

ALCOHOL, COFFEE AND TEA, AND TOBACCO



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Diseases of every stripe and type have been brought upon human beings by the use of alcohol, coffee, tea, and tobacco. Alcohol related diseases range from liver disease to ulcers to dementia. Prevention by abstaining is better than cure. These hurtful indulgences must be given up, not only one but all; for all are hurtful, and ruinous to the physical, mental, and moral powers, and should be discontinued from a health standpoint. Scientific evidence against their use is everywhere and overwhelming and needless be rehearsed here.

The spiritual harm from these indulgences is no less pernicious. Alcohol, coffee, tea, and tobacco are harmful to both our physical and spiritual health. “Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11), is the language of the apostle Peter. Many regard this warning as applicable only to the licentious; but it has a broader meaning. It guards against every injurious gratification of appetite or cravings as well as passion.

Abstain from fleshly lusts is a most forcible warning against the use of such stimulants and narcotics as alcohol, coffee, tea, and tobacco.

These indulgences may well be classed among the lusts that exert a pernicious influence upon moral character. The earlier these hurtful habits are formed, the more firmly will they hold their victim in slavery to lust, and the more certainly will they lower the standard of spirituality.

The only safe course is to touch not, taste not, handle not, alcohol, coffee, tea, and tobacco. The necessity for the people of this generation to call to their aid the power of the will, strengthened by the grace of God, in order to withstand the temptations of Satan, and resist the least indulgence of perverted appetite, is twice as great as it was several generations ago.

Those who are waiting for the soon return of our Lord Jesus Christ, to “be caught up together with” resurrected saints “in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air” so as to forever “be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:17), must now “walk, even as he walked” (1 John 2:6) with purity of their whole being.

Body-Temple principle

The Biblical principle that should guide in the choice of what we place into our bodies is the knowledge that our bodies are God’s temples.

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Corinthians 3:16, 17).

In making the choice of what we place in the body-temple, the will of God must be our guide, not cravings. “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Colossians 1:9). We must do all for God’s glory. “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

By teaching us the body-temple principle, God desire our good and holistic health. “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (3 John 1:2).

Healthy bodies form a holy body-temple that God will accept, which we must offer to Him. “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5).

How do we build the body-temple? “Abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul” (1 Peter

2:11), is the language of the apostle Peter. Many regard this warning as applicable only to the licentious; but it has a broader meaning. It guards against every injurious gratification of appetite, cravings and addictions.

The apostle Paul pleads: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1-2).

Nothing harmful to our health should ever be placed in the body-temple. These harmful things include intemperance in drinking tea and coffee, wine, beer, rum, and brandy, and the use of tobacco, opium, and other narcotics, which have resulted in great mental and physical degeneracy, and this degeneracy is constantly increasing.

To these harmful habits, the apostle warns of the consequences. "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep" (1 Corinthians 11:29-30).

To those that destroy the body-temple by their habits of eating abominably God will destroy them. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). This forever settles that a person can be lost for defiling the property of God – the body-temple. Whilst you are not saved by food, defiling your body with food will cause you to be lost.

Bad habits will weaken our body-temple and unfit us for God’s service. We are not to cling to our habits when we know they are harmful to health. We can overcome addictions, even of tobacco. Almost the whole world drinks alcohol, coffee and tea, and smokes tobacco. But as Christians, we are called out of the world habits. “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2). Besetting sins are to be conquered, and evil habits overcome.

But if you have to be transformed by the renewing of your mind, the brain must not be intoxicated with alcohol. The brain is the organ and instrument of the mind, and controls the whole body. In order for the

other parts of the system to be healthy the brain must be healthy. And in order for the brain to be healthy the blood must be pure. If by correct habits of eating and drinking the blood is kept pure, the brain will be properly nourished. Moreover, if intoxicated by alcohol, the Holy Spirit cannot reach your mind to transform you into the likeness of Christ.

Alcohol

Alcohol is responsible for millions of death today. The amount of alcohol consumed is rising steadily. Binge drinking (the consumption of four to five successive drinks in males and three to four successive drinks in females) is growing alarmingly among adolescents and young adults. This trend shows no sign of abating. Alcohol has consequences through intoxication, drunkenness, dependence (addiction), and other chemical effects on the body.

Interestingly, long before any scientific description of the negative effects of alcohol on the fetus (fetal alcohol syndrome), Samson's mother was warned not to take alcohol during her pregnancy. "And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and

said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son ... and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death” (Judges 13:3-7).

