

## GOD OR MAMMON?

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No servant can serve two masters : for either he will hate the one, and love the other ; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon (Luke xvi. 13).

He that is not with me is against me ; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad (Matt. xii. 30).

Enormous expanses of the best land, from which millions of now suffering families might have gained a sustenance, are covered with tobacco, grapes, barley, hops, and, above all else, rye and potatoes, which are used for the preparation of spirituous beverages, wine, beer, and, above all else, whiskey.

Millions of working people, who might have been producing useful things for men, are occupied in the manufacture of these articles. It has been figured out that in England one-tenth part of the working people are busy manufacturing whiskey and beer.

What are the consequences from the preparation and use of tobacco, wine, whiskey, and beer ?

There is an old story about a monk who disputed with the devil, saying that he would not let him into his cell, but that if he let him in, he would do the devil's bidding.

The story tells how the devil assumed the form of a wounded raven, with a broken wing, who leaped about pitifully near the door of the monk's cell. The monk took pity on the raven with the broken and bleeding wing and took him into his cell. Then the devil, upon entering the cell, offered the monk the choice of three crimes, - murder, adultery, or intoxication. The monk chose intoxication, thinking that in getting drunk he would only harm himself. But when he drank, he lost his reason, went to the village, and there succumbed to the temptation of a woman and committed adultery, and then murder, while defending himself against the husband, who came home and attacked him.

Thus are the consequences of drunkenness described in an ancient story, and such in reality are the consequences from the use of intoxicating liquors. A thief, a murderer, hardly ever commits a crime while in a sober state.

From court records it may be seen that nine-tenths of all crimes are committed while the criminal is drunk. The best proof of the fact that the greater number of crimes are called forth by wine, may be found in the circumstance that in certain States of America, where wine and the importation of spirituous liquors are entirely pro

hibited, crimes have almost stopped: there are no thefts, no robberies, no murders, and the prisons stand empty.

Such is one of the consequences of the use of intoxicating liquors.

Another consequence is the harmful influence produced by intoxicating liquors upon the health of people. Not only does the use of intoxicating liquors produce especial, painful diseases, which are peculiar only to drinking people, but it has also been observed that drinking people who get sick with the common diseases do not convalesce so easily, so that the insurance companies always give preferred insurance on the lives of those who do not use intoxicating liquors.

Such is the second consequence of the use of intoxicating liquors.

The third, the most terrible, consequence of intoxicating liquors is this, that liquor dims men's reason and conscience: the use of liquor makes people coarser, more stupid, and more evil.

What good is there then in the use of intoxicating liquors?

None at all.

The defenders of whiskey, wine, and beer used to assert that these beverages add health and strength, and warm a person up and cheer him. But it has now been proved beyond any doubt that that is not true. The intoxicating liquors do not add health, because they contain a powerful poison, — alcohol, — and the consumption of a poison cannot be anything but harmful.

It has been frequently proved that liquor does not add to a man's strength, by comparing for months and years the work of equally good workmen, of whom one drank and another did not, when it appeared that the one who did not drink did more and better work than the one who drank, and by this, that in those commands of soldiers which during expeditions receive whiskey, there are always more disabled men and stragglers than in those where no whiskey is distributed.

Similarly it has been proved that liquor does not warm a man up, and that the warmth from wine consumed does not stay long with one, and that after a short period of warmth a person experiences greater cold, so that prolonged cold is always harder on a drinker than on one who does not drink. Every year people freeze to death mainly from having warmed themselves up with liquor.

That the cheerfulness which comes from liquor is not real and not joyous, there is even no need of proving. Everybody knows what cheerfulness this is that comes from intoxication. One need but observe what is going on in the cities during the holidays in the restaurants, and in the villages during holidays, christenings, and weddings. This cheerfulness from intoxication always ends in curses, fights, broken limbs, all kinds of crimes, and the degradation of human dignity.

Liquor gives neither health, nor strength, nor warmth, nor cheerfulness, but does people much harm. And so, it would seem, every rational, good man ought not only him self to abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors and from treating others to them, but also with all his strength to try to destroy the habit of the use of this worthless and harmful poison.

