

MODERN DANCING:

IN

The Light of Scripture and Facts.

BY

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Author of "CHURCH COMMUNION," "MISSILES OF TRUTH," "BIBLE
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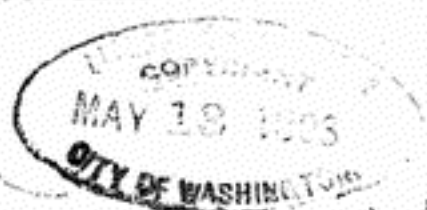
"And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the
renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable,
and perfect will of God."—Rom. 12: 2.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE substance of the following Treatise on MODERN DANCING, viewed in the light of *Scripture*, was first preached in Maysville, Ky., in 1849, and served to allay a serious trouble in our church there on the subject of dancing. The sermon was repeated in Russellville in 1866, and prevented the exclusion of several dancing members belonging to influential families. By special request, the sermon was published as a Circular Letter by Bethel Association, and extensively read. In 1874, the author revised and published the Circular in his "MISSILES OF TRUTH," and it was repeatedly called for in *Tract-form*, even by some prominent Methodist ministers, as well as by our own preachers.

In noticing the last Missile on MODERN DANCING, in the *Tennessee Baptist*, DR. J. M. PENDLETON said: "I know of no publication which, in narrow limits, presents the subject of dancing so forcibly. I call attention to it with the hope that it may be published in *Tract-form*, and have a wide circulation. It is highly important that correct views of dancing be entertained. Many look upon it as an innocent amusement. I scarcely know any thing which more effectually dissipates serious thought, while it promotes lightness and frivolity." And DR. J. R. GRAVES, of Memphis, Tenn., has more than once requested the author to let him issue the Missile in permanent *Tract-form*, with the confident assur-

ance that many thousands would be speedily sold and eagerly read.

In 1887, the writer was greatly troubled with dancing at Bardstown, Ky., and preached on "MODERN DANCING VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE AND FACTS," and it restrained dancing in his church until he left there for Elk Creek in Jan., 1888. And this is the form in which the subject is presented in the following little Book.

The author has been more or less troubled with dancing in all his churches, but by private and prompt effort and faithful preaching on the subject, he has been enabled to stop the pernicious practice without exclusions. In compliance with repeated and urgent requests, the writer now gives the Missile to the public in small Book-form, hoping that, by God's blessing, it may aid pastors and churches in controlling the growing evil, and save some of our dear young people from present disgrace and eternal ruin. Free use has been made of the works within the author's reach and due credit given; especially the admirable Treatises of Dr. James H. Brookes, of St. Louis, and Major W. E. Penn, of Eureka Springs.

W. W. GARDNER.

ELK CREEK, KY.,

Jan. 1, 1893.

To save repetition and space, the author has freely *italicised* and EMPHASIZED parts of the numerous quotations from other authors, in order to call attention to the points under consideration and give force to the arguments, without mentioning the fact in the body of the work; and he hopes that this general acknowledgment will be satisfactory to all concerned. The quotations have been made with great care.

W. W. GARDNER.

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MODERN DANCING:

IN

THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE AND FACTS.

The words *dance*, *dances*, *dancing*, and *danced*, occur 26 times in the Bible: 21 in the Old Testament, and 5 in the New Testament.

Dancing is an exercise of very ancient date, and was always expressive of joy, whether holy or unholy. The Bible mentions but two kinds of dancing: one a *religious service*, performed on joyful occasions, in which the sexes never united; as in Exod. 15: 20; Judges 11: 34; 1 Sam. 18: 6; 2 Sam. 6: 14; Ps. 30: 11; Jer. 31: 4. The other kind was a *worldly amusement*, to which the religious service had been prostituted by the ungodly, and is associated with "revelry" and "wantonness" in the Scriptures. Some four instances of the latter kind are mentioned in the Bible:—1st. The idolatrous Israelites "dancing" in honor of the golden calf at Mt. Sinai, Exod. 22: 19-29; 2nd. The "vain and shameless fellows," to whom Michael alludes in 2 Sam. 6: 16-20; 3rd. The ungodly parents mentioned in Job 21: 11, whose "children dance," and who say unto God, "depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways," Job 21: 7-14; and 4th.

That memorable scene of impiety and revelry which resulted in the *murder* of John the Baptist. Matt. 14: 3-12. Now, modern dancing is of this *latter* kind; and taken *as it is*, with its unavoidable associations and concomitants, it is an evil of no small magnitude, legitimately leading to greater evils; and it is at war with the spirit and teachings of the Bible.

Bad as was ancient dancing, modern dancing is *far worse*. The German Waltz and the French Round-dances were then unknown; ancient promiscuous dancing was not respectable, and the better class of society seldom participated in it; but modern dancing is the favorite amusement of the *elite*, and is regarded by carnal professors and the ungodly generally as a high accomplishment.

I have always been regarded as *conservative* on this subject, and some extremists have objected seriously to my conservatism; but I occupy the *middle* ground, which is clearly the Bible ground. Accordingly, the spicy editor of the *Spencer Courier*, not a professor of religion, remarks: "Dr. W. W. Gardner, of Elk Creek, delivered his Sermon on MODERN DANCING in the Taylorsville Baptist church last Sunday morning. The venerable preacher handled the subject ably and fearlessly, and he found no occasion to apologize when the caustic touched local tender spots. He was listened to very attentively through the long discourse. Dr. Gardner is not one of those *extremists* who hold that dancing is the very worst form of sin, but none the less he demon-

strated plainly that it is contrary to church decorum, to religious feeling, and to the Bible itself. Moreover, it leads to worse forms of sin, some of which he talked of very pointedly."—*Spencer Courier*, of Jan. 13th, 1893.

In presenting the subject of Modern Dancing, we shall view it first *in the Light of Scripture*, and then *in the Light of Facts*. And we shall address ourselves especially to professors of religion.

CHAPTER I.

MODERN DANCING IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE.

We remark,—

I. THAT IT IS PURELY A WORLDLY AMUSEMENT, BASED UPON A LOVE OF WORLDLY PLEASURE.

By worldly amusements and worldly pleasures is meant those amusements and pleasures belonging peculiarly to the unconverted, in contradistinction to the sacred and social enjoyments and pleasures becoming Christians. All that is true and honest and just and pure and lovely and of good repute in this world, belongs to the Christian. Religion never was designed to make our innocent pleasures less. On the contrary, it tends to augment, elevate and purify both our natural and spiritual enjoyments. Its ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace; it imparts real and substantial happiness.

But the Bible expressly forbids *conformity* to the world

in its impure and vain amusements and pleasures, and requires in Christians a new and holy life and conversation, *conformed* to the spirit and teachings of the Gospel. As it is written: "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12: 2); "Only let your conversation (including conduct) be as becometh the Gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1: 27); "As He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" and conduct. (1 Pet. 1: 15.) Now, when professors of religion engage in the giddy dance, or encourage it in others, are they not guilty of violating these plain precepts?

The Bible also prohibits the *love* of the world, including its honors, riches, and *sinful pleasures*. As it is written: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world." (1 John 2: 15, 16.) That dancing is one of the *favorite pleasures* of the world, none will deny; and it is well known that those who habitually indulge in this fascinating amusement, become *passionately fond* of it. Indeed, the passion of the *professional gambler* for cards is not more insatiate than that of the *habitual dancer* for this worldly amusement. And this very love of the dance is not only one of the greatest hindrances to Christian enjoyment and progress, but it is one of the greatest obstacles to the salvation of

sinners. During a busy pastorate of nearly half a century, in cities, towns, and country, the writer has witnessed many sad examples of this fact. Hence it is manifest that all Christians, young and old, are expressly prohibited from either dancing themselves or encouraging it in others; and those professors of religion who persist in this forbidden amusement give painful evidence that "the love of the Father is not in them."

Accordingly, the *Religious Herald*, of Richmond, Va., says: — "Social dancing is not only unscriptural, but *anti-scriptural*. It wars with the very tone and spirit of the Bible. The command, "Be not conformed to this world," as clearly forbids it as if it had been said, "Thou shalt not dance," for what is conformity to the world, if dancing is not? In Galatians 5: 19-21, the Apostle gives a dark catalogue of the works of the flesh, and tells us that they who do such things "shall not inherit the kingdom of God;" but let the devotees of dancing know that the Apostle includes in this appalling list of sins, that shut men out of the kingdom of heaven, "*revellings*," (Greek, *komos*,) which means social dancing; or festivity, with music and dancing. The truth is, that this popular amusement is just as unscriptural as any one of the other giant sins with which *revelling* is here classed." We remark,—

II. THAT MODERN DANCING IS EVIL BOTH IN ITS APPEARANCE AND IN ITSELF.

The advocates of dancing admit this fact in the very plea, that it is not *as bad* as some other forms of amuse-

ment in which Christians engage. If this be true, it only proves that they should abstain from all such forms of amusement, and especially from dancing, which is admitted to be a *bad* thing. Christians are required to "*abstain from all appearance of evil*" (1 Thess. 5: 22); or as Revised, to "*abstain from every form of evil.*" Whatever is evil in its appearance, or evil in its tendency, or evil in itself, is prohibited in Christians; and all this is confessedly true of dancing.

