

The Tobacco Habit.

A few days ago the editor, while walking down the streets of this city, met so many evidences of the real curse of the tobacco traffic, and real slavery, and saw the inducements held out to the young men and boys of the city and the students of the educational institutions, that he felt so deeply impressed that this question suggested itself to him: Must this state of things continue? Is there no help for it? Do these people who send their bright, promising boys here to our excellent institutions want them enslaved by this filthy habit?

He appealed to the Pastors of four of the city churches to write for the "Highway" their personal opinions of the tobacco traffic, and the habit as they observed it, and I am glad to present to our readers the four excellent articles.

The writers are generally known to be among the leading ministers of their denominations, and we know their opinions must carry great weight on the subject. We feel very grateful to them, for their ready response to our request, and we trust that these excellent communications will be copied by our exchanges, and many other papers will pass them along.

EDITOR.

By Rev. W. H. Smith, Ph. D.,
Pastor of Presbyterian Church, Fredericton.

I cheerfully comply with your request for a paragraph concerning the use of tobacco. In the earlier history of our people when ignorance of its actual effects was almost universal one is not surprised to find the subject treated with indifference. It is an amazing fact that in the clear light of scientific evidence concerning its deadly effects, especially in growing life, so little attention is given to the subject by those in authority who are supposed to safeguard the best interests of the people. Scientific experiment has conclusively and persistently shown that nicotine, the constituent element in tobacco in any form, is a deadly poison. The quantity in a cigar has sufficient power to kill a strong cat. When the human body is growing the tissues are very susceptible to the influence of any injurious substance. Young people who abstain from the use of tobacco and all other hurtful things develop normally in body and mind. Those who receive the tobacco poison into their systems are so seriously affected that their physical, mental and moral powers are terribly handicapped. The injury is proportionally less after maturity has been reached, but every one suffers. Some may use it with advantage, as they use other poisons, but these are abnormal or defective. No reputable scientist today claims that tobacco is necessary for efficiency in any department of life.

In view of these things it is painful to behold the brazen attempts persistently made to push the sale and use of this poison. Let anyone walk through the city and he will behold glaring advertisements and posters heralding the advantages of certain brands. Scientifically all these should be called poisons. It is astonishing that our rulers permit such invitations to debauchery and ruin. We close our mails against indecent literature and we cover our billboards with invitations to use tobacco, which first degrades life and then supplies an army of weak-minded people who sink into other vices. I believe the time is not far distant when all such advertisements dealing with

stimulants will be prohibited. This is the only logical position to take.

We now have a section of the Criminal Code dealing with the sale of cigarettes to minors, but so lax is the enforcement that it is almost, if not altogether, a dead letter. In addition to law we need officials who respect their oath enough to enforce the laws. It is a disgrace to see the traps set in the sight of our young people. Students coming in to our educational institutions imagine that it is the proper thing to use this poison. They do so to be in the fashion. Certainly if they judge by the publicity tobacco has they would not be far astray.

The time has come for Christian men to take higher ground. The boy has never been able to see why it is wrong to use tobacco if his father uses it. Whilst we recognize that this is a question in which every man has full liberty, we must also recognize that every Christian has the privilege of denying himself his rights in order that weak ones may become strong. The moral influence of society has a determining influence with a majority of young people. When the new brotherhood of Jesus Christ lets his self-denying love shine upon the path of the young there is good reason for believing that much of the misery and wretchedness due to the use of tobacco will be a thing of the past.

Rev. Joseph E. Wilson, B. A.,
Pastor of the George Street United Baptist Church, Fredericton.

In my opinion, the tobacco habit is one of the greatest evils of our present day civilization. It is an evil from an economic point of view. It is estimated that over nine hundred and fifty million dollars is spent annually by the American people for tobacco. When this sum is compared with the two hundred and fifty million spent by the same people for the work of the Christian church within its own borders, we get some idea of the enormous waste of money caused by the tobacco habit. Frequently, in the case of the poor, the money that should be spent to provide the necessities of the home goes to satisfy an abnormal appetite of the parent.

It is an evil to society in that it tends to destroy rather than to strengthen mental and physical powers. Modern science declares that tobacco is a poison. The cigarette is doubtless its most deadly form, leaving its tell-tale mark on the very skin of its victims. It has been demonstrated in our public schools that boys addicted to the cigarette habit fail in the examinations which boys who have kept themselves free from its use, pass successfully.

The tobacco habit is a personal evil because it is a habit of self indulgence, and robs an individual of his manhood. It develops an appetite which frequently enslaves its victims, producing a type of man who is willing to sacrifice the best interests of himself and family in order to meet the demands of the weed. Repeatedly I have seen the coal bin and pantry empty while the pipe was kept replenished. I believe the tobacco habit is opposed to the economic well-being of society; is deadly to the mental and physical development of man; and is an enemy to the realization of a free and independent manhood, in which as in the man Christ Jesus, is the perfect balance of all the faculties and powers of life.

Rev. Niel McLauchlan, B. A.,
President of the Methodist Conference of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

I am opposed to the use of tobacco, whether by smoking or chewing, for the following reasons, as a few among many.

First, it is an injurious habit. I recall during my earlier days when teaching school, in the school was a lad of ten years of age. When a mere child of five years he was a bright, precocious little chap. He was taught to chew tobacco. It was supposed to be cute for one so young to chew the weed. The habit became permanent and in after years the boy could not throw it off. His intellect was impaired, his will weakened, his nerves injured, his growth partially arrested. In school he always seemed dazed and stupid; when he stood in class to read his hands trembled so that he could hardly read and I had to stand beside him and steady the book. His memory was so feeble he could scarcely remember anything. This may have been an extreme case, but it is only one of several cases that have come under my own observation in which the use of tobacco proved ruinous to young boys. It is not, according to medical authority, equally injurious to persons of mature years, but still it is hurtful. It is undeniably destructive to the nerves and to the heart and digestive organs. Its use may for the moment soothe the nerves but its use has already so disturbed and weakened the nerves that they require soothing. Any unnecessary habit that impairs in any way the strength of the body is absolutely wrong and cannot be justified.

In the second place, it is an ungentlemanly habit, because it interferes unnecessarily with the comforts and enjoyments of many others to whom its use is extremely offensive. One may walk on the street with the intention of inhaling the pure atmosphere of heaven, or stand on the deck of a steamship, or await a train in the railway station, or even travel on a train, or sit on a grandstand watching a game, or enter a house of assembly, or go where he will by his side he will find the ubiquitous smoker vitiating the air and emitting the foul fumes of tobacco in his face, and in many instances dropping his spectrum either upon or at his feet. So the non-user is forced to take his secondhand smoke and have his garments befouled with the disagreeable fumes. I repeat it; this is not a mere matter of being thoughtless or selfish, it is ungentlemanly.

In the third place, it is an unclean habit. As regards the smoker, his teeth and breath and clothing to a greater or less degree emit unpleasant odors especially in any assembly of people. It is true there are smokers who reduce the offensiveness to a minimum by taking special care not to be offensive, and one appreciates their efforts. But many smokers as regards their person even when not in the act of smoking are very ill-smelling, and soon vitiate the atmosphere in any room they may be in. Perhaps even more disgusting than smoking is the use of tobacco by chewing. The odor is not so offensive but the spectacle is more disgusting. Even on our public streets a person is sometimes at a loss to know whether he has been preceded by an unclean domestic bird or a human being.

In the fourth place it is a wasteful habit. While statistics are available by which we know the cost per capita of the population, there are no available statistics by which we can ascertain the cost per capita of tobacco