

A Cloud of Witnesses,

Darting out Light upon a CASE, too Unreasonably made Reasonable to be Discourged on.

THE CASE before us, is not, Whether People of Quality may not Employ a Dancing-Master, with due Circumstances of Modesty to instruct their Children how to carry themselves handsomely, in Company? But, whether the Dancing-Hamour, as it now prevails, and especially in Balls, or in circumstances that Lead the young People of both Sexes, unto great Liberties with one another, be not a *Vanity* forbidden by the Rules of Christianity? And, If it be so, Whether Vertuous and Prudent Parents, will not Second Thoughts be very cautious, how far they expose their Children to the Temptations of such a *Vanity*? If a *Nonconformist* Minister should speak to this CASE, it may be thought Answer enough, That it is HE. Wherefore that the Reader may have no pretence to be Angry at any One such Minister, in the World, we will only bring some other Authorities.

'Tis fit we should begin with, The Sacred Scripture.

Rom. XIII. 13.

Let us walk honestly, [or decently] but not in

RIOTING.

A

1. Pet.

The Time past of our Life may suffice us, to have wrought the Will of the Gentiles, when we walked in REVELLINGS.

All the World, that understand the Greek Tongue, (and the greatest Interpreters.) confess, That the Greek word, *κωμος* Komos, which our Translators, in one place render, by, RIOTING, in another, by, REVELLING, is truly translated, by DANCING. 'Tis the very Thing, Expressly forbidden.

The ASSEMBLIES Larger Catechism.

Q. What are the Sins forbidden in the Seventh Commandment?

A.—Light Behaviour,—Unchast Company.—

DANCINGS, Stage-plays, and all other Provocations to Uncleanness in our selves or others.

Behold, A great Authority, and Reason with it. Phil. IV. 8.

Whatsoever things are of GOOD REPORT, Think on these things.

We will proceed unto some faithful Citations; from Fathers, yea, from Pagans; from Councils; from Divines of the Church of ENGLAND; yea, from Roman-Catholicks, and even Courtiers among them too: And we will not Cite so much as one word from any English Nonconformists, (who do not use to declare for less Vertue, than the rest of mankind!) that we may have some Account of the GOOD REPORT, which the Thing before us has had among all the Vertuous FATHERS:

The words of Chrysostom, and of Arnobius, and of Austin, and other Ancient Writers, are so full of Terrors and Thunders, against the Dances of their

their Times, that ours will not bear to bear them. We will be so complaisant, unto the *Modern Customs*, as only to Summ them up in this Epitome; *A Dance, is a Work of Satan, one of his Poms and Vanities, which all Baptised Persons are under Vows to Renounce.*

Only we will make so free with *Ambrose*, (who was no *Non-Conformist*, but a *Bishop*, and a *Confessor* too!) as to quote his Advice; *That if Godly Parents would not have the Souls of their Children corrupted and Ruined, they should be very cautious about sending them to the Dancing School.*

P A G A N S.

Macrobius informs us, That amongst the *Ancient Romans*, Dancing was look'd upon as *Infamous*.

Scipio Africanus, complained of it, as a *Degeneracy* in his Age, that Persons of Quality sent their Children to the *Dancing School*.

Salust, the *Historian*, reproached *Sempronius* as *infamous*, for having been a *Dancer*; their practice being, *The Instrument of Luxury*.

Cicero, in his *Oration for Muræna*, says, *Nemo Saltat Sobrius, nisi forte infamat.* A man must be either *Drunk*, or *Mad*, (says the *Orator*,) that is fond of *Dancing*. He Says, *That this Vice never goes alone*; & therefore he *Reproaches Gabinius & Antonius* with it.

Seneca bewails it, That in his Time Young ones were corrupted with *Dances*; and that *Dancing-Schools* were set up in the City. *Tiberius* himself, *Banished the Dancers* out of the City.

Priamus, in the *Poet*, severely reproves his Children, Because he understood they were, *opxusai Dancers*.

Plutarch, in his *Description of, A Vertuous Woman*, mentions this, as part of her Character, *She must not be a Dancer*.
CENI.

[4] C O U N C I L S.

It is well known, That the old *Councils*, Ordained no less a Censure, Than that of *Deposition* for a *Clergy-Man*, and that of *Excommunication* for other *People*, to bear a part in a *Dance*. Particularly, One assembled in *Trullo*. Can. 51. Yea, very many *Councils*, make it a Crime in *Clergy-Men* to be so much as the *Spectators* of a *Dance*.

We will descend unto late ones.