Ungodly friends plead that dancing is a genteel and harmless amusement, and by this means induce young Christians and pleasure-loving professors of religion to participate with them, but at the same time these very friends regard it as highly improper in Christians to dance; and therefore have very little confidence in the piety of those who join them in this worldly amusement, which has the appearance of evil and is admitted to be evil.

The prevalent idea that partial conformity to the world in questionable things will recommend our holy religion and win the ungodly to Christ, is both dangerous and false. People of the world admire *consistency*; and they know full well that Christians are required to "*abstain from all appearance and every form of evil,*" and to "*keep themselves unspotted from the world;*" — "*perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*" Hence it necessarily diminishes their confidence in the piety of those professors of religion who indulge with them in this vain amusement or excuse it in others. What anxious or dy-

ing sinner would think of calling on a *dancing* professor of religion, much less a dancing preacher, to instruct and pray for him! To such he would say, "Physician, heal thyself."

And that which has the appearance of evil and is confessedly an evil in dancing children, has the same appearance and the same character in those pleasure-loving parents who approve and permit them to engage in the dance. The *approval* of evil is *evil itself*; and if modern dancing has the appearance of evil and is a real evil, as is admitted, then the approval of it by parents is sinful. God himself so regards it. Said He, "I will judge (or punish) the house of Eli forever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and *he restrained them not*." (1 Sam. 3: 13.) Parents are responsible to God, to religion and to society for the evil which they might restrain in their children and others, and it is dangerous and sinful to neglect it. The same is true of churches in regard to their dancing members. We remark,—

III. THAT MODERN DANCING OBSCURES THE LIGHT OF CHRISTIANS AND CAUSES THEIR GOOD TO BE EVIL SPOKEN OF.

To all his true disciples Jesus says: "Ye are the light of the world. Therefore, let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 5: 14, 16.) Christians are here required to let their light shine before men by

holy living and good works, and thereby constrain them to *glorify our heavenly Father*. They are to be "living epistles of Christ," known and read of all men. As he who holds a *torch* in his hand is distinctly seen by those who are in the dark, so Christians are seen and watched by the ungodly. And men of the world judge of our holy religion and are influenced far more by what they see in Christians than by what they read and hear from the word of God. Hence the importance and propriety of our Lord's injunction: "*Therefore let your light,*" etc.

But when the disciples of Christ mingle in the giddy dance, or encourage it in others by their presence or otherwise, they necessarily *obscure their light*, and men of the world are driven from the Savior, instead of being drawn to him. "Take heed, therefore," says Jesus, "that the light that is in thee be not darkness; for if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." (Matt. 6: 23; Luke 11: 35.)

Accordingly, Paul exhorts Christians to "be harmless and blameless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom *ye shine (or shine ye) as lights in the world.*" (Phil. 2: 15.) Now we ask, are Christians "harmless and blameless, the sons of God without rebuke," in the *Ball-room*, or in the *dancing-party*; and do they there "shine as lights in the world?" Is not their light darkness when they mingle with the gay and the godless in the merry dance? and are they not justly liable to "*rebuke*" when they participate in this wordly amusement?

And that which obscures the light of Christians when done by themselves, unavoidably has the same effect when *encouraged* in their children or others. Christian parents are required to train up their children in the way they *should go*, with the promise that even when old they will not depart from it. (Prov. 22: 6.) But is modern dancing, or even the dancing-school, any part of such training? Rather, does it not tend to lead children in the way they *should not go*? Let facts answer these important questions. It is evident, therefore, that modern dancing in all its forms, necessarily tends to *obscure the light of Christians*, and hence should neither be practiced nor encouraged by them.

Accordingly, the *Religious Herald* says: "Social dancing is *destructive* of the religious influence of those who practice it. One of the great ends for which Christ leaves his people in the world is, that they may exert an influence for his cause. Any thing that hinders or impairs such an influence, should be at once abandoned at all cost. That *dancing* does this is manifest, from the notorious fact, that no one has much confidence in the piety of professing Christians who dance. They are the occasion of scoffing, even from those who, on convivial gatherings, urge them to dance. No one thinks any the less of worldlings for dancing, (for nothing better is expected of them.) But, let one profess religion, and then indulge in this amusement, and he will at once immensely sink in the estimation of all classes. The dancing professor not only exerts no good influence for the cause of

Christ, but is a *positive injury* to it. He causes the way of truth to be evil spoken of."

Modern dancing not only obscures the light of Christians, but it also causes their "*good to be evil spoken of*" by the world, and thus weakens their influence for doing good. Says Paul: "Let not then your good be evil spoken of." (Rom. 14: 16.) Yet even dancers themselves speak disparagingly of the piety of those professors of religion who participate with them in the ball-room and the dancing party. It is so glaringly inconsistent with the Christian profession, that even the ungodly are forced to condemn it. It is impossible for a dancing Christian to enjoy religion or do good to others. We remark,—

IV. THAT MODERN DANCING GIVES OFFENSE TO GOOD
BRETHREN AND SISTERS AND THEREFORE
IS A SIN AGAINST CHRIST.

It is a *double sin*, *giving* offense and *causing* others to offend. Now, it is a fearful sin either to offend or cause the least of Christ's disciples to offend. Speaking of this sin, our Lord says:—"Who so shall offend (or cause to offend) one of these little ones who believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea." (Matt. 28: 6.) But it is not only the ignorant and weak who are offended by modern dancing, but the overwhelming majority of the wise and good regard the practice as glaringly inconsistent with the Christian profession and ruinous in its tendency to the souls of men; and hence they are deeply grieved with those pleasure-loving breth-

ren and sisters who either dance themselves, or aid and abet it in their children and others. What professor of religion can reasonably expect the divine blessing upon himself and family, who thus knowingly and willfully offends good brethren and sisters, and by example and persuasion causes inexperienced young Christians to offend by dancing?

Now, if dancing were a *commanded duty*, then Christians would be bound to practice and encourage it, even though it might give offense to others; for "we must obey God rather than men;" but no one will plead this in justification of modern dancing. There is *no sin*, therefore, in abstaining from the practice, while there is *much sin* in indulging in it. As it is written: "*Give no offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God*" (1 Cor. 10: 32); "*For,*" adds Paul, "*when ye sin so against the brethren and wound their weak consciences, ye sin against Christ.*" (1 Cor. 8: 12.) The argument of the Apostle is this: "To give unnecessary offense to brethren and wound their consciences is a sin against Christ; modern dancing gives just offense to brethren and wounds their consciences; therefore it is a sin against Christ either to dance or encourage it.

Christ regards whatever is done to his people as done to himself, and will so treat it at the judgment: "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. 25: 40; comp. vs. 41, 45.) To offend or cause

one of the weakest of Christ's disciples to offend, therefore, is to offend against Him, and He will so treat it. Hence we see that those Christians who either dance themselves or encourage it in others, will meet a fearful account at the last day.

In the language of the *Religious Herald*, we add, that "*Social dancing is wounding to the feelings of all the truly pious.* What eminent Christian in any denomination is there among the ministry or laity, who is not grieved and discouraged, when this amusement prevails among professing Christians? Now, does not dancing become sinful, if it produces this effect upon so many of the most intelligent, useful, and holy in Zion? *Can that professor be a Christian who persists in a practice that gives pain to his pastor and more experienced brethren?* If the amusement were sinless, he is bound on Scriptural grounds, for this reason, to renounce it. Read 1 Cor. 8: 13."

It is not only a great sin either to offend or cause one of Christ's disciples to offend by dancing yourselves or encouraging it in others, but it is a much greater sin to defile a church of Christ and disturb its peace by this pernicious practice. Accordingly, Paul says to the Church at Corinth: "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are; let no man deceive himself." (1 Cor. 3: 17, 18.) That church member, therefore, who persists in dancing, or aids and abets the sinful practice in others, and thereby defiles a church of Christ and disturbs its

fellowship, incurs the just displeasure of God, and will inevitably be destroyed, except he or she repent.