Solomon also warns against the effects of alcohol, specifically wine and beer. From his observation and possibly even experience, he describes how alcohol changes and modifies behavior, usually leading to regrets. “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise” (Proverbs 20:1). Do not miss Solomon’s conclusion here that it is “not wise.” In other words, it is folly to drink alcohol.

“Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again” (Proverbs 23:31-35). These are devastating effects!

Isaiah graphically describes how inappropriately priests behave when intoxicated, confirming the warnings given by the other writers. “Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them!” (Isaiah 5:11). The inflamed condition of the drunkard’s stomach illustrates the effect of alcoholic liquors. To such, the ordinary food does not satisfy the appetite. The system feels a want, a craving, for something more stimulating, until they drink their souls to death.

The biblical descriptions of alcohol consumption mostly reveal inappropriate and undesirable behaviors and warn against these. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8), is a warning given by the apostle Peter. In other words, those who are not sober, the drunkards, will surely fall prey of the devil.

Paul, too, has words of caution regarding alcohol. “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). One cannot be filled with Spirit of God at the same time drunken with alcohol or having gluttonously taken new wine (unfermented fresh juice).

Many have misinterpreted the Bible to suggest that it endorses moderate drinking of alcohol. This is based largely on the use of the term “wine” in the Bible. The term “wine” in the Bible is used to refer to either unfermented fresh juice or fermented juice, the latter being alcoholic and is condemned. In some cases, the Bible uses the term “new wine” to refer to fresh unfermented juice.

For God’s people, it is fresh unfermented juice the Bible recommends. “As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants’ sakes, that I may not destroy them” (Isaiah 65:8). This kind of wine is the only wine in the Bible that has God’s blessings. The fermented wine – alcoholic wine, is a curse.

Some have argued that Jesus made alcohol, but this a pure lie, for Jesus never could have gone against His own word to bless that which is a curse. We find the story in John 2, where Jesus turned water into wine at a small wedding in Cana of Galilee, making a total of “six waterpots” into wine. In an estimate, each pot was about 30 gallons, making 180 gallons in total. Did Jesus go contrary to the Old Testament and make 180 gallons of alcohol to intoxicate and destroy His own people?

Jesus knew the Bible, His own word, and he could not have intoxicated His people. “Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!” (Habakkuk 2:15). If Jesus had made alcohol at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, His own word would have declared “woe unto him” and He would not have been our saviour. It was unfermented wine, fresh juice that Jesus made.

Moreover, Jesus told the parable of the drunkard servant who would be destroyed. “But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers” (Luke 12:45, 46). Jesus could not have contradicted Himself by providing alcohol to His people at Cana to eat and “drink, and to be drunken.” Jesus made pure unfermented juice for His people to enjoy.

The fact science can attest is that alcohol causes intoxication by a process that deprives the brain of oxygen. This deprivation destroys brain cells,

affecting, ultimately, the reasoning powers of conscious thought. Would Jesus, the Creator of the body, condone something that would weaken moral inhibitions, reduce the power of effective decision, and finally destroy the sacred body temple of the Holy Spirit? Never! Jesus simply would cease to be Jesus if He ever made alcohol. The truth is, Jesus turned water into pure unfermented juice.

Others have sought to argue that little alcohol is good for the stomach. They point, in error of interpretation, to the counsel given to Timothy by Paul. "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities" (1 Timothy 5:23). Was Paul recommending alcohol or pure juice? If alcohol, he would contradict himself, for he had said earlier to Timothy not to drink alcohol. "A bishop then must be blameless, sober, Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; not a brawler" (1 Timothy 3:2, 3). Science attests that alcohol brings ulcers. Alcohol then could not have been a cure for stomach, and Paul could not have recommended alcohol to Timothy.

Moreover, both Timothy and Paul were disciples and could not have drunk alcohol, for the disciples were well known for their non-alcoholic conduct. The disciples of Jesus only would drink pure juice –

new wine, which was fresh unfermented grape juice. That is why at Pentecost the disciples were mocked for being drunk with fresh unfermented grape juice – new wine. “Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine” (Acts 2:13), but the disciples denied being drunken, “For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day” (verse 15). It is only new wine, that is, pure fresh juice, that both Timothy and Paul, as all other disciples, would drink, and Paul never recommended alcohol.

Even with grape juice or new wine, we find that Paul recommends it should not be taken in excess. He says to Timothy that deacons must not be “given to much wine” (1 Timothy 3:8). The wine here is not alcohol as some suppose. The Bible counsels against taking good things in excess. We find similar counsel about honey. “It is not good to eat much honey: so for men to search their own glory is not glory” (Proverbs 25:27). The argument that one should drink alcohol in moderation is not biblical.