Many provincial Assemblies in *Holland*, have declared, That the Scourge of *Ecclesiastical Discipline* should be employed upon *Dancers*.

The National Synod of *Dort*, A. 1578. thus Express themselves.

“ Because Dances are for the most part attended
 “ with a levity, unbecoming Christians, and are
 “ an offence to the Godly ; Especially when practis-
 “ ed in a Time of Common Danger and Calamity :
 “ they that go to Dances shall be Reproved ; and
 “ if after divers Admonitions they persist therein,
 “ they are to be excluded from communion.

The Reforming Synod in *Poland*, prohibited the *Dances* too commonly practised ; and pronounced them censurable.

The Discipline of the Reformed Churches in *France*, has this Article.

“ Dancing is to be suppressed ; and those that
 “ take the Liberty or Custome to Dance, after they
 “ have been several times admonished, shall be Ex-
 “ communicated, when they shew themselves obsti-
 “ nate in their Rebellion. And
 “ the consistories are Exhorted
 “ well to put this Article into
 “ Execution, and to Read the
 “ same Publickly in the Name
 “ of

[Read this, Ye Danc-
 ing Refugees, and
 Reflect on Your
 strange conduct un-

of God, and in the Authority *der the dreadful*
of the Synods: And the said *Judgments of God.*
Synods and Colloquies are
Exhorted to take heed of, and warn those Con-
sistories that therein do not their Duties, to Cen-
sure the offenders for it.

And in this, 'tis well known, they did but imitate
the old *Waldenses*.

Divines of the Church of ENGLAND.

Three famous Bishops, have Written against *Mixt*
Dances, as unlawful. Their Names are, Dr. DOWN-
HAM, Dr. BABINGTON, Dr. ANDREWS. Their words
are too long to be Repeated.

An Arch-Bishop, namely, Dr. USHER, has Written
against these Vanities, particularly in his Catechism.
Page 279.

Yea, divers have more lately had the Courage to
do so. Amongst the rest, Mr. H. De Luzancy, the Vi-
car of *Harwich*. In his Treatise of the *Two Sacraments*,
he shoves, That *Baptised Persons are to Renounce the*
Pomps and Vanities of this sinful World. And says he,
p. 91, 92 " Such are the Vain Conversations, Empty
" Visits, & Publick Meetings of People of Different
" Sexes, where the Soul is betray'd by the Eye, and
" Sinful Creatures are proud of poisoning one ano-
" ther. Such are those Methods of Dressing, which
" are grown a Study and a Trade; and Women are
" ashamed to appear with the Faces which God has
" given them, but choose rather to be seen with those
" of the Devils making. Washing, Painting, PATCH-
" ING, are become serious Occupations, and have
" turn'd out of Doors Morning Devotions. Such
" are BALLS, and Playes.

ROMAN-CATHOLICKS.

How can *Protestants* Expect any other, but that
the Vengeance of Heaven, will Employ the *Angels*
to Chastise them, to Destroy them, when *Protestants*
indulge themselves in Vanities, which are *detestable*

and condemn'd even by the very *Papists*?

We know not what *Broad-sides* may quickly be given us, from *French Roman-Catholicks*. But there shall Two be now (instead of many more) turned upon us.

Father *Le Jeune*, in his *Le Missionnaire de L'Oratoire*, has a whole Sermon, *Contre Les Bals, Les Danses, et autres divertissemens mondains, qui sont allumettes de Luxure*.

I will faithfully Translate a few passages out of it. 'The Evil Spirit, has invented and introduced into the World, BALLS, and DANCES, and other Divertissemens, which the *Reproved* call *Innocent*, but St. *Augustin* called, *Lugendas Latitias, The Sports which call for Sorrows*.

He proceeds to show, how the Sacred Scriptures, which command *Seriousness*, and *Gravity*, and *Modersty*, condemn *Dances*, and begs his Hearers to think on that word; *Job. 21. 11, 13. Their Children DANCE, and in a moment they go down to the Grave; (or as he renders it,) into Hell. Says he; There are some Sins thought Venial, that will End so.*

He mentions and commends *Chryssostom*, who having heard, That some of his Hearers had been at a *Bal*, immediately he Preached a powerful Sermon against it; and among other things that man of God

said, (& his words are quoted with Honour by this *Papist*;) *If I could Learn, who they were, that were present at these Follies, I would chase them out of the Church; I would not permit them to be present at our dreadful Mysteries; And he goes on to call them, The Poms of the Devil.*

[The men of Rome, shall rise in Judgment with this Generation, and shall condemn it!]