Now, every intelligent Christian must have *doubts* as to the *propriety* of modern dancing, and this alone ought to restrain all from either practicing or encouraging it. It is manifestly a sin to indulge in any thing of the *propriety* of which we have doubts. Accordingly, Paul, in speaking of the propriety of eating things offered in sacrifice to idols, says: "He that *doubteth* is damned (or condemned) if he eat, because he eateth not of *faith*; for *whatsoever is not of faith is sin*." (Rom. 14: 23.) This is a *general principle*, applicable to *promiscuous dancing*, and to every thing else of the *propriety* of which we have *doubts*. No Christian should engage in any thing of doubtful propriety.

But even if modern dancing were an innocent amusement, as some contend, still it would be the bounden duty of all Christians to abstain from and discourage it, *simply because it gives offense to good brethren and sisters*. When the question of eating meats that had been offered in sacrifice to idols arose among the early Christians, how nobly and promptly did Paul determine:—"If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh (*i. e.*, offered to idols) while the world standeth, lest I make my brother offend." (Rom. 14: 13-23.) Though not, in the Apostle's estimation, wrong in itself; yet, like Jesus, Paul "*pleased not himself*" by willful indulgence, lest he should hinder the Gospel, and offend or cause his brethren to offend. Thus all Christians should act in

regard to *modern dancing*. The principle laid down here by the inspired Apostle is of universal application, and extends to every thing that needlessly gives offense to good brethren and sisters, or causes others to offend, as dancing most unquestionably does. We remark,—

V. THAT MODERN DANCING IS WHOLLY INCOMPATIBLE
WITH EVERY CHRISTIAN DUTY.

Paul, in addressing Christians, says: “Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, *do all to the glory of God.*” (1 Cor. 10: 31.) Does the Christian *dance* to the glory of God at the present day? Is the glory of God the object of parents in sending their children to the dancing-school, or in dressing and encouraging them to participate in the party dance or the public ball? Yet the inspired injunction is: “*Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*” This command covers the whole ground, and includes *whatsoever we do*.

Again, Paul says: “*In every thing* by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” (Phil. 4: 6.) When Christians desire to dance, do they make known their requests unto God? When parents send their children to the dancing-school, or encourage them in dancing by their presence or otherwise, do they “by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving,” make known their requests unto God, and invoke his blessing upon their mirthful efforts? Yet the divine command is: “*In every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto*

God." How dare a Christian practice or encourage any thing upon which he or she can not in faith and hope, with a clear conscience, ask God's blessing?

And again, the Apostle says to parents: "Provoke not your children to wrath, but *bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord.*" (Eph. 6: 4.) Is modern dancing any part of "the nurture and admonition of the Lord?" Rather, does it not necessarily tend to counteract the good effects of all religious nurture and admonition? And if dancing children be converted, it is *in spite* of the evil influence of such pleasure-loving and worldly-minded parents, and owing to the blessing of God on the efforts of others. Such children are truly "*brands plucked out of the fire,*" and monuments of God's amazing mercy.

And still again, Paul says: "Let us, therefore, follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another." (Rom. 14: 19.) Is modern dancing one of "the things which make for peace?" And does it tend to mutual Christian edification? Let backslidden young Christians, distracted churches, grieved brethren and sisters, and troubled pastors answer these questions.

The same is equally true of every divine precept. It is evident that modern dancing in all its forms, and especially the *Waltz*, is wholly incompatible with every Christian duty; and, therefore, it ought neither to be practiced nor encouraged by any Christian, but should be discountenanced and opposed by all.

We remark,—

VI. THAT MODERN DANCING IS THE OPPOSITE OF
THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST AND AT WAR
WITH THE ENTIRE BIBLE.

The Spirit of Christ is known by its fruits, which are “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Gal. 5: 22, 23); and in conversion, these fruits are implanted in the heart by the Holy Spirit. “Now,” says Paul, “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” (Rom. 8: 9); that is, he is not a Christian. The possession of these holy fruits, therefore, is both an evidence and test of our personal piety. We receive Christ by faith; and, says the Apostle, “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.” (Col. 2: 6.)

But what is the spirit of the dance? Is it a fruit of the Holy Spirit? Is it the Spirit of Christ? Rather, is it not a fruit of the flesh, and the spirit of the world? It is associated with “revelry and wantonness,” and is diametrically opposed to the Spirit of Christ. To imbibe the spirit of dancing, therefore, is to quench the Spirit of Christ; and to participate in the dance, is to cease to walk in Christ as we received him. The Spirit of Christ and the spirit of dancing cannot dwell together in the same heart. The love of the dance expels the love of Christ from the soul, and it can be regained only by sincere repentance.

It is evident therefore that modern dancing is opposed to the *spirit* of the Gospel, and is the very *opposite* of the

Spirit of that Savior who was meek and lowly in heart, and who requires the same spirit in all his followers. The spirit of the dance is at war with the spirit of Him who is "holy and harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners;" and yet we must possess his Spirit and follow in his steps, or go down to hell. To all those professors of religion who persist in the corrupt and corrupting dance and die without repentance, He will say at the last day: "Depart from me ye workers of iniquity, for I never knew you." (Matt. 7: 21-23; 25: 12.)

Accordingly, MRS. SALLIE ROCHESTER FORD, of St. Louis, author of "Grace Truman," remarks: "It is a significant fact that *even the world condemns dancing in Christians*. Is not this a forcible reason why young men and young women, who have professed to follow Christ, should abstain from dancing? How much better it would be for the true interests of the people of God, that all dancing Christians, and all apologists for dancing, give up this practice, which in its spirit is so opposed to the Spirit of Christ. If we apologize for it, or in any way give it our countenance, and by so doing permit or aid in its indulgence by our children or the children of our friends, and they be enticed thereby down to death—what a fearful record we shall have to meet when we come to be judged!" See *Ford's Christian Repository*, for Sept. 1877.

Such, in brief, is Modern Dancing *in the Light of Scripture*: 1. It is purely a worldly amusement, based upon a love of worldly pleasure; 2. It is evil both in its

appearance and in itself; 3. It obscures the light of Christians, and causes their good to be evil-spoken of; 4. It gives offense to good brethren and sisters, and therefore is a sin against Christ; 5. It is wholly incompatible with every Christian duty; and 6. It is the opposite of the Spirit of Christ, and at war with the entire Bible. For these and many other reasons which might be given, Christians particularly should neither dance nor encourage the evil practice, but should oppose and restrain it in others.

CHAPTER II.

MODERN DANCING IN THE LIGHT OF FACTS.

We remark,—

- I. THAT IT IS A FACT, THAT MODERN DANCING LEGITIMATELY LEADS TO GREATER EVILS, AND TENDS TO IMMORALITY AND IRRELIGION.

Dancing, like card-playing and moderate drinking, legitimately leads to greater evils; and herein it differs essentially from other forms of worldly amusement. Things must be judged of by their *tendency*. There may be nothing morally wrong in the mere act of playing cards for amusement; but it begets a love of gaming, and legitimately leads to gambling, drunkenness, debauchery, and many other evils, and therefore should neither be practiced nor encouraged. Its tendency is to evil; and on this ground and for this reason, Christians especially should abstain from *progressive-Euchre*, and all

other forms of card-playing. There might be no sin in the moderate use of ardent spirits, but it creates a fondness for intoxicating liquors, and thus legitimately tends to drunkenness, with all its ruinous evils; and therefore should not be used as a beverage by Christians or any other persons, especially not by boys and young men.

So there may be nothing morally wrong in the simple act of *private dancing* for amusement; but it soon becomes a *controlling passion*, and legitimately leads to frivolity, gayety, love of display, immorality, irreligion, and numerous other evils, which often drown the soul in perdition; and therefore it should be avoided by all, and especially by Christians, in its *very beginnings*. This indeed is the only sure way to escape the evil; for if children and youth never *learn* to dance, they will not desire to practice it.

Accordingly, the late DR. N. L. RICE, of Bardstown, Ky., a distinguished Presbyterian preacher and polemic, in a published Sermon on DANCING, justly remarks:—

“I am aware that there is some difficulty in the discussion of this subject, arising from the various phases which it assumes,—from the family dance in the parlor of a professor of religion, under the eye of the head of the family, up to the gayest and most brilliant ball, and even to the masquerade dance. We labor under the same difficulty in showing the sinfulness of card-playing, horse-racing, and the theatre. It might be difficult to prove it a sin in itself for a few young persons to amuse themselves an hour or two by playing at cards. We know,

however, that it is an attractive and exciting amusement; that when once our children have become pleased with it, they are likely to yield to the suggestion that, by risking a few cents, additional interest will be imparted to the game; and we know that, having gone thus far, they are fairly introduced to the gaming-table, and that they are likely enough to become regular gamblers. We proceed, therefore, upon the Latin adage, '*Obsta Principiis*' (Resist the *beginnings* of evil); or rather, we are guided by the word of inspiration: 'Abstain from all appearance of evil, and from every form of evil.'