But, unfortunately, nothing of the kind takes place. People value so much their old customs and habits, and with such difficulty get rid of them, that there are in our time very many good, sensible people, who not only do not abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors and from treating others to them, but even defend this use as best they can.

" It is not the wine that is blameworthy," they say, "but drunkenness. King David said, 'Wine gladdens the heart of man.' Christ in Cana of Galilee blessed the wine. If people did not drink, the government would lose its most important revenue. It is impossible to celebrate a holiday, a christening, a wedding without wine. How can we abstain from drinking wine in closing a bargain, in meeting a beloved guest?"

" Considering our work and labour, we cannot get along without drinking," says a poor labourer.

" If we drink only on special occasions and with moderation, we do not do any one any harm," say well-to-do people.

" A Russ taketh pleasure in drinking," said Prince Vladimir.

" No one suffers from our drinking but ourselves. And if we suffer, that is our business; we do not care to teach anybody, and do not want to be taught by any one ; not with us did this begin, and not with us will it end," say unthinking people.

Thus speak drinkers of every condition and age, trying to justify themselves. But these justifications, which were of some value some decades ago, are now of no use.

It was all very well to say this at a time when all thought that the use of intoxicating liquors added to a man's health and strength; when it was not yet known that liquor contained a poison which was always injurious to man's health; when men did not yet know of those terrible consequences of drunkenness, which now are before everybody.

It was possible to say this when there were not yet those hundreds and thousands of people who die an untimely death in terrible agonies, only because they have become accustomed to drinking intoxicating liquors and are no longer able to abstain from the use of them. It was all very well to say that wine was a harmless pleasure, when we did not yet see those hundreds and thousands of hungry, worn-out women and children, who suffer only because their husbands and fathers became addicted to the use of liquor. It was

all very well to say so, so long as we did not yet see those hundreds and thousands of criminals, who fill the prisons, the places of deportation, and the mines, and of ruined lewd women, who fell into their state only thanks to liquor. It was all very well to say so, when we did not know that hundreds of thousands of people, who might have lived their lives in joy to themselves and to people, wasted their strength and their minds and their souls, because there exist intoxicating liquors, and they were tempted by them.

And so it is not possible in our day to say that the drinking or the non-drinking of liquor is a private matter, that we do not consider a moderate use of liquor to be harmful for us and do not wish to teach any one or be taught by any one, that this did not begin with us and will not end with us. It is impossible to say so now ; the use of liquor or the abstinence from it is in our time not a private, but a common matter.

Now all people – whether they wish it or not – are divided into two camps: some struggle against the use of the worthless poison, the intoxicating liquors, with words and deeds, by not using liquor themselves and not treating others to it; others in words, and still more powerfully by their example, maintain the use of this poison ; and this struggle is now going on in every country, and has been particularly virulent in Russia for the last twenty years.

" When ye did not know, there was no sin on you," said Christ. Now we know what we are doing and whom we serve, when we use liquor and treat others to it, and so, if, knowing the sin of the use of liquor, we continue to drink and treat others to it, we have no justification.

Let no one say that it is impossible not to drink and not to treat others on certain occasions, – at holidays, weddings, and similar occasions, – that everybody does so, that our fathers and grandfathers did so, and that, therefore, we cannot act differently from the rest. It is not true: our forefathers and fathers gave up those evil and harmful habits, the evil of which became obvious to them ; even so we are obliged to give up the evil which has become obvious in our time. But that liquor has in our time become a terrible evil, of that there cannot be any doubt. How, then, knowing that the use of intoxicating liquors is an evil, which ruins hundreds of thousands of men, shall I treat to this evil my friends who have called on me on a holiday, at a christening, or a wedding ?

It has not always been as it is now, but everything has changed from worse to better, and this change did not take place of its own accord, but because people did what their reason and conscience demanded of them. Even now our reason and conscience demand in the most emphatic manner that we should stop drinking liquor and treating others to it.

It is generally considered right to condemn and despise those drunkards who in saloons and restaurants drink until they lose their reason and are so addicted to liquor that they cannot contain

themselves and spend everything they have for drinks. But those who take their liquor home, drink daily in moderate quantities, and treat their guests to it on proper occasions, are considered to be good, respectable men, who are not doing anything wrong. But it is these people that are more worthy of condemnation than the drunkards.

