

MINISTERS AND TOBACCO.

A writer in the Chicago *Interior* speaks strongly on the above subject. The following extracts, we commend as healthy reading not only to ministers but to all tobacco users who wish to influence the world for good. Referring to a certain church, he says:

"A minister once went hundreds of miles to visit it. He was entertained in a delightful home. When he departed the family remembered him. They could not help it, for he had saturated their house with tobacco. It was not a pleasant memory for a minister to leave. The father of that family had taught his boys to abhor tobacco; this man of God set them the example of using it. The probabilities are that the boys would become disgusted with the minister and he could never have much good influence over them. Such cases suggest the question: Have ministers any moral right to use tobacco? In my own judgment they have not. Several reasons appear.

"First, it is useless and injurious. A few weeks ago a Christian physician, almost seventy years of age, took me into the cemetery and pointed out the grave of a son who died in the prime of life. He said, "Tobacco killed him." This same physician had long used tobacco himself, but he sought and obtained divine help to give it up.

"It is generally believed that smoking is bad for boys. The Legislature of Illinois thinks so, and I believe it has prohibited the selling of cigars to boys under sixteen years of age. Only yesterday the writer read the statement of a German physician to the effect that it often produces heart disease. Most people who use tobacco do so without any good reason. Certainly no minister has a right to do this. All his passions and appetites are to be brought under subjection. The Apostle was not even writing to ministers but to common Christians, when he said, "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." God's glory should govern every appetite and passion.

"Secondly, the tobacco habit is an extravagance. We complain of the liquor traffic because it wastes our national resources, and the point is well taken. Nine hundred million dollars are spent for strong drink every year. But look at our

tobacco bill! It foots up to six hundred million dollars. What a fearful waste! Waste is a sin. The minister teaches men that their property belongs to God and that they should use it for His glory. What can he say if he himself squanders money to gratify this appetite? In the city where the writer lives it has been said that the Christian congregations spend enough for tobacco to support their ministers. They would never think of giving a quarter of that amount to save the heathen.

"Thirdly, the tobacco habit cripples a minister's influence. This is a very serious matter. Perhaps it does not apply everywhere, certainly not with equal force. In some places the use of tobacco is so general that it is nothing thought of. A minister might use it and still retain the full respect of his people. But it is not so everywhere. That which Sam Jones could do with impunity in Georgia crippled his influence in Chicago. There are many good people who loathe tobacco. The very smell sickens some. They think that it is wrong to use it and have less respect for the minister who does so. The minister who uses it cannot have his best influence over these people. In some cases it will unfit him for the sick room.

Besides, the use of tobacco often leads to worse habits. No doubt it is sometimes a stepping-stone to intemperance. No minister should set an example that the young people of his congregation cannot safely follow.

"These are some reasons, briefly stated, why it seems improper for ministers to use tobacco. They apply with special force to young ministers. The coming clergyman is going to be a clean man. The Church will demand it. A large denomination has already interpreted the signs of the times so far as to refuse to ordain young men who are addicted to this habit. One honored doctor of divinity in our Church, who once smoked but has given it up, says, 'I am not sure but it hindered me from receiving one or two honorable calls. I am sure that I have a better digestion, that I feel better every way, and that I am glad that I am a clean, free man.' 'Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.'"

It is not sixty years since an order was issued by the Indian Government that "missionaries must not preach to natives."