"On the same general principle," says Dr. Rice, "we oppose *dancing* as now conducted. Suppose we admit that there is nothing improper in the *family dance* in your parlor; we know perfectly well that this is but the *commencement* of the difficulty. Your children learn to dance; they are delighted with dancing; you have admitted that there is nothing improper in it; and now that the principle is conceded, they will carry it out for you. And you will find it no easy matter to prove to them that dancing in the parlor is proper enough, but dancing in a large and elegant ball-room is quite sinful. They will attend balls, the gayest and most brilliant of them; and you can not prevent it. The only sure remedy for the evil, therefore, is to check it at the *beginning*, and not allow them to contract the habit."

But the *associations* and *concomitants* of modern dancing are far worse than the thing itself; and yet they are inseparable. It is infinitely better that our children should

remain ignorant of such fascinating and sinful amusements. Accordingly, says Paul to all Christians: "*I would have you wise unto that which is good, but simple concerning evil.*" (Rom. 16: 19.) It was the forbidden knowledge of what we had better not have known that brought sin with all its direful consequences upon our race. A knowledge of the *art* of dancing is not necessary to the happiness and respectability of our children, and it might lead them to shame and everlasting contempt, as it has many devotees of the dance.

Accordingly, the late ALBERT BARNES, an eminent Presbyterian Commentator, says: "DANCING, BALLS, and PARTIES lead to forgetfulness of God. They nourish passion and sensual desires. They often lead to the seduction and ruin of the innocent. . . . No child dances into heaven, but many a one has danced into hell." (Emphasis mine.)

The *whole tendency* of modern dancing, therefore, is to immorality, irreligion and eternal ruin. How could it be otherwise? What are the influences which it brings to bear upon the youthful mind, just when the heart is most susceptible of religious impressions, and in most danger of being fatally hardened? How is the young mind engrossed while preparing for the gay assembly! God is not in all their thoughts! Heaven and hell are forgotten! What feverish excitement while engaged in the merry dance! And when the scene is ended, how is the mind dissipated, the moral sensibilities blunted,

and the heart steeled against the Spirit and truth of God!

Many *sad examples* might be given, but we have space only for a few. During the revival in which the writer embraced Christ, many of his relatives and schoolmates were hopefully converted. Among the anxious a lovely young lady presented herself again and again for special prayer. But she was passionately fond of dancing, and her pleasure-loving friends prevailed on her to attend a fashionable ball in an adjoining neighborhood. For the time being her convictions were stifled, and on her return to the revival next day, she declined coming forward for prayer, and shunned her religious friends. The meeting closed with sixty baptisms. In a short time this young lady was seized with a fever from which she never recovered. Her pious friends visited her and proposed prayer with her, but she persistently refused, saying, that it was "*too late*;" God had given her up. In a few days she *died in hopeless despair*!

Again, an experienced and useful pastor states in substance, that he was called to visit a dying young lady, said to be *in despair*. She had been an anxious inquirer after salvation, but in an evil hour her dancing associates urged her to accompany them to a ball, but she declined at first. At length she yielded, saying, "I will go, and risk the consequences." Her convictions subsided, and she felt that the Holy Spirit had withdrawn from her. The man of God exhorted her to repent and trust the Savior, but she was callous. He pro-

posed prayer, but in the agony of despair, she refused. With sad heart, he left her, soon to be enveloped in the blackness of darkness forever! These are but *specimens* of many young persons, who have danced themselves into the world of woe.

Now, modern dancing is not only evil in itself, but it invariably leads to *greater evils*, and unavoidably tends to immorality and irreligion. *For instance*, the venerable DR. JAMES BROOKES, long a beloved Presbyterian pastor in St. Louis, Mo., gives the case of a pious young man of his own church, who was drawn into the dance by ungodly associates, and this led him to the card-table, the drinking saloon, and the theatre, etc. He was arraigned before the Session on the *four charges* of dancing, card-playing, drunkenness, and profane swearing. He penitently confessed his guilt in the last three charges, and promised to abandon them at once, but claimed that dancing was a harmless and genteel amusement, and avowed his determination to practice it. One of the elders moved his suspension from church privileges till he should give evidence of repentance. The pastor asked that his case be postponed to another meeting, that he might have a private interview with the young man. He called on him and had a free and full conversation with him on the subject. The young man became convinced that *dancing* had led him into the other sins, and at the next meeting of the Session, he penitently confessed his sin in dancing, and promised to abandon the evil practice forever.—“*May Christians Dance?*”

This is but one of many instances in which pious young men have been decoyed into dancing, and this led them into greater evils, and finally resulted in exclusion from their churches. Doubtless multitudes of inexperienced youths have been drawn into this fascinating amusement, and thus led into greater sins, until they were ruined both for time and eternity.

II. IT IS A FACT, THAT MODERN DANCING, INCLUDING THE GERMAN WALTZ AND FRENCH ROUND-DANCES, UNAVOIDABLY TENDS TO AND OFTEN RESULTS IN THE VIOLATION OF THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

Now, young ladies generally and inexperienced young men are not aware of the *licentious tendency* of modern dancing, especially that of the German Waltz and French Round-dances, or they would not engage in them. But the experienced leaders in these voluptuous dances, well understand their licentious tendency. Said one: "I would not give a straw to dance with Miss ——. You can't excite any more passion in her than you can in a stick of wood." These "vain and shameless fellows," therefore, are the *aggressors*, while innocent girls and unsuspecting young men are the *sufferers*; and thus multitudes of virtuous youths are being led into this vortex of corruption and sin every year. And strange to say, some Christian parents, and especially some aspiring *mothers*, not only allow, but even encourage their daughters and sons to prepare for and participate in these demoralizing and licentious dances!

There is no disguising the fact, that promiscuous dan-

cing, including the Waltz and Round-dances, to which the "square dances" naturally lead, are *essentially licentious*, and legitimately tend to the violation of the Seventh Commandment. In proof of this fact, "the chief of Police of New York city in his official Report some years since stated, that three-fourths ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the abandoned girls of that city were ruined by dancing." (See the *Religious Herald* of Sept. 26th, 1878.) And the "Christian Commission" of St. Louis, Mo., in its published Report a few years ago, stated, "that three-fifths ($\frac{3}{5}$) of the fallen women of that city attribute their fall to promiscuous dancing."

Accordingly, MRS. GENERAL SHERMAN, of Washington city, in an open letter in a public journal several years since, *Warned* all ladies, and *mothers* especially, against the "round-dances and Waltzing," as being *demoralizing* in their effects, and *dangerous* to female virtue. She based her *appeal* on twenty years' experience and observation in that fashionable and pleasure-loving city, and avowed her dermination never to waltz again.

Now, females are the better part of our fallen race, though born totally depraved in the Bible sense of utter destitution of love to God and a natural proneness to evil. Hence young girls at first dance with purer intentions than young men generally, although some young men are naturally more virtuous than others, and may not at the beginning be conscious of the amorous and licentious tendencies of modern dancing. Yet that unconsciousness does not save even the purest minds from the insinuating

tendency of this inherently voluptuous amusement. The devotees of the dance, therefore, naturally differ among themselves, not so much in the corrupting influence received from participation in the evil practice, as in their intelligent consciousness of that influence.

But bad as are the effects of modern dancing on virtuous young ladies, its effects are *far worse* on young men, though more hidden ; and this fact accounts for the growing *laxity* of morals and the increasing *drunkenness* and *licentiousness* among young men at the present time. Yet it is strangely true that known *libertines* often lead in the dance of modern society, and are received into the most respectable families, while the innocent and unsuspecting girls whom they have ruined in the dance, are driven from virtuous society and doomed to a life of shame and contempt.

III. IT IS A FACT, THAT THE WISE AND GOOD OF ALL CHURCHES AND DENOMINATIONS BEAR UNITED TESTIMONY AGAINST MODERN DANCING.

While the Roman Catholics and Episcopalians *tolerate* dancing, still their ablest and best Bishops and ministers bear testimony against it ; and those who advocate and practice dancing, are by no means distinguished for piety and usefulness in these churches. Hence it is that not only the ministry, as a body, but the most intelligent, pious and useful members of all churches abstain from and oppose dancing *in every form*, as being unscriptural and of evil tendency.

