

FACTS FOR TOBACCO USING MINISTERS



WITH what consistency can smoking ministers condemn other physical and moral uncleanness without condemning tobacco? But are not many led into the practice of smoking by the example of their pastors? With the most profound grief we have to answer, Yes.

Thousands of little boys—pung, vicious, vicious little boys—in our cities, are chewing, spitting, and smoking every old stick they can pick up, or anything they can get hold of. When their parents or minister chew or smoke it helps them amazingly.

A writer in a New York paper mentions how he was astonished at a Conference of ministers to see at the house of a friend, where the ministers were entertained, a spittoon of the largest kind overflowing with the united expectorations of one bishop, two presiding

elders, three ministers, and one preacher on trial. What would be the effect of a man preaching from the text, "Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul," on the mind of an enlightened common sense congregation with a plug of tobacco in his mouth, or being known as a user of the weed?

Most tobacco-using ministers would be astonished if they knew to how many in their congregations their stench of person renders them offensive; how many housekeepers open their doors and windows to air the rooms after their pastor's social call; how many persons shrink from the nauseating odors of the tobacco-perfumed study, when desiring religious counsel. For, be it remembered, that it is not his person alone which the use of tobacco renders offensive; his smoking room and his whole house suffers similarly. Curtains, carpet, furniture, pictures, and books, all reek alike with the foul residuum of stale tobacco smoke. There is no such thing as a clean room where tobacco is used, said a gentleman recently. "I had a smoking clergyman at my house for some weeks—he smoked in the room which he used as a study; he has been away from us now five months. We have done everything in our power to cleanse that room; but on a damp day when the air is heavy, the smell of old tobacco smoke is distinctly perceptible there."

How would Paul and Peter and John look standing up now among the people in the House of God, with quids of tobacco in their mouths, with its juices defiling their lips, spitting the stuff in every direction; spending ten or twenty dollars of their stunted salary every year on this breathing, enslaving sin, and preaching the doctrine of self-denial, crucifixion of the flesh, pecuniary economy, and liberal support of the Lord's treasury?

"I am sorry to have it to say that this idle, disgraceful habit prevails much at present among ministers of most denominations. Can such persons preach against self-indulgence, destruction of time, or waste of money? These men greatly injure their own usefulness; they smoke away their own ministerial importance in the families where they visit: the very children and maid-servants pass their jokes on the 'piping parson'; and should they succeed in bringing over the uninfected to their vile custom, the evil is doubled. I have known serious misunderstandings produced in certain families where the example of the idle parson has led to such a calamity. Some are so brought under the power of this disgraceful habit, that they must have their pipe immediately before they enter the pulpit. What a preparation for announcing the righteousness of God, and preaching the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ! Did St. Paul do anything like this? 'No,' you say, 'for he had the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.' Then you take it to supply the place of this inspiration! How can such persons smile at their own conduct? 'Be ye followers of us as we are of Christ Jesus,' can never proceed out of their lips."—Dr. ADAM CLARK.

How can the Christian minister stand up before the people, and from the

sacred desk proclaim the beauty of holiness, while he is known to be the abject slave of a disgusting and ungentlemanly habit? How can he lead sinners to forsake the world, the flesh, and the devil, when he is not himself an example of common decency? How can he exhort and pray in the Conference meeting and at the family altar when his breath is offensive to all whom he approaches?

"Ministers are to be an example to the believers,"—(1 Tim. iv., 12). They are to present to their flocks, and especially to their young people, a living and a practical illustration of all the Christian virtues. Now, suppose a case: You are invited to dine with one of your people, who has a son, a 'fast young man,' a terrible smoker of cigars, and a great grief to his parents. *Smoking is one of the things that are ruining him.* But he sees you smoke, and you confirm him in the habit! The next time his afflicted father reasons with him on the necessity of abandoning the practice, he is met by a quotation of your example, and is coolly told that his '*own pastor smokes!*' It is a fearful thing when they who have 'to watch for souls' become the means of *confirming* souls in sin. But, certainly, a pastor who is an inveterate smoker must do some injury, in some few quarters, to say the least, by his devotion to this habit. I believe, however, that the greater part of the injury which such a man does is done quietly and secretly *even to himself*. He will never know all the mischief he has occasioned until he is confronted with it at the bar of God at the last great day. For the influence of ministers steals into the houses of their flock, and permeates the families dwelling there, and radiates through the locality in which they labor, so that thousands are every moment more or less affected by their lives; and if the salvation of souls be our one great object, ought we not to be willing to forego any and every such questionable habit (to use no stronger phrase) as smoking rather than add to the jeopardy in which a single soul is placed? Anything rather than impair the salvation of a fellow creature! Anything rather than raise a barrier in the way of the reception of our message by a solitary hearer! And my own experience enables me to say, with perfect confidence, that no minister of the gospel can be addicted to tobacco without injuring his usefulness in some quarter."

"Anything that can enfeeble the strain of a minister's address, when speaking to such characters (young smokers); anything that can take off the edge of his warning and exhortations should be carefully avoided. And I feel that, now I touch neither pipe nor cigar myself, I am in a better position for dealing with such cases than I used to be in before. No youth who wastes his shillings a week on cigars, or other things to which cigar-smoking generally leads, can turn upon me now and say, '*Physician, heal thyself.*'"—From *Confessions of An Old Smoker*.

It has been truly said that evil habits in good men work by their example immeasurably more harm than evil habits in bad men. Hence the holy Apostle's injunction, "Nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." Yet see the ministers and the deacons working their devoted tobacco mills, week days and Sundays. They sit down to their strip of the solid plug, and begin to bite and chew, and chew and spit; and they go on biting and chewing, and praying and spewing without cessation, year in and year out; till by uncommon Christian faithfulness in the course of 50 years—if they should live so long to bless and bedaub the world—they have finished their strip of one or two miles' length!

An eminent minister said he was walking the streets of Rochester, N. Y., the place of his residence, with a lighted cigar in his mouth, as the better class of smokers would do, when an avowed infidel of his acquaintance met him, and instantly burst into a fit of laughter. The preacher wishing to know what pleased him so, was answered with "Oh! I was thinking how you would look going up to meet the Lord amid wreaths of tobacco smoke, with that cigar in your mouth!" The minister abandoned the weed.

How sad it is for a minister to be turned away from a death-bed on account of the stench of tobacco on him! yet, dear saints in the agonies of death, have, with pale and trembling hand, waved tobacco using pastors from their bed-sides—pastors they loved! *Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.*