

Reader, I think you will admit that nothing is ever gained by swearing. There are certain sins which are regarded as being profitable by those who commit them. Gain is the motive by which they are actuated in the commission of these sins. But there is no sense whatever in which it can be said that swearing is profitable. Men generally swear without a purpose, and without a motive, and it is somewhat difficult to discover why they indulge in a habit by which they gain nothing and which is so foolish and offensive to all good men.

But suppose men did get rich by it. "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Matt. xvi. 26.) No swearer can enter the kingdom of God.

But what is the effect of the habit on the swearer himself? The effect is bad. He begins with a simple oath and trembles when he utters it, but soon the habit gains almost imperceptibly upon him, until he hardly knows when he does swear. He goes on adding sin to sin and when his cup of iniquity is full, he dies a swearer's death, and is buried in a swearer's grave. The writer once stood by the death bed of such an one—a young man—whose last words were profane oaths. "How dreadful such an end!"

This is not the worst. The evil effects of the habit do not stop with himself. The corrupting power of his example is felt in others, and often to a sad and ruinous extent, and probably will continue to be so felt to the end of time. One profane person, says an excellent writer, makes multitudes, corrupts his professed friends, his daily companions, his near relations and all with whom he corresponds, so far as they are capable of being corrupted. They again corrupt others, and they in their turn spread contagion through successive circles of mankind, increasing continually in their numbers and expansion. Like certain diseases of the human body, profaneness descends from person to person; and like the plague, is regularly caught by infection. As a regular stream of pollution it flows on blighting and withering everything in its course. May the swearer ponder these things in his heart.

The habit is so self-evidently wrong that one would think it needs only to be seen

to be hated. No one will attempt to defend or even justify it, not even the swearer himself. He will admit that it is perfectly inexcusable, and serves no good purpose whatever. Nay, the universal conscience of man condemns it, and yet it prevails almost universally. How are we to account for this? Because the depravity of the human heart is such that it loves to revel in iniquity. Men take pleasure in sin, and glory in their shame.

My reader, if you have followed me thus far, and are in the habit of swearing, I beg you will read the following closing lines with serious attention. They were written by a great and good man now in heaven. "*Now, therefore, thus saith the Lord, Consider your ways. Ask yourself what you gain; what you expect to gain; what you do not lose. Remember you lose your reputation, at least in the minds of the wise and good, and all the blessings of their company and friendship. That you sacrifice your peace of mind; that you break down all those principles on which virtue may be grafted, and with them every rational hope of eternal life; that you are rapidly becoming more and more corrupted day by day; and that with this deplorable character you are preparing to go to the judgment. Think what it will be to swear and curse; to mock God and insult your Redeemer through life, to carry your oaths and curses to a dying bed; to enter eternity with blasphemies in your mouth, and to stand before the final bar, when the last sound of profaneness has scarcely died upon your tongue.*"

If these considerations do not move you; if they do not make you tremble at the thought of what you are doing; if they do not force you to a solemn pause in the career of iniquity; if they do not compel you to retrace your downward steps, and return while it is in your power, to reformation and safety, I can only say, that you are hurried by an evil spirit to destruction, and that you will soon find yourself in the eternal dungeon of darkness and despair. What meanest thou! Arise, call upon God, if so be that He will hear thee, that thou perish not. Repent; and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Acts xvi. 31.—*S. Massey, Montreal.*