All the various denominations of professed Christians

in this country and England, though differing widely on many points, bear united testimony against modern dancing, especially the vile round of polkas and waltzes. This is true of the Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and all others; and they have recorded their testimony against Dancing in all its forms, from the square dance up to the round dance and the waltz; for the one legitimately leads to the other. Let us hear this testimony as given by their ablest and best men and women. Let us hear,—

1st. *The testimony of the Roman Catholic Church.*

The Pope of Rome is understood to be opposed to modern dancing. And the Archbishops and Bishops of the Catholic Church when assembled in plenary council at Baltimore, October, 1866, issued a "*Pastoral Letter*" to all their Priests and people, from which we extract the following authoritative utterances on the subject of *Modern Dancing*, viz. :

"In this connection, we consider it to be our duty to warn our people against those amusements which may easily become to them an occasion of sin, and especially against the *fashionable dances*, which, as at present carried on, are *revolting to every feeling of delicacy and propriety*, and are *fraught with the greatest danger to morals.*"

Through the "*confessionals*" the Priests of the Catholic Church learn the secrets of the heart, and are thus enabled to know the *evil effects* of modern dancing upon their people: and accordingly, all the Archbishops and Bishops of the United States and England in council assembled,

warn their people against the "*fashionable dances*," and denounce them as "revolting to every feeling of delicacy and propriety, and fraught with the greatest danger to morals."

ARCHBISHOP ELDER of Cincinnati, O., a few years since, issued a "*Circular Letter*" to all the clergy of his Diocese, in which he authoritatively says: "THERE MUST BE NO ROUND DANCING AT ANY TIME, AND NO DANCING OF ANY KIND AFTER DARK." He bases this prohibition on the *demoralizing* and *licentious* influence of the "round-dances" and night dancing, as developed to the Priests in the "confessionals."

We ask, why does Archbishop Elder prohibit the round dances even in *daylight*, and all kinds of dancing *after dark*? Let Protestant Christians who either dance themselves, or encourage dancing by their attendance at such places, answer this question; remembering that they who aid and abet the pernicious practice by their presence or otherwise, are equally guilty before God with those who dance: just as Saul of Tarsus "was consenting unto Stephen's death," by being present and holding the clothes of his murderers. And there is no difference, except in degree, between the parlor dance and the public ball, because the one is the training-school for and the stepping-stone to the other.

And a Catholic Bishop recently issued his positive prohibition to the Priests of his Diocese, requiring them to restrain their people from all dancing, and especially from the Round-dances and Waltzing; basing his pro-

hibition upon the startling revelations of the "confessional." — *Western Recorder* of Nov. 13, 1890.

Let us hear,—

2nd. *The testimony of the Protestant Episcopal Church, as expressed through its ablest and best Bishops.*

Many of the most distinguished Bishops of this Church, living and dead, have borne explicit testimony against *modern dancing*; as Bishop Hopkins of Vermont, Bishop Meade of Virginia, Bishop McIlvaine of Ohio, Bishop Coxe of New York, and others, who in their "*Pastorals*" before Lent, have testified strongly against *promiscuous dancing*, and warned their people against its *demoralizing* and *licentious* tendencies.

For example, BISHOP HOPKINS, the Senior Bishop at his death, and probably the master intellect in his Church, remarks:

"In the period of youthful education, I have shown that *Dancing* is chargeable with waste of time, the interruption of useful study, the indulgence of personal vanity and display, and the premature incitement of the passions. At the age of maturity, it adds to these, no small danger of health, by late hours, flimsy dresses, heated rooms, and exposed persons; while its incongruity with strict Christian principle and sobriety, and its tendency to dissipation, are so manifest, that *no ingenuity can make it consistent with the covenant of baptism.*"

The late venerable BISHOP MEADE of Virginia, speaking of *Dancing*, says:

"As an amusement, seeing that it is a perversion of

an ancient religious exercise, and has ever been discouraged by the pious and sober-minded of all nations on account of its *evil tendencies and accompaniments*, we ought conscientiously to inquire whether its great liability to abuse, and its many acknowledged abuses, should not make us *frown upon it in all its forms*. . . . Social dancing is not among the *neutral* things which, within certain limits, we may practice at pleasure, nor among the things *lawful* but not expedient, *but it is in itself wrong, improper, and of bad effect.*"

BISHOP McILVAINE of Ohio, of national reputation, thus addresses his people:—

"Let me now turn to two subjects, in which there is no difficulty of discrimination,—*the theatre and the dance*. The only line I would draw in regard to these is, *that of entire exclusion*. . . . The question is not what we can imagine them to be; *but what they always have been, and will be, and must be*, in such a world as this, to render them pleasurable to those who patronize them.

"If the writer be asked whether, in his view, in the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, which are renounced in baptism, are included *theatrical amusements and dances*, he answers without hesitation, in the affirmative. If he be asked whether, under the Apostle's exhortation, 'Be not conformed to this world,' they are included as matters of worldly conformity, he answers, certainly. . . . He thinks they are renounced in baptism, that their renunciation is ratified in confirmation, and professed in every participation of the Lord's

Supper. He prays that the time may come when all communicants will unite in rejecting these things."

BISHOP COXE of New York, not long since, addressed a "*Pastoral*" to the ministers and members of his Diocese, in which he uses the following strong language:—

"The *enormities* of theatrical exhibitions and the *lasciviousness* of dances, too commonly tolerated in our times, are so *disgraceful* to the age and so *irreconcilable* with the Gospel of Christ, that I feel it my duty to the souls of my flock, to *warn* those who run with the world to 'the same excess of riot' in these things, that they presume not to come to the *holy communion table*. . . . It is high time that the lines should be drawn between *godly* and *worldly* living; and I see no use in a Lent that is not sanctified to such ends."

And Bishop Coxe in 1888, speaking of "*The Modern Dance*," adds: "You are welcome to quote me anywhere and everywhere as regarding the modern dance—Waltz, German, or whatever else they call it, as *immoral*. My stand-point is, the Scriptures, as understood in the primitive Christian age, when "renouncing the world" meant anything but conformity to the licentious and heathenish indecorums of that "excess of riot," which disgraces the Laodicean religion of these times. The *shameless dances*, with play-going and social parties, are all denounced by the *spirit* of the New Testament, discouraged by the example of saints and martyrs, and everywhere discountenanced by moralists."—*Western Recorder* of Jan. 26, 1888.

And the "PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL FEMALE TRACT SOCIETY" of Baltimore has given its testimony against "*indecent dances*, involving personal liberties between the sexes, which would be *indecent* and *unsafe* anywhere;" and that "for parents to have their children *taught to dance* is nothing else but leading the little ones into temptation and exposing them to a snare. They may in theory dance innocently, but *practically* they will not."

Such is a fair specimen of the testimony of the wisest and best men and women of the Episcopal Church against modern dancing, condemning it as not only indelicate and indecent, but also as *immoral* and *licentious* in its tendency. Let this testimony of grave Bishops and pious women against the evil practice be weighed against those time-serving ministers and pleasure-loving members of that Church, who choose to disgrace their profession, disobey their superiors, and violate their solemn vows, by defending and patronizing the modern dance, with the hope of drawing the wealthy and worldly into their Church. Verily they receive their reward; but a day of fearful reckoning awaits them, when God will reward them according to their evil works and according to the fruit of their doings.

Let us hear,—

3rd. *The testimony of the Presbyterian Church, both North and South.* This Church stands on record against *modern dancing*; and has probably preached and written more against it than any other church or denomination. And first of all, the "GENERAL ASSEMBLY," the supreme court

of the Presbyterian Church, has repeatedly borne its testimony against this worldly amusement, as demoralizing and licentious in its tendency. As early as the year 1860, the General Assembly unanimously adopted the following *Resolutions*, viz. :

“1st. That whilst the pleasures of the *ball-room* and the *theatre* are primarily intended by the ‘dancing and the Stage plays’ forbidden in the answer to the 139th Question in the Larger Catechism, the *spirit* of the prohibition extends to all kindred amusements which are calculated to awaken thoughts and feelings inconsistent with the Seventh Commandment, as explained by the Saviour in Matthew 5: 27, 28.

“2nd. That whilst we regard the practice of promiscuous social dancing by members of the Church as a *mournful inconsistency*, and the giving of parties for such dancing on the part of the heads of families as tending to *compromise* their religious profession, and the sending of children by Christian parents to the dancing-school as a *sad error* in family discipline, yet we think that the *Session* of each church is fully competent to decide when discipline is necessary, and the extent to which it should be administered.”