The dangers of alcohol are well documented in the Bible for our caution. We find Noah becoming naked for the curse of alcohol. “And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent” (Genesis 9:21). Noah’s sin is a

warning to us. If Noah, the only righteous man and his family saved from the floods, could fall by use of alcohol, we must not be presumptuous to its snares.

Of Lot is recorded of terrible sin resulting from alcohol. Lot was raped and he committed incest under the influence of alcohol. "And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose" (Genesis 19:33). Today, how many rapes are committed under the influence of alcohol? Should this story of Lot not be a warning to us?

Of the Israelites as a nation, is recorded the results of being drunken, ending up in nakedness and worshiping idols. "And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play ... And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:)" (Exodus 32:6, 25). They drunk alcohol until they stripped naked and worshipped the golden calf that Aaron had made.

Of Amnon, the son of King David, is recorded the rape of his sister, and his being thereafter murdered under the influence of alcohol. "And Absalom spake

untt his brother Amnon neither good nor bad: for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar ... Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant" (2 Samuel 13:22, 28).

Should Kings and statesmen drink alcohol? No, the Bible condemns drinking of alcohol for all, including statesmen. "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink" (Proverbs 31:4). When Kings and statesmen disobey God and drink alcohol, history records awful results.

In Daniel 5 is recorded that King Belshazzar "made a great feast to a thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand" (verse 1). All the attractions that wealth and power could command, added splendour to the scene. Beautiful women with their enchantments were among the guests in attendance at the royal banquet. Men of genius and education were there. Princes and statesmen drank wine like water, and revelled under its maddening influence. With reason dethroned through shameless intoxication, and with lower impulses and

passions now in the ascendancy, the king himself took the lead in the riotous orgy.

At the very moment when the feasting was at its height, a bloodless hand came forth, and traced on the wall of the banqueting room the doom of the king and his kingdom. "Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin," were the words written, and they were interpreted by Daniel to mean, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. . . . Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians" (verses 25-28). And the record tells us, "In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom" (verses 30 and 31).

The world today is overtaken by alcoholic drunkenness. The Lord cannot bear much longer with an intemperate and perverse generation. There are many solemn warnings in the Scriptures against the use of intoxicating liquors. In the days of old, when Moses was rehearsing the desire of Jehovah concerning His people, there were uttered against the drunkard the following words:

"And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to

thirst: the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and His jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven” (Deuteronomy 29:19, 20).

The use of alcohol among the Israelites was one of the causes that finally resulted in their captivity. Through the prophet Amos the Lord said to them:

“Woe to them that are at ease in Zion. . . . Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near; that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; that chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed” (Amos 6:1-7).

Solomon laments: “Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning! Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles, and thy princes eat in due season, for strength, and not for drunkenness!” (Ecclesiastes

10:16, 17). “It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted” (Proverbs 31:4, 5).

The Jews had a tradition of offering alcohol to those who were perishing – those that are getting lost. “Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts” (Proverbs 31:6). The Jews, by this tradition, and thinking that Jesus was lost for being crucified on the cross, “for he that is hanged is accursed of God” (Deuteronomy 21:23), they gave Jesus alcohol to drink but He refused: “And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received it not” (Mark 15:23). Such alcohol was meant for the perishing person, who was hopeless, so that he forgets his sorrows whilst perishing. “Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more” (Proverbs 31:7).

Hopeless people drink alcohol to drown their sorrows; they forget that sorrows know how to swim. But Christians do not need alcohol to drown their sorrows. We are not hopeless. We take all our sorrows to Christ, not to alcohol. Christ says to us, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). If

we are tempted to drink alcohol, we still take the desire to Christ in prayer, for “the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished” (2 Peter 2:9). The lasting remedy to all our sorrows can only be found in Christ.

As Christians we do not resolve sorrows by alcohol as the world does, for we are holy and special to God. “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Peter 2:9). Peter echoes the words of Moses, “And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). As holy people, we are commanded: “do not drink wine nor strong drink” (Leviticus 10:9). No Christian can drink alcohol and remain “an holy nation, a peculiar people.” Christians must abstain from alcohol.

The pure juice of the grape, free from fermentation, is a wholesome drink. But many of the alcoholic drinks which are now so largely consumed contain death-dealing potions. Those who partake of them are often maddened, bereft of their reason. Under their deadly influence men commit crimes of violence and often murder. Other similar popular

drinks, including coke, have differing degrees of negative effects on the physical and mental health – and must be discarded on the same grounds as alcohol. Most soft drinks are as unsafe as alcohol.

