

Tobacco.

"There is an evil, which I have seen under the sun" that Solomon never saw, a "vanity" which he never beheld, an "abomination" of which perhaps, he never thought. A nauseous and noxious plant, which was probably created for its medical properties, is extensively cultivated to be chewed and spit, smoked and puffed, and this by him who "is the image and glory of God." Were this only done by unregenerate ones, I would write to-night on another subject. Those who will not serve God may be expected to serve sin in any form. Such are liable to be victims of every "evil," "vanity" and "abomination" to which the devil can lead, drive or betray them. But there are those of whom it is written thus: "Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation (conduct) received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. . . . Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever."

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light; (1 Peter i. 18, 19; ii. 9.) and of whom it is further said: "Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (Cor. vi. 19, 20.)

For a people of whom Scripture thus speaks to form the habit, or, having formed it, to continue the habit of using tobacco, urges me to press my pen onward with the earnest prayer that I may write the lamentable truth in a convincing way respecting this abominable practice, for which there never has been offered and never can be offered one single decent apology. "It is a foolish habit," "it is an expensive habit," "it is a filthy habit," "it is an injurious habit." Such is the almost invariable testimony of every candid person using tobacco, and of every one who uses it not. To this it may be added that it is an "offensive habit," and in some instances, disgustingly offensive to those who do not use it. Its friends and foes unite in its condemnation, and yet statistics declare that the money spent for tobacco in the United States is sufficient to run the United States; and I doubt not statistics would declare, could they be gathered that sufficient money is spent by church members to double the financial strength of the church. Thousands there are, in the church whose tobacco bill exceeds even their liberal contributions for the Gospel's support; thousands there are whose tobacco bill each year equals their contributions for that purpose, and thousands there are who give nothing worthy of mention toward the Gospel, but spend weekly for tobacco what would be a liberal contribution, if given toward the Gospel. Look at this from the standpoint of stewardship, and evidently the great, terrible word condemnation stands against the tobacco habit.

"Will a man rob God?" Asked the Most High of the Jews; "yet ye have robbed me," declared the Most High against the Jews. What was true of them is true of tobacco chewers and smokers in the church. Should the Judge in reckoning with them ask, "What went with the balance of the money intrusted into your hands?" how each would blush and drip with shame to acknowledge, "Lord, I squandered it for tobacco!" That a being who is the image and glory of God (1 Cor. xi. 7), and has been translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. i. 13), and has been made an

heir of God and joint-heir with Christ (Rom. vii. 17), that such a being would consent to chew and spit and smoke and puff merely by force of habit, is at once acknowledged as shameful, disgusting, abominable. If this be not a prostitution of money and manhood, what is? Think of Paul going into such business, and its monstrous character becomes evident.

But the evil is not yet fully told. A Methodist preacher once said in my hearing, "I gave up tobacco that I might rebuke a member of a certain church for which I preached, who was an inveterate smoker. It was known that his family at times lacked bread, and yet every time I met him he was smoking a dirty old pipe. Hence, he was robbing his own family of common necessities in order to gratify his tobacco habit. But I could not rebuke him while I used it myself, and thus I quit." What was true of that smoker is true, in a measure, of thousands who profess the religion of Christ, and we thus see that professed Christians will consent to rob God and themselves and their own families for the sake of tobacco. Let me here ask, are those who do such things good exemplars for either saint or sinner? Can they rebuke folly and extravagance, or foolish and extravagant habits? "Physician, heal thyself," is the proverb which should be thrust into their teeth when ever they attempt rebuke.

But the extent of this evil still extends further. Its folly and expensiveness do not exhaust the catalogue of its evil features. But its filthiness and offensiveness to others place it under constant contempt. I would sooner handle a man's vomit than his tobacco juice and would as soon smell a cess-pool as his tobacco smoke and breath. Thousands who read these lines will confess to the same. For to the filth and disagreeable odor of tobacco is added the disgusting thought that its use is a foolish habit. An old smoker's breath, like that of an old toper's, can sometimes be smelt ten feet.

As with rum, so with tobacco—when a man becomes saturated with it, it issues from him through every pore and with every breath. What an infliction this is upon the wife of a tobacco slave! to say nothing of other members of his family; and what a predicament is this for a body that is "the temple of the Holy Spirit."

So far I have spoken of Christians generally, but now speak of preachers and other prominent servants of the church in particular. Elders, deacons and evangelists are required by Scripture to be examples—examples of "good works," not of evil. This, indeed, is necessary in order that they may exert a saving influence. When the Spirit by Paul said to Timothy, "Be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity," and to Titus "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works;" and when the Spirit said by Peter to the elders, "Being examples to the flock," the key note of a good influence was strongly touched. Example not only speaks louder than precept, but precept from a man never speaks effectively without example. A striking illustration of this now presents itself to my mind. Professor L. of a certain college, known also as a preacher, some years ago lectured a class of young men about using tobacco, in which lecture he said that should two young men be applicants for the pulpit of a certain church, one of whom had excellent talents but used tobacco while the other's talent was not so good, but was free from tobacco, that his advice to the church would be to choose the latter. One of these young men said in my hearing afterward that he was considerably impressed with those remarks, till one evening that professor came into his presence "puffing a cigar." "That," said the young man, who is also a preacher,

"Made me lose confidence in Prof. L's advice against tobacco."

