

# THE KING'S SON;

OR,

## A MEMOIR OF BILLY BRAY.

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### CHAPTER IX.

#### DRINKING AND SMOKING.

"What! know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost 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."—1 Cor. vi. 20.

ANY life of Billy Bray would be considered by all who knew him as incomplete that did not refer to his strong detestation of the pernicious habits of taking intoxicating drinks, and of smoking. He bore a life-long and emphatic testimony against these evils. He had been much debased by drunkenness, and a perfect slave to the pipe. "When I heard," he says, "that Mr. Teare was coming to Hicks Mill to lecture on Teetotalism, I thought I would go to hear him, but that I would not sign the pledge; for a little drop, if a man does not take too much, will do him good. As I listened to what Mr. Teare had to say, the darkness was removed from my mind, and I thought I would sign the pledge; and before Mr. Teare had finished speaking I shouted out to friend Tregaskis, 'Thomas, put down my name!'" and from that hour he was not only a staunch teetotaller, but also one of the most earnest and successful advocates of the great and holy cause of temperance. That so many persons have been saved from sin and shame by the safeguard of teetotalism ought to be a sufficient reason for all good people to render it their support. Billy used to say, so Mr. Ashworth tells us, "'If Satan ever catches me, it will be with the ale-pot. Men set lime sticks to catch birds, and Satan sets wine-bottles and ale-pots to catch fools, but I will not touch a drop, then I shall never get drunk.'

"At one temperance meeting, speaking of moderation, he said, 'Ye might as well hang an old woman's apron in the gap of a potato field to prevent the old sow with young pigs from going in, as expect a drunkard to be cured with moderation. Satan knows that, so he sets the little pot to catch him again.'"

He also fully endorsed the opinion which he had heard expressed, that public-houses were *hell-houses*. He knew one house where *nineteen* men got drunk, and while in a state of intoxication fell into "shafts," and were killed.

“*Hell-houses*,” he would say, “indeed they are!—for they are places where people are *prepared for hell*, and they *help* people on their way.” But with his love of antithesis, and his habitual cheerfulness, even “hell-houses” reminded him of chapels, where people are converted and prepared for heaven, and therefore might properly be called “*heaven-houses*.”

But the evils of drinking are so generally admitted, that we need not insist on the importance of Temperance, or attempt to describe the benefits that come, with autumn ripeness and bountifulness, on all persons who embrace and advocate its principles. But the case is different with the growing evil of *smoking*, and Billy’s views thereon we cannot lightly pass over without being unfaithful to his memory. He says—

“I had been a smoker as well as a drunkard, and I used to love my tobacco as much as I loved my meat, and I would rather go down into the mine without my dinner than without my pipe. In the days of old the Lord spoke by the mouth of His servants the prophets; now He speaks to us by the Spirit of His Son. I had not only the feeling part of religion, but I could hear the small still voice within speaking to me. When I took the pipe to smoke, it would be applied within, ‘It is an idol, a lust, worship the Lord with *clean lips*.’ So I felt it was not right to smoke. The Lord also sent a woman to convince me. I was one day in a house, and I took out my pipe to light it at the fire, and Mary Hawke—for that was the woman’s name—said, ‘Do you not feel it is wrong to smoke?’ I said, ‘I felt something inside telling me it is an idol, a lust;’ and she said that was the Lord. Then I said, ‘Now I must give it up, for the Lord is telling me of it inside, and the woman outside; so the tobacco must go, love it as I may.’ There and then I took the tobacco out of my pocket, and threw it into the fire, and put the pipe under my foot, ‘ashes to ashes, dust to dust.’ And I have not smoked since. I found it hard to break off old habits; but I cried to the Lord for help, and he gave me strength, for He has said, ‘Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.’ The day after I gave up smoking I had the toothache so bad I did not know what to do. I thought this was owing to giving up the pipe, but I said I would never smoke again if I lost every tooth in my head. I said, ‘Lord, thou hast told us, ‘My yoke is easy, and my burden is light,’ and when I said that all the pain left me. Sometimes the thought of the pipe would come back to me very strong; but the Lord strengthened me against the habit; and, bless His name, I have not smoked since.”

Mr. Maynard says that, after Billy had given up smoking, he thought he would chew a little; but he conquered this dirty habit too. “On one occasion,” he says, “when at a prayer meeting at Hicks Mill, I heard the Lord say to me, ‘Worship me with clean lips.’ So. when we got up from our knees, I took the quid (and when speaking of it he would suit the action to the word) out of my mouth, and ‘whipp’d en’ (threw it) under the form. But when we got

on our knees again, I put another ‘quid’ into my mouth. Then the Lord said to me again, ‘Worship me with clean lips.’ So I took the ‘quid’ out of my mouth, and ‘whipp’d en’ under the form again and said, ‘Yes, Lord, I will.’ From that time I gave up chewing as well as smoking and have been a free man.”

Smoking and chewing are expensive and wasteful habits, and this view of the matter is worthy of consideration by working-men who find it difficult to live honestly in the world, and especially by Christian working-men who find it still more difficult to render any but the most trifling pecuniary aid to the cause which they have espoused. More than twenty years after Billy had abandoned smoking, he said, “God has just given me enough money to pay my way through life, and nothing for the pipe. If I had spent only sixpence a week on the pipe I should have been at this time about thirty pounds in debt.” A thought surely worthy of the attention of those who indulge in any useless habit at the expense of others and to their own injury.