We can be sure that the use of alcohol is one of the devil's greatest traps. How many millions of lives have been ruined over the centuries through use of this dangerous drug, which is poison to both the body and the mind. How much better for our loved ones and ourselves were we to avoid this dangerous trap completely, with no compromise at all.

Coffee and tea

The effects of coffee and tea to our health are well documented in the world's health literature. Coffee and tea, frankly, are poisonous drugs, to which many are slaves. The most pathetic proof of this drug-slavery is to be found in expectant mothers. With all the accumulation of medical data proving the damaging effect of caffeine in coffee and tea (in addition to alcohol) on the fetuses, pregnant women still pour the poison into the bodies of their unborn babies. It might be possible to understand a woman willing to risk her own life and health by a perverse indulgence in chemical poisons, but how

could she so deliberately endanger the life of her child? To most, drinking coffee and tea it is a drug addition.

Coffee and tea do not nourish the system. The relief obtained from them is sudden, before the stomach has time to digest them. This shows that what the users of these stimulants call strength is only received by exciting the nerves of the stomach, which convey the irritation to the brain, and this in turn is aroused to impart increased action to the heart and short-lived energy to the entire system. All this is false strength that we are the worse for having. They do not give a particle of natural strength.

Coffee is a hurtful indulgence. It temporarily excites the mind to unwonted action, but the aftereffect is exhaustion, prostration, paralysis of the mental, moral, and physical powers. The mind becomes enervated, and unless through determined effort the habit is overcome, the activity of the brain is permanently lessened. All these nerve irritants are wearing away the life forces, and the restlessness caused by shattered nerves, the impatience, the mental feebleness, become a warring element, antagonising to spiritual progress.

Should not professed Christians, purchased by the blood of Christ, be awake to counteract the evils of these injurious drinks? A Christian yet a caffeine addict? In some cases it is as difficult to break up the coffee and tea habit as it is for the inebriate to discontinue the use of alcohol. But the money expended for coffee and tea is worse than wasted. They do the user only harm, and that continually.

Those who use alcohol, coffee, and tea, may sometimes live to an old age, but this fact is no argument in favour of the use of these stimulants. What these persons might have accomplished, but failed to do because of their intemperate habits, the great day of God alone will reveal. Those who abuse their health by the poisonous effects of coffee and tea shorten their life service to God. By these hurtful habits they live ungodly. Will they stand guiltless? "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter 4:18).

Those who resort to tea and coffee for stimulation to labour will feel the evil effects of this course in trembling nerves and lack of self-control. Tired nerves need rest and quiet. Nature needs time to recuperate her exhausted energies. But if her forces are goaded on by use of stimulants, there is,

whenever this process is repeated, a lessening of real force. For a time more may be accomplished under the unnatural stimulus, but gradually it becomes more difficult to rouse the energies to the desired point, and at last exhausted nature can no longer respond. Christians must not live unhealthily.

Drinking coffee and tea is indulgence of fleshly lusts, which wars against the soul. The apostle in the most impressive manner, addresses Christians, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (Romans 12:1). If the body is saturated with coffee and tea and the defilement of toxins, it is not holy and acceptable to God. Satan knows that it cannot be, and for this reason he brings his temptations to bear upon men upon the point of appetite, that he may bring them into bondage to this propensity and thus work their ruin. Christians must not defile their body temples.

God calls for a living sacrifice, not a dead or dying one. When we realise the requirements of God, we shall see that He requires us to be temperate in all things. The end of our creation is to glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are His. How can we do this when we indulge the appetite to the injury of the physical and moral powers? God requires that

we present our bodies a living sacrifice. Then the duty is enjoined on us to preserve that body in the very best condition of health, that we may comply with His requirements. "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Is drinking coffee and tea a sin? Of course it is! We dare not call it less than a sin. With all the knowledge around us, we know coffee and tea is not good for our health; is it then not sin if you continue drinking that which is harmful? "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17). Anything that defiles the body is sin, and God will destroy the defiler. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Corinthians 3:17). If you are a defiler of God's body-temple, unless you repent, you will never go to heaven, for "there shall in nowise enter into it anything that defileth" (Revelation 21: 27).

Tobacco

Tobacco is recognised by nearly all as being the world's most rampant killer. Tobacco continues to be the largest single cause of preventable death

throughout the world. There are warnings on the cigarette boxes; these go unheeded by many. Information is not preventive if we do not act on it. On most cigarette packets is written a warning "smoking kills", the law says, "thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13), yet smokers kill their own lives by a slow death. Smoking is suicide by installment.