I give another instance. Not long since in Central, Ohio, a brother and his wife (both thorough disciples) went to hear a man preach on the occasion of a new meeting house being opened. The preacher profoundly impressed this brother with his remarkable acquaintance with the Bible, which impression said the brother was expressing to his wife, when she remarked, "Well, yes, he can quote plenty of Bible, but look at the nasty tobacco juice on his beard and shirt; and then he smokes too."

Why do not those who have been "called unto liberty," and whom the Son hath made "free," so that they are "free indeed," but are yet slaves to tobacco—why do they not give thanks for what they chew and smoke? Imagine one of them folding his hands and solemnly thanking God for his plug or pipe of tobacco, and the reason they do not will at once be evident. Some years ago in the same part of Ohio previously mentioned, a Presbyterian preacher who used tobacco was one day about to "indulge," when one of his brethren said to him, "Hold on, brother, before you bite that tobacco just ask the Lord to bless it to its intended use." "Well," said the preacher letting fall his hand, fall, "I don't know about that—I don't know whether I can do that." "Don't you know," continued that brother, "that you should give thanks for all good things, and thus you should thank the Lord for your tobacco and ask his blessing upon it before using it?" I will think about that, said the preacher, putting the piece of nuisance in his pocket. It seems he did think, for that was the last of his tobacco habit.

The above is no imaginary case. When in Reynoldsburg not long since I met and talked with the venerable gentleman, who asked that question of his preacher, and will here say that I could wish him present with every preacher, elder, deacon and private member of the Church of Christ, whose mouth is defiled with tobacco long enough to approach each with similar words to those he pressed upon his own preacher. Such words rightly addressed and rightly reflected on would doubtless lead many to abandon the abomination at once and forever. I call it an "abomination," because for lips sanctified to the praise of God to practice squirting tobacco juice and puffing tobacco smoke is certainly abominable. Several months since, one of our aged, pious, excellent preachers read and prayed with a family and followed his prayer with edifying remarks on the subject of religion. While making those remarks he slowly stretched out his right foot and put his right hand into his pocket and slowly took out tobacco and tore off a piece, which he put into his mouth and began chewing, and mark you, this he did while continuing his religious remarks! Reader I felt sad and ashamed that one so true and good was yet a slave. Do not say, "perhaps he did it for the toothache!" That brother has no teeth save these he bought. It was simply the force of a filthy habit.

This article is long enough, but it would be incomplete without a paragraph or two on the tobacco habit in "injurious" feature. I quote from a work on "Physiology and Hygiene," written by R. T. Brown, M.D., who is "Chemist-in-Chief, department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C." Under the heading, "Quantity of Food," that writer says: "Persons addicted to the use of tobacco require a larger amount of food to furnish the same nutrition than persons who do not use narcotic. The saliva, being rendered unfit for its office, is wasted, and the starchy part of the food, which should have been converted into sugar by this fluid, remains to a great extent unchanged. The saliva is less important in the digestion of animal food, and for this reason those who use tobacco

instinctively become largely flesh eaters, or the habit induces dyspepsia."

Perhaps some one on reading the above will say, "That's not so; I use tobacco and am not much of a 'flesh eater.'" Be not hasty, kind sir; probably you are already a dyspeptic and dare not eat much of anything.

Under the heading, "Tobacco—its mode of Poisoning," that same author says, "Tobacco is among the most powerful of the narcotic poisons which the vegetable kingdom affords. It differs from alcohol, however, in many particulars, which modify its effects on those who use it. As alcohol is the active poison in all the various forms of intoxicating drinks, so nicotine is the exhilarating agent in tobacco, whether it be chewed, smoked or taken in snuff. This nicotine is an alkaline principle, volatile at a high heat; but at ordinary temperatures, it is converted into vapor in an sensible quantities, and therefore, does not penetrate the membranes and pervade the tissues of the whole body as alcohol does; and on this account its narcotic effects are slowly developed."

"In addition to the exhilarating effect, nicotine is directly emetic, even when the poison is not taken into the stomach, but absorbed by the skin. While the paralyzing effects of alcohol begin with the nerves of sensation, the action of tobacco is primarily on the nerves of motion, diminishing the contractile force of the muscles."

From the above testimony, I doubt not, there is little or no variance in authoritative works, and hence, those who use tobacco are depleting poisoning and destroying the bodies God has given them. That this is a positive sin is beyond question. We have no more right to waste, injure or destroy our bodies by useless habits than we have to do any other wrong act. "If any man defile (destroy) the temple of God, him shall God destroy," has an application here.

To this article I call the special attention of certain editors, evangelists, elders and deacons, and this for the special reason that their rebukes of extravagance and folly are worse than vanity in the eyes of many while they use tobacco. Unless the *Standard's* editor has recently reformed, he is yet a slave to that one curse. The same is true of the editor of the *Review*. Both those brethren have strong pens and their positions give them tremendous influence. It is odious to think that while they rebuke folly and extravagance in others they are themselves guilty of the same. "Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor; so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor," and again, "Therefore thou art inexcusable O man, whosever thou are that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things." These Scriptures are both applicable to both those editors and others who follow their example.—DANIEL SOMMER, in *A. C. Review*.

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