It was especially a gratification to Billy if he could persuade young men to imitate his example.\* He would tell them that the pipe “was no help to them in the way to heaven, but an enemy to body and mind and pocket. When the good spirit suggests to the mind of a good man to read a chapter in the Bible, the evil spirit which is after the flesh will say, ‘I will have a pull at the pipe first;’ and by the time he has lit his pipe and smoked, something comes along for him to do, and he does not read at all for that time. When it comes into his mind to pray, it is said, ‘I would have a pipe first,’ and by the time the pipe is done, something comes in his way that calls him off; and there is no praying for that time. *The pipe has robbed the Christian of hundreds of chapters and prayers*, besides proving injurious in point of health and wealth.

But persons say, “It is their right, and they will not give it up.” But Billy would say they must give up every idol for the Lord’s sake, who gave His

\* “After fifty years of the most extensive and varied practice in my profession, I have come to the decision that smoking is a main cause of *ruining our young men*, pauperizing the working-men, and rendering comparatively useless the best efforts of ministers of religion.” —*John Higginbottom, Esq., M.R.C.S.*

“The first cigar that a young man puts into his mouth is often his first step in a career of vice.”—*John Angell James,*

“Smoking,” a clergyman says, “is Satan’s seed-basket, with which he beguiles unwary souls.”

Mr. Scott, the Chamberlain of the City of London remarks, “The apprentices of the City who violate the covenants of their indentures are amenable to my Court; and my first inquiry invariably is, Does the boy drink? and as invariably the answer is, No. Does he smoke? and in nearly every instance the reply is, Yes.” “Seventeen out of twenty cases of criminal offenses in Manchester and Salford gaols,” says Mr. Thomas Wright, “are in connection with smoking and drinking—the former generally preceding the latter.”

These quotations are taken from the “Fascinator; or The Knight’s Legacy.”

last drop of blood for them. Once while he was speaking warmly on this subject, a gentleman said he was speaking what was not right. Billy said, "Drink and smoke, is that right? It must be 'drink and smoke,' or '*not* drink and smoke?" The gentleman said no more and an old man said, "Billy Bray is right, for I smoked forty years, and it did me no good, and I have given it up now." But Billy had to confess afterwards that the same old man says Billy is *wrong*; for he had turned to his idol again and was a worse smoker than ever." Some who abandoned the habit soon took it up again, and exposed themselves to Billy's sarcasm, "that a little pipe could beat them." He told a person who said that he was tempted, to go and tell the Lord about it. The man said "I do not know whether it is the devil who is tempting me or not, for it is continually coming into my mind to give up the pipe." Billy answered, "I do not think that *that* is the devil. I told him to stop, and not throw away his pipe till we had prayed and cast lots, and if it came to his lot to throw the pipe away he should. We knelt down, and asked the Lord to show us by the lot what we ought to do; and as it came for him to give up his pipe, he threw it away for the time. After a day or two he said to me, he thought there was some good in the pipe after all. Then I said to him, 'Thee has cut the head of the beer-quart off, but only chopped the tail of the tobacco-pipe off; thee wilt have it again soon.' And he did, but after a while he gave it up finally."

Billy was particularly hard upon preachers through whose example many, he believed, of the Lord's people were induced to depart from the right way. He considered no favour should be extended to them. He was hardly at liberty to be charitable in the matter, for it was the Lord's work, and soon all would have to answer for their conduct in the judgment; some for continuing to smoke, and others for giving it up, and he felt confident as to what the decision of the Great Judge would be. "If the preachers smoke, I may smoke too," was the argument he felt he could not answer, except by bringing a *charge* against the preachers, which he was most unwilling to do. "*Defile not yourselves with idols,*" and "*Mortify the deeds of the body,*" were, in Billy's view, such definite commands, that for Christians to smoke seemed to him to be the most glaring inconsistency.

Billy and a preacher of somewhat the same type of character were holding a missionary meeting at F——. Billy opened the meeting with prayer, and the preacher and others fervently responded to many of his petitions. Observing this, he began to be more minute and pointed in his requests. "O Lord, help the people to give up their idols." The preacher said, "Amen." "May Thy children be saved from the love of the world's fashions." "Amen," again said the preacher. "Help Thy people to give up their ribbons and feathers." "Amen," was still the response of the preacher; and again "Amen" when he added, "And their cups and drinks." "And their pipes and tobacco," but to

this there was no “Amen” from the preacher. Billy at once said, “Where’s your Amen, Br. B——? Why don’t you say ‘Amen’ to the pipes as well as the cups? Ah! yon won’t say ‘Amen’ to the pipes!” He then proceeded with his prayer. And what would be irreverent in most persons, did not appear so in him. But the preacher afterwards remonstrated with Billy on his impropriety in administering this personal rebuke in public. He justified himself by saying, “You were hearty and loud enough with your ‘Amens’ for others to give up their idols; but you are not willing to part with your own. Bless the Lord! I have given up *all* for my Saviour.”

At one time the same preacher was preaching when Billy Bray was present; warming with his subject, he exclaimed, “If my arms were long enough and strong enough, and God would give me permission, I would take you all and fly right away to heaven with you!” “And I,” said Billy Bray, “would be back again in half an hour for another turn.”

Persons sometimes are laughed out of idle habits, when serious remonstrance and Scriptural appeals are in vain. Billy frequently said, that if God intended man or woman to take snuff, the nose would have been turned upside down; and that an architect who built a house without a chimney, so that all the smoke came out at the front door, was in his opinion a very poor architect. And if the Lord intended men to smoke, He certainly would have made a little chimney at the back of the head for the smoke to pass through; but as He has not, I don’t think He intended for man to smoke; for surely the Lord could not be a worse architect than man.”