The *Papist* goes on to tell us, That *Chryssostom* observes, *We read not of any Dances at the Weddings of the Holy Patriarchs, and that the Weddings had the Blessings of God the more following of them.*

This *Papist* proceeds; 'When you were *Baptised*,
 ' you *Renounced* these *Follies*; you were *Engaged* by an
 ' *Express* promise, to shun these *Pomps of the Devil*.
 ' If you *Return* to them, you are guilty of *Perfidy*, &
 ' *Forgery*, and *Disloyalty*. But how then can one grant
 ' you the *Communion* which is much more than *Bap-*
 ' *tism*?

Sayes he; 'Here you throw away *the* precious
 ' *Time*, which cannot be recovered; *the* *Time* which
 ' is allowed you to work out your *Salvation*. You
 ' *Extinguish* in your selves the *Spirit of Piety*, of
 ' *Charity*, and of *Repentance*; the *Spirit of Devotion*,
 ' That *Spirit* is a precious *Balm*; or an *Essence* and
 ' a *Cordial*; nothing so easily grows *Dead* and *Flat*;
 ' there needs but *One Dissolute Hour*, to ruine in you, all
 ' that *Spirit of Piety*, which you have been gather-
 ' ing for many weeks, by your *Meditations*, and
 ' *Supplications*. They have no *Speech of GOD*, at
 ' a *Ball*, or at a *Play*; and if at *Collations*, they *Speak*
 ' of *GOD*, and of *Divine Things*, of *Devotions* or
 ' of *Devout Persons*, it is ordinarily to rally up-
 ' on them, and tell merry *Stories* thereof.

'Here are profuse *Expences* of what should be
 ' *Employ'd* for the *Comfort* of the *Poor*, and their
 ' *Succour* in their *Miseries*.

'If the *Young Gentlewomen* would be well
 ' provided for in a *Marriage*, they should prefer
 ' a man of *Sense* and *Judgment*. Now there is
 ' no man of *Judgment*, who would not choose
 ' rather a *Young Gentlewoman*, that should be
 ' *Wise*, *Modest*, *Reserv'd*, and *Retired*, than a
 ' *Dancer*, a *giddy*, and an *idle Damsel*.

'Whence comes it that the *Casnist* informs me
 ' not, that the *Ball* and the *Play*, are any other than
 ' *Indifferent Things*? But think you to be *Excused*
 ' from the *Judgments of God*, because your *Faith*
 ' has been pin'd on the *Sleeve* of, an *Almonds Cas-*
 ' *nist*, who has a mind to render himself *con-*
 ' *plaisant* unto your *Inclinations*, rather than *harm*.

ken to *St. Augustin*, and *St. Chrysoftom*, and *St. Cyprian*, and other Fathers of the Church, who *Flatter* you not, because they *Need* you not.

But, because this was a *Church-man*, we will hear no more from him. Let us at last hear a *Courtier*.

M. Rabutin, in his Instructions to his Children. [In his *Memoirs*, Tom. 2. p. 155.] has these pas-

sages. 'I have ever believed *Balls* to be dangerous. Of this, not only my *Reason*, but my own

Experience made me sensible; and tho' the Authority of the *Fathers* of the Church in this Case, be very

considerable, yet that of a *Courtier* may be of greater weight. The coldest Constitutions are in-

flamed there. They that are *Old*, cannot go to them, without making a ridiculous Figure, nor the

Young, tho' within the Rules of Decency, without Exposing themselves to great Dangers. It is my

Opinion, then, That A CHRISTIAN OUGHT NOT TO BE AT A BALL; And I think it

the Duty of the *Guides* of Consciences, to Interdict it for ever unto those who are under their Dis-

cretion. A Question upon the whole.

Whether a *Non-conformist Minister* can be justly Reproached, for his faithful and watchful Endeavours, to reclaim his Neighbours, from hazarding their own and their Childrens Vertue, by *Vanities*, which have had no *Good Report* by the *Virtuous* in all Ages, but been decried, not only by *Fathers*, by *Councils*, by *Divines* of the Church of *England*, but also by *Papists*, both *Preachers* and *Courtiers*, and by the very *Pagans*?

Think seriously upon it; and upon *Amos* 6. 3, 5, 6. *Wo* to them that put far away the *Evil Day*, and chance to the sound of the *Viol*,---but they are not grieved for the afflictions of *Joseph*. And upon *Isa.* 22. 12, 13, 14. *No* that Day did the Lord God of Hosts call to weeping and to mourning; And behold Joy and Gladness; Surely, This I-
 Look it, Reader; for I Tremble to Write it!