And in May, 1891, the General Assembly held at Detroit, Mich., “*reaffirmed* the Deliverances of past Assemblies on the subject of worldly amusements,” calling special attention to the repeated action of the Assembly in 1879, 1869, and 1860, against the theatre, opera, *dancing* and card-playing; and affectionately urged all the mem-

bers of their Church to take no part in these *sinful amusements*. See *Minutes of the General Assembly*, A. D. 1891, pp. 152-155.

This is a fair sample of the repeated "*deliverances*" of the supreme court of the Presbyterian Church against Dancing, in which "*the ball-room and theatre*" with "*kindred amusements*" are expressly forbidden, and "promiscuous 'social dancing'" is denounced as "*a mournful inconsistency*" in church members, tending to "*compromise their religious profession*," and "the sending of children by Christian parents to the *Dancing-school* as a *sad error* in family discipline;" while the administration of church discipline is left with the *Sessions*, in which it is vested by the General Assembly.

In response to an *Overture* of the Presbytery of Atlanta, Ga., in 1887, the General Assembly, South, says: "Answer 1st. The Assembly has uniformly discouraged and condemned the *modern Dance* in all its forms, as *tending to evil*, whether practiced in public balls or in private parlors.

"2nd. Some forms of this amusement are more mischievous than others; the round dance than the square, the public ball than the private parlor; but all are *evil*, and should be discountenanced." See *Presbyterian Digest*, by Dr. Alexander.

In October of 1860, THE SYNOD OF MISSOURI, next in power to the General Assembly, met in the city of Columbia, and unanimously adopted the following *Resolutions*, which serve as samples of the action taken from

time to time by numerous other Synods on the subject of "*promiscuous dancing*," viz. :—

"1st. *That the practice of dancing, of giving or attending private or public dancing parties or theatrical exhibitions, and of professing Christians educating their children in the art of dancing, is clearly forbidden by the spirit of the Gospel, condemned by our Confession of Faith, and by the decisions of our highest Church judicatories, and in violation of the covenant obligations entered into by every one who connects himself with the Church of Christ; and that such conduct is an offense which a due regard to the purity as well as the peace of the Church will not permit her courts to overlook or disregard.*

"2nd. Synod does, therefore, recommend and enjoin that the Sessions of all our churches within our bodies treat these sins as other recognized sins are to be treated, and, by proper instruction, admonition and reproof, endeavor in the spirit of Christian gentleness and fidelity to remove all such practices from our churches. And that when milder measures fail, they proceed by the exercise of *discipline* to correct the evil, or to separate those who willfully persist in these sinful practices from the body of Christ, that the cause of Christ be not hindered, and that we may coöperate with Him in presenting to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it may be holy and without blemish."

Many of the ablest and best ministers of the Presbyterian Church, living and dead, have preached and pub-

lished much against modern dancing, only a few extracts from which can be quoted at present.

For instance, the late DR. ARCHIBALD ALEXANDER, long an honored Professor in Princeton Theological Seminary, speaking of "FASHIONABLE AMUSEMENTS," says : "The growing *laxity* of the age gives peculiar meaning to the exhortation, 'Be not conformed to this world.' The rule of most persons is corrupt and dangerous; it is to *do as others do*. The consequence is mutual injury and perpetual declension in the Church. You will find professors who as they increase in wealth constantly enlarge their license. It requires a keen eye to discriminate between their pleasures and expenditures and those of the ungodly. If they abstain from the theatre, they go freely to the opera; or if they scruple at this, they linger at the midnight ball. The step is so easily taken from apparently innocent dancing, to that which is *free, indiscreet, amorous*, and LICENTIOUS, that a tender conscience will find it *safest to reject all*." (Emphasis mine.)

REV. B. M. PALMER, D. D., of New Orleans, a leading Presbyterian preacher in the South, in a printed Sermon on DANCING, says : "*Promiscuous dancing between the sexes is essentially voluptuous and demoralizing*. Nor is it a sufficient answer to say that multitudes dance who are never conscious of any improper associations. It might not be safe for many whose character is above suspicion even to themselves, to make too nice an *analysis* of the pleasures they experience in the dance. . . . How comes it that even in communities where the Gospel lifts its voice, and

therefore virtue has a sure abode, the WALTZ so extensively prevails?—a species of dance I do not hesitate thus publicly to denounce as UNDISGUISEDLY LICENTIOUS! (Emphasis mine.)

“The *liberties*, too, taken in the dance are such as can hardly be safe, even when sanctioned by the sacred laws of kindred and tender friendship. And it seems strange to us that a *freedom* which, if indulged in ordinary intercourse, would be chastised as impertinence, should be allowed in the public assembly, and even to perfect *strangers*! Take human nature as it is, fallen and depraved, and subject to the dominion of wicked passions, and judge ye whether the *concomitants* of the dance are not as dangerous as the smoking brand to the magazine of powder. The *ball-room dress*,—not generally such as a severe taste would approve,—the electric touch of the hand, the fascination of the eye, the excitement of physical motion, the gay confusion of sounds, the bewildering glare of light, act powerfully upon the senses, and occasion a vague and wild delight, into the source of which there is little opportunity to examine.

“What aggravates the evil still more is that the *persons* who are chiefly subjected to this severe ordeal are the least able to abide it. And at no period of life is it so difficult to stem the current of appetite as when the *passions* begin to develop, and, in all the freshness of novelty, fill the mind with images of pleasure. The *young* are the very last who should be surrendered to such a trial. It is just the season when sense and appetite enter

the lists against reason and principle,—just the season when the lusts of the heart rise up from their lair, hungry as young lions, and the judgment is untrained by experience,—just the season when the die is cast for life,—and just the season when every evil thought leaves a stain upon the soul indelible forever.

“In short, if the dance has not worked out its *worst results among us*, it is because Christianity will not close her jealous eye nor hush her warning voice. Let these BIBLES be closed, these *pulpits* be silent, the voice of weeping and intercession, now heard between the porch and the altar, be stifled, let no banner be lifted up by the Spirit of the Lord, and the *tide* of profligacy and vice will sweep on, until religion and common morals shall go down together beneath their gloomy waves.” See *May Christians Dance?* as quoted by Dr. James H. Brookes.

REV. S. R. WILSON, D. D., for years the highly esteemed pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Louisville, in an able Sermon on *Dancing*, now issued as a Tract by the Presbyterian Board of Publication, remarks : “That no countenance is afforded by the word of God to the practice of this fashionable amusement. . . . It is a corrupt and corrupting practice, derived to modern society from the public games and private amusements of the Greeks and Romans, at which slaves and courtesans entertained the spectators and guests with an exhibition of their persons and skill, in *dances* scarcely less indecent than the immodest *Waltz* of a social dancing party.

“Without hesitation it may be affirmed that this fashionable amusement”—as now taught and practiced—“belongs to the forbidden category of ‘chambering and wantonness,’ which the Holy Spirit has associated with ‘rioting and drunkenness.’ *This amusement can never, with propriety, be participated in by Christians. . . . The promiscuous dance is incompatible with modesty.*

“This remark may be applied to the *children’s dance* in the parlor, and to the dancing of grown up men and women in other places. The evil, indeed, begins in the *dancing-school*, which, instead of being called a school of easy manners, ought rather to be styled a place where girls are taught to substitute the *finesse* of the coquette for true female delicacy, and boys take their primary lessons in the art of seduction.

“Hence in the Larger Catechism of the Westminster Assembly, under the list of particular sins forbidden by the Seventh Commandment, ‘*lascivious dancings*’ are included. How justly entitled to this denomination are the most fashionable dances of the present day, I submit to the candid judgment of every Christian who knows anything on the subject. I do not say that no one can be chaste or modest who dances. But that there is an *incompatibility*, an *incongruity* between that delicate modesty which ought ever to characterize the intercourse of the sexes and the *promiscuous dances* now almost universal, I unhesitatingly affirm.” (See *A Time to Dance*, pp. 12-18.)

“REV. JAMES H. BROOKES, D. D., of St. Louis, Mo.,

remarks: "I think a powerful argument could be constructed against the 'round-dances,' as they are called, on the ground of *delicacy* and *decency*. These 'round-dances,' into which the 'square-dances' seem certain to run, I here and hereafter, and on all occasions, denounce as *disgraceful* and *infamous*. Fashion, which is often a fool, and still oftener a fiend, even while wearing a smiling face, has succeeded in enthroning the *Waltz*, and her *still more lascivious Sisters*, as the recognized queens of our best society, and under their sway it is fast getting to be our worst society.

