride's parents, Woodworth Cape, Sept. 14, by Pastor J. W. Brown, Wilton Stevens of Stokess of Hub-boro, and Alice Maud Jamieson, all of Albert Co.

WHITE EARLE.—At the Free Baptist parsonage, Belle's Cove, on Aug. 24th, by Rev. S. J. Perry, Brazil White, of Wick a n, and Bessie Earle, of Kars, K. Co.

KERRSTEAD SNEY.—At the Free Baptist church, St. John West, on Sept. 27, by Rev. R. W. Ferguson, assisted by J. V. W. Kers and Rev. W. C. Kierside, Pa. D., I. D., F. D., E. U. S. A., to Gertrude L., daughter of Capt. Geo. Sney, Charlotte Street, St. John West.

FLEMING-NICHOLSON.—On the 21th ult, at the residence of the bride's parents, by Rev. John Perry, Mr. Ernest Jordon Fleming, of Weston, C. Co., and Miss Joie Annie Nicholson, only daughter of Albert and Lezlie Nicholson, of Comelia, Charlton Co.

Died.

CHUTE.—At Berwick, Sept. 7th, Unio Maud, youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. Burton Chute entered into rest after a brief illness of typhoid pneumonia. She was baptized in 1895 by Rev. H. D. Simpson and the fullness of her beautiful Christian life will long be felt by many. The Sunday school loses its organist and a faithful teacher and the choir misses her voice, but the greatest loss is experienced in the home, where she was ever thoughtful for the comfort and pleasure of others. Two of the four pastors Revs. I. Wallace and D. H. Simpson were in attendance at the funeral.

WRIGHT.—At McDonald's Point Aug. 21st, Charlotte O., aged 82 years, wife of Deacon Richard Wright, passed into the rest that remaineth for the people of God, leaving a husband, two sons, two daughters and one sister to mourn the loss of an office bearer and one sister to mourn the loss of an office bearer, a kind and loving mother and a sister, for twenty six years, on sister was a very great sufferer, and for the last five years was unable to move herself. During all these years she was never known to murmur or complain, but during her suffering with unceasing thanksgiving to God. She always took a deep interest in every branch of church work and had a special interest in Missions as was president of the Aid Society ever since its organization. Lovable in character, amiable in disposition, firm in faith, zealous for God and the church she will be much missed by the church and community. The Pastor will always feel that there is one less praying for him and his work—although she could not meet with us except when we met at her home, we always realized that in her home, her prayers were ascending and her life was a power for good. I feel that this notice should not be closed without reference to the untiring attention of the devoted husband and also a niece, Miss Martha Oils, to this dear sister, through all these years. No thing that could be done so much to be loved and her comfort was always considered before any pleasure for themselves.

While it is true that "Religion never was designed to make our pleasures less," it should be remembered that there are pleasures and pleasures, and that even legitimate pleasures may be followed foolishly, selfishly and blindly, so that they tend to the undoing, instead of the making of character. Some are in themselves degrading; others, right under certain conditions, become wrong when followed for their own sakes, and not as a means of recreation; or when they are indulged in to excess, or when associated with questionable practices. The regeneration of pleasure, and its regulation and its subordination to the higher ends of life, are matters that need more careful and honest treatment from religious teachers.—The Christian

The Baptist Year Book of the Maritime Provinces will, it is expected, be issued before the end of October. By order of the Convention, all persons desiring copies will be required to pay ten cents per copy, except that a limited number will be sent free for the use of the several Boards of Convention and the several Associations when convened, and also a number of complimentary copies will be sent out as usual. Therefore all churches and individuals interested are advised to notify the editor at an early day how many copies of the Year Book they require, and to enclose with this notification a sum sufficient to pay for the books ordered at 10 cts. each.