That warning against tobacco is written on cigarette boxes is enough evidence of the world's acceptance of scientific research into the noxious effect of nicotine on the body. Nicotine contained in tobacco is possibly the most deadly poison known to man. Millions continue to die as a result of its malignant influence. By constricting the arteries of the body, nicotine forces the heart to overexert. Lungs have become riddled with carcinoma. Fetuses have been fatally affected. Hardly an organ of the body escapes the insidious effect of the fatal nicotine poison. Yet people quit not smoking.

Tobacco is a slow, insidious, but most malignant poison. In whatever form it is used, it tells upon the constitution of the body; it is all the more dangerous because its effects are slow and at first hardly perceptible. Its use excites a thirst for strong drink and in many cases lays the foundations for the liquor habit.

It is not unusual picture to see seemingly intelligent people in workplaces start off their busy working day with a cigarette in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other hand, then continue with coffee, tea and tobacco throughout the day, only to finish up with pints of alcohol in the evening to put to sleep their often self-inflicted day's sorrows. This circle of hurtful indulgence is continued week after week, month after month, and year after year, until the body retires. What a wretched intemperate life!

No human being needs tobacco, but multitudes are perishing for want of the means that by its use is worse than wasted. If only the money was put to a better use! Have you not been misappropriating the Lord's money? Have you not been guilty of robbery toward God and your fellow men? "Know ye not that 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" (I Corinthians 6:19, 20).

Is smoking tobacco a sin? Yes indeed it is a sin! Anything that destroys the body temple is sin, and that is why God will destroy whoever defiles his body. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Corinthians 3:17). We dare not smoothen smoking tobacco to call it less than sin.

Whilst some people are ignorant of the negative effects of smoking, the majority are simply addicts and enslaved in the habit. These do experience a tremendous conflict between their knowledge of the poisonous fact of tobacco and their addiction. They are slaves to tobacco and find it just as hard to give up smoking as to give up alcoholic and caffeinated drinks. Scientific methods of overcoming these addictions have their place, but a complete victory over these habits is only available in Christ. No addict who truly is willing to glorify God in his body can fail to quit smoking. A new birth experience in Christ must be sought in earnest prayer.

Conclusion

Now, if you are willing to honour God, where do you go from here? Simply stop completely the hurtful habit of drinking alcohol, coffee, or tea, and quit smoking. Decide to give up all and pray to God for victory. It is only when you are willing to give up all the habits will you receive full victory. Do not fall for the temptation to gradually give up the habit. A habit is a habit. If you cut off the “h” you still have “abit” left. If you then cut off the “a” you have a “bit” left. If you further cut off the “b” you will still have “it”

left. Even after cutting off the “i” you are left with “t.” And if your habit was “t” as in “tea,” you have no full victory over the habit yet.

In relation to alcohol, coffee, tea, and tobacco, the only safe course is to touch not, taste not, handle not. The tendency of coffee, tea, and similar drinks is in the same direction as that of alcoholic liquor and tobacco, and in some cases the habit is as difficult to break as it is for the drunkard to give up intoxicants.

Those who attempt to leave off these stimulants will for a time feel a loss, and will suffer without them. But by persistence they will overcome the craving, and cease to feel the lack. Nature may require a little time to recover from the abuse she has suffered; but give her a chance, and she will again rally, and perform her work nobly and well.

Our bodies are Christ’s purchased possession, and we are not at liberty to do with them as we please. All who understand the laws of health should realise their obligation to obey these laws, which God has established in their being. Obedience to the laws of health is to be made a matter of personal duty. We ourselves must suffer the results of violated law. We must individually answer to God for our habits and practices.

Therefore the question with us is not, what is the world's practice? but, how shall I as an individual treat the habitation that God has given me? In obeying health laws, as the body temple purchased by Christ, we must practice total abstinence from alcohol, coffee, tea, and tobacco. Whoever defiles the body temple with these hurtful indulgences, "him shall God destroy" (1 Corinthians 3:17).

You who are waiting for the soon return of our Lord Jesus Christ, to "be caught up together with" resurrected saints "in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" so as to forever "be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:17), must now "walk, even as he walked" (1 John 2:6) with purity of your whole being.

Are you in sorrow and without peace? Drowning yourself in alcohol to forget your sorrows, gaining false strength from coffee or tea, constricting your nerves with tobacco to gain temporary control over your nervousness, will not give you lasting peace in this troubled world. Only a trust in God can keep you in peace. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee" (Isaiah 26:3). Obey God to obtain peace.

Finally, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

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