"At the beck of these tyrants, there are young ladies, I am sorry to say, who will permit *liberties* to be taken with them in public, which, if attempted in private, they would instantly resent as the most shocking insult. There are fathers and mothers who permit their daughters to attend the 'club' or the 'hop'; and after gliding for hours through the 'voluptuous movements of the waltz,' they are accompanied home, it may be, by an accomplished libertine, half drunk with champagne. And shall these shameful practices go unrebuked because, forsooth, some weak-minded parent, or giddy girl, or debased voluptuary, chooses to grow furious at the man who hurls his indignant remonstrance against the outrage upon purity and morality which is committed night after night in a thousand circles throughout the land?"—" *May Christians Dance?*" pp. 79, 80.

And REV. WM. S. POTTS, D. D., for many years the esteemed and faithful pastor of the Second Presbyterian

Church of St. Louis, in a published Sermon on the text: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them," shows, first, that *dancing* is one of these unfruitful works of darkness, and then says of the PUBLIC-BALL, that "the female is expected to make her appearance in a *ball-dress*, which means that as much of the person as modesty will at all permit shall be exposed. She may be held in the embrace of the smooth-tongued stranger whom she never saw before, and whose heart is filled with lust, and her panting breast drawn close to his, while waltzing or practicing any of the still more indelicate dances now most fashionable."

He next speaks of the "*dancing party* given by an individual in his own house," and shows that it is governed by the same rules and is liable to nearly all the evils of a public-ball, and legitimately leads to the public dance. And then Dr. Potts closes with a solemn *appeal* to Christians, saying: "To you, at least, these amusements are *sin*. . . . Expensive dressing and its attendants, pride and vanity, are inseparably connected with this amusement. Drinking is encouraged, the fires of lust are fanned, the veil of female modesty removed, and, in the cases just mentioned, the *foundations of female chastity are shaken and often overthrown*."

"Indeed," says DR. JOSEPH F. TUTTLE, "it is notorious that among the worldly and often licentious men who are ever to be found in dancing-assemblies, it is this feature that gives zest and piquancy to the modern dance. Strip it of its opportunities to pander to the appetites by

a promiscuous mingling of the sexes never otherwise allowed, and you rob it of its charm. What virtuous maiden first looks upon the fashionable dances of the day without a conscious flushing of the cheek?"—*Shall I Dance?* p. 20, by the Presbyterian Board of Publication.

Such is a specimen only of the testimony of some of the ablest and best ministers of the Presbyterian Church against modern dancing, showing that it is demoralizing and licentious in its tendency, and legitimately leads to the violation of the Seventh Commandment. Had we space, we might add the testimony of many others, living and dead; such as Drs. W. M. Engles, Herrick Johnson, Le Roy J. Halsey, Stewart Robinson, George C. Heckman, William S. Plumer, James M. Brown, John McDonald, Gardiner Spring, &c., all of whom have placed themselves on record against the licentious and ruinous tendencies of the modern dance.

3rd. *The Methodist Episcopal Church, both North and South*, stands on record against Modern Dancing in all its forms. The following "APPEAL to all Christians, especially members of *the Methodist Episcopal Church*, against the Practice of Social Dancing," expresses the general sentiments of both ministers and laymen of that large body of Christians. After presenting many *Reasons* why Christians should neither dance nor encourage the practice, the writer adds:—

"There is another very important reason why members of the Methodist Episcopal Church especially can

not be allowed to dance with impunity. It is a flagrant violation of the 'GENERAL RULES' of those Churches, both North and South, and of the assurance they gave, on being received into the Church, of a 'willingness to observe and keep the rules;' and all who desire to continue in the fellowship of these Churches are requested to abstain from 'all such diversions as can not be indulged in the name of the Lord Jesus;' and this has always been interpreted as prohibiting their members from attending theatres, circuses, *balls, dancing parties*, etc. And so frequently is this rule read, expounded, and enforced upon the membership, that to ignore its existence is to manifest a degree of ignorance of which any one in fellowship with those Churches ought to be heartily ashamed. And this rule is not a *dead letter*. So that if members of these Churches *dance* or *attend* dancing parties, they not only violate one of the fundamental rules of their Church, but they are also guilty of violating a solemn pledge, given by themselves in the presence of the Church, to 'observe and keep the *Rules* of the Church.'

"It was our good fortune, years ago, to hear one of the General Superintendents of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, deliver a pastoral address to an Annual Conference, in which he referred to the evident increase of *dancing* propensities among the membership, and earnestly exhorted the ministers to enforce the Rules of the Church against all such '*disorderly walkers*.' In concluding his remarks on this point, he averred that if the

Church of his choice should ever connive at this practice in her official capacity, and permit persons to remain in her fellowship *habitually* addicted to dancing, he would feel it his duty to withdraw from her pale, and seek Christian communion elsewhere."

And the late MRS. JULIA A. TEVIS, for more than fifty years the efficient and honored Principal of "Science Hill Female Academy," Shelbyville, Ky., was early trained in the Dancing-school, and says: "I was passionately fond of dancing, but I would repeat here *that I do most heartily condemn dancing; its associations and its influence upon the general system of society being pernicious in the extreme.* Dulling the sense of moral feeling, it establishes the reign of false appearances, lowers the standard of true taste, and drives from its circle those by whose virtues or by whose talents that circle might be adorned. How often do we see young persons, whose independent spirit would make them shrink from the hurtful influence of hollow pretensions and empty parade of the world's low pleasures, and those captivating and dangerous lures which beset the pathway of the young, *wanting* in that mental vigor supported by moral and religious rectitude, which would secure the firmness to resist hurtful allurements. Yet parents should studiously avoid that cold severity in which young minds find an excuse for artful conduct. Let the young also remember that a crooked policy, even under the most trying circumstances, always brings a thousand nameless terrors, cal-

culated to destroy all peace of mind."—*Sixty Years in a School-room*, pp. 162, 340, 341.

I conclude Methodist testimony against dancing with a few sentences from the experience of DR. ADAM CLARKE, their standard commentator, who says:—

"Dancing was to me an unmix'd moral evil; for although, by the mercy of God, it led me not to depravity of manners, it greatly weakened the moral principle, drowned the voice of a well-instructed conscience, and was the first cause of impelling me to seek my happiness in this life. Everything yielded to the disposition it had produced, and everything was absorbed by it. I hold it justly in abhorrence for the moral injury it did me."—*Shall I Dance?* p. 16.

4th. *The Baptists as a denomination have ever been opposed to Dancing, and especially to the Waltz.* Our ablest and best men have preached and written much against modern dancing, and the great mass of our people oppose the evil practice. All our churches are opposed to dancing in every form, and regard it as *anti-scriptural* and of evil tendency. Many churches have adopted *Standing Rules* against modern dancing, making it a matter of discipline and even of exclusion, if persisted in by their members. As a *specimen* of what is quite common in our churches, we here give the *Preamble and Resolutions* of the Bardstown Baptist Church, adopted April 12th, 1879, and reaffirmed in 1887, viz. :

"On motion and second, the following Preamble and Resolutions were adopted, viz. :

“*Whereas*, modern dancing is a worldly amusement, the practice of which leads to evil, in that it tends to destroy the spirituality and Christian influence of those who engage in it, and also interrupts the fellowship of the Church, by giving offense to good brethren; and *whereas*, we are exhorted to ‘Be not conformed to this world,’ and to ‘abstain from all appearance of evil;’ to ‘follow after the things which make for peace:’ Therefore be it *Resolved*,—

“1st. That this Church considers modern dancing, *in all its forms*, an evil, and one from which every member should abstain; and one that should be discouraged in every possible and honorable way.

“2nd. That any member engaging in dancing should be considered *disorderly*, liable to church discipline, and, if persisted in, to expulsion from the Church.”

From numerous Books, Sermons, and Tracts issued by the American Baptist Publication Society and other Baptist publishing houses, we give a few *Extracts* indicating the views of Baptists generally in regard to Modern Dancing. In the “*Baptist Quarterly*” for Oct., 1867, we find an able Article on the “*Modern Dance*,” by REV. ALVA HOVEY, D. D., long the honored President of Newton Theological Seminary, who is good authority on this and all other questions of morals and religion; from which we quote a few paragraphs. Says Dr. Hovey:—

“Our accusation is that *the Dance*, instead of affording an opportunity for mutually ennobling companionship between man and woman, inspired with a chaste and sweet

interfused remembrance of their contrasted relationship to each other,—that *the dance*, instead of this, consists substantially of a system of means contrived with more than human ingenuity to *incite the instincts of sex to action*, however subtle and disguised at the moment. . . . We charge that *Passion*, PASSION, and nothing else, is the true *basis* of the popularity of the dance.