The drunkards became such only because the non drunkards, without doing any harm to themselves, taught them how to drink liquor, – tempted them with their own example. The drunkards would never become such, if they did not see honourable people, who are respected by everybody, drink liquor and treat others to it. A young man, who never drank any liquor, will learn the taste and the action of liquor on a holiday or at a wedding of those honourable people, who are no drunk ards, but who drink and treat their guests on certain occasions.

And so he who drinks liquor, no matter how moder ately he may drink, no matter on what especial, generally accepted occasions he may treat people to it, commits a great sin. He tempts those who are not to be tempted, of whom it says, " Woe unto him that shall offend one of these little ones." They say: " Not with us did it begin, and not with us will it end." Yes, it will end with us, if only we shall understand that drinking or not drinking liquor is not a matter of indifference for each of us ; that with every bottle that we buy, with every glass of wine that we drink, we contribute to that terrible, devilish affair, from which the best human forces perish; and that, on the contrary, by abstaining from liquor in our own case and putting a stop to the senseless habit of using liquor on holidays and at weddings and christenings, we perform a work of vast importance, – the work of our soul, the wurk of God. Let us but understand this, and drunken ness will end with us.

And so, no matter who you, reader, may be, – whether a young man just preparing for life, or a grown person, just established in life, an adult householder, or an aging man, – when the time of accounting for your acts is near, – whether you be rich or poor, famous or unknown, – whoever you may be, you can no longer remain in the middle between the two camps, you must inevitably choose one thing or the other, – to counteract drunken ness or contribute to it, – to serve God or mammon.

If you are a young man, and have never drunk, have never yet poisoned yourself with liquor, hold in esteem your purity and freedom from offence. If you have already succumbed to the offence, it will be harder for you to overcome it. Do not believe that liquor increases cheerfulness. Cheerfulness, true, good cheerfulness, is proper in your years, and liquor will only change your true, innocent cheerfulness into a drunken, mad, vicious cheerfulness. Above all else, beware of liquor, because in your years it is hardest to abstain from other offences, while liquor weakens the power of reason, which is so nec essary in your years, and which counteracts the offences.

Having drunk liquor, you will do something that you did not even think of in your sober mood. Why should you subject yourself to such a terrible danger ?

But if you are a grown person, who have already made a habit of intoxicating liquors, or who are beginning to get used to them, – give up that terrible habit, while there is still time, or else, before you look around, it will take possession of you, and you may become just like those hopelessly ruined drunkards, who have perished from liquor. They all began like you. If you should be able all your life to stick to a moderate use of intoxicating liquors and did not yourself become a drunkard, you, by continuing to drink liquor and treating others to it, may cause your younger brother, your wife, your children, to become drunkards, if they have not the strength to stop at a moderate use of liquor. Above all else, you must understand that upon you, as a person in the most powerful age of life, a master or mistress of the house, the guide of life, rests the duty of guiding the lives of your family. And so, if you know that liquor does not do any good, causes great evil to men, you are not only not obliged slavishly to repeat what your forefathers did, – to use liquor, to buy it and treat others to it, but, – on the contrary, are obliged to set aside this custom and substitute another for it.

Be not afraid that the abolition of the habit of drinking wine on holidays and at christenings and weddings will very much offend or provoke people. In many places people are already beginning to do this, by substituting savoury food and non-alcoholic drinks for the customary liquor; and it is only at first that people, only the most stupid of them, marvel, for they soon get used to this and approve of it.

But if you are an old man, of an age when, sooner or later, you shall have to account to God how you served Him, and you, instead of turning inexperienced young men away from liquor, – a terrible evil, which you could not help but notice during your life, – tempt others with your example, by drinking liquor or treating others to it, you are committing a great sin.

" Woe unto the world because of offences ' for it must needs be that offences come ; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh." If people only comprehended that in the matter of the use of liquor there is now no middle way, and whether we want to or not, we must choose one or the other: to serve God or mammon.

"He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."