“For it is no accident that the dance is what it is. It mingles the sexes in such *closeness* of contact and personal approach as, outside of the dance, is nowhere tolerated in respectable society. It does this under a *complexity* of circumstances that conspire to heighten the impropriety of it. It is evening, and the hour is late; there is the delicious and unconscious intoxication of music and motion in the blood; there is the strange, confusing sense of being individually unobserved among so many, while yet the ‘noble shame’ which guards the purity of man and woman alone together is absent:—Such is the occasion, and still hour after hour, it whirls its giddy kaleidoscope around, bringing hearts so near that they almost beat against each other, mixing the warm mutual breaths, darting the fine personal electricity across between the meeting fingers, flushing the face and lighting the eyes with a quick language, subject often to gross interpretations on the part of the vile-hearted.

“We say that the dance is not fortuitously such. It is such *essentially*. Its real nature is shown by what it constantly tends to become in *new figures* introduced stealthily from time to time, a little *more doubtful* than the old,

and in wanton whirls, like the *Waltz and Polka*. Always the dance inclines to multiply opportunities of *physical proximity and contact between the sexes*,—always to make them prolonged and more-daring. But if what has already been said and suggested fails to convince any that our analysis of the pleasures of the dance is true, we ask:—Why is it that *the dance alone, of all the favorite diversions of gay society, requires the association of the two sexes in it?*

“And then consider, ye Christian fathers, and brothers, and husbands, to what horrible hazards of *contact* the opportunities of the dance expose your daughters, and sisters, and wives! For who that has gained any experience of the world is ignorant of the fact, that hardly once does a considerable party assemble, even in the most respectable society, without including some man whom his associates know to be a *libertine* in heart, if not in life? And what better facilities could be imagined for an accomplished voluptuary to capture his prey?”

Dr. Hovey's *analysis* of the pleasures of the dance is unquestionably true; and this fact has no little to do with the *laxity* of the marital relation, and the increasing number of divorces being sought and obtained.

MAJOR W. E. PENN, of Eureka Springs, Ark., the distinguished Evangelist, in his popular Treatise on *Dancing*, gives the testimony of an eminent lady on *dancing*, whose name is withheld, but who has distinguished herself in literature, from which we give the following:—

“You ask me to say what I think about ‘*round dances*.’ I am glad of the opportunity to lay my opinion on that subject before the world; though I scarcely know what to write. I will, however, venture to lay bare a young girl’s heart and mind, by giving you *my own experience* in the days when I waltzed. In those days I cared little for Polka or Varsovienne, and still less for the old-fashioned Money Musk or Virginia Reel, and wondered what people could find to admire in those ‘slow dances.’ But in the soft floating of the WALTZ I found a strange pleasure, rather difficult to intelligibly describe. The mere anticipation fluttered my pulse, and when my partner approached to claim my promised hand for the dance, I felt my cheeks glow a little sometimes, and I could not look him in the eyes with the same frank gayety as heretofore.

“But the climax of my confusion was reached when, folded in his warm embrace, and giddy with the whirl, a strange, sweet thrill would shake me from head to foot, leaving me weak and almost powerless, and really obliged to depend for support upon the arm which encircled me. If my partner failed from ignorance, lack of skill, or innocence, to arouse these, to me, most pleasurable sensations, I did not dance with him the second time.

“I am speaking openly and frankly, and when I say that I did not understand what I felt, or what were the real and greatest pleasures I derived from this so-called dancing, I expect to be believed. But if my cheeks grew red with uncomprehended pleasure then, they grow pale with shame to-day when I think of it all. It was the



THE WALTZ,*

as among the *élite*, of Washington, D. C.

*NOTE.—*Waltzing Described.*—The following daguerreotype we find in the *St. Louis Advocate*: "Look! look!" said half a dozen lady voices one pretty night as we sat leaning against the outside of the ball

physical emotions engendered by the *magnetic contact* of strong men that I was enamored of—not of the dance, nor even of the men themselves.

“Thus I became abnormally developed in my lowest nature. I grew bolder, and from being able to return shy glances at first, was soon able to meet more daring ones, until *the Waltz became to me and whoever danced with me, one lingering, sweet, and purely sensual pleasure*, where heart beat against heart, hand was held in hand, and eyes looked burning words which lips dare not speak.

room. We did look—alas! for our poor modesty, we ought not to have done so. “If my children were among them, I’d whip them well for it. Yes, if they were full grown, I’d give them the hickory;” so said the wife of one of our princes, as she turned away in utter disgust. Let me describe a little—if the public may look, certainly it may read, though it run. A group of splendid ones is on the floor, and lovingly mated. The gents encircle their partners’ waists with one arm; the ladies and gentlemen stand closely face to face; the gents are very erect, and lean a little back; the ladies lean a little forward. (Music.) Now, all wheel and whirl, circle and curl; feet and heels of gents go rip-rap, rip-rap, rip; ladies’ feet go tippity-tip, clippity-tip, tip; then all go rippity, clippity, slippity, tippity, bippity, slippity, hoppity, jumpity, bumpity, thump. Ladies fly off by centrifugal momentum; gents pull ladies hard and close; they reel, swing, slide, sling, look tender, look silly, look dizzy; feet fly, tresses fly, hoops fly, dresses fly, all fly. It looks tuggity, huggity, pullity, squeezity, pressity, rubbity, rip. The men look like a cross between steelyards and “limber-jacks,” beetles and jointed X’s. The maidens tuck down their chins very low, or raise them exceedingly high; some smile, some grin, some giggle, some frown, some pout, some sneer, and all sweat freely. The ladies’ faces are brought against those of the men, or into their bosoms: breast against breast, nose against nose, and toes against toes. Now they go again, making a sound like georgey-porgey, derey-peery, ridey-hidey, coachy-poachy. This dance is not much, but *the extras are glorious!* If men were women there would be no such dancing, but they are only men, and so the thing goes on by woman’s love of it. A secular writer says: “There is no established standard of propriety about the matter. If I were a lady, I might object to these dances; but being a man I do not. We certainly ought to be satisfied, if *they* are.”

“All this while no one said to me: ‘*You do wrong;*’ so I dreamed of sweet words whispered during the dance, &c. . . . Yet we had been taught that it was *right* to dance; our parents did it, our friends did it, and we were permitted to do it. I will say also that all the girls with whom I associated, with one exception, had much the same experience in dancing; felt the same strangely sweet emotions, and that almost imperative necessity for a closer communion than that which even the freedom of the Waltz permits, without knowing exactly why, or even comprehending what.

“Married now, with home and children around me, I can at least thank God for the experience which will assuredly be the means of preventing my little daughters from indulging in any such dangerous pleasure. But if a young girl, pure and innocent in the beginning, can be brought to feel what I have confessed to have felt, *what must be the experience of a married woman?*”

Major Penn adds: “I read in the Scriptures, in that ever memorable Sermon on the Mount, this significant declaration: ‘Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. (Matt. 5: 28.) Christ only gives the great sin a name by calling it adultery. It was in this way that the seed was sown in the heart of the Psalmist David, that caused him to commit one of the greatest crimes ever committed on earth. (See 2 Sam. 11: 2-17.) In the same way the seed has been sown in the hearts of many thousands of men *in the ball-room, in the party dances, and in the pri-*

vate parlors, which has ripened into disruptions of the marital relations,—has ripened into husbands murdering their wives, and has ripened into husbands losing their wives by elopement, has ripened into husbands being murdered, has ripened into young men killing each other; and last, though not least, has resulted in the utter ruin of hundreds of thousands of the fair daughters of our land and country, Taking the declarations of Jesus Christ as true, and no honest man can doubt it, *there never was and never will be a dancing party or ball that the great sin He referred to was not and will not be committed in the hearts of some men.* And here permit me to ask an important question:—WITH WHOM IS THIS GREAT SIN COMMITTED? With virtuous wives, daughters and sisters.

“When the ball closes, the young men take the girls to their homes. In a little while the girls—darling angels—are in the land of dreams, but they certainly never dream that they have been ‘sowing the seeds of eternal shame, sowing the seeds of a maddened brain.’ They never dream *that they are responsible for all the sins and crimes that flow from the ball-room*; BUT THEY CERTAINLY ARE, because if they would not go to these places, there never would be another ball or hop or dance upon earth; *for men will not dance by themselves.*”

“But where do the young men go after the ball or dance closes? I do not say that all the young men go to the drinking saloons as soon as they carry their girls home, or as soon as the ball or dance is over. No, many

of them (with inflamed passions) go to *other places*, such as are described in the 5th chapter of Proverbs. *Men will not deny this.* Who caused these men to go to those places? Shall I answer and tell the truth? If I do, I must say that it is the virtuous wives, daughters, sisters and sweethearts who have been participating with them in the dance. *Every man knows that this is true.* In view of these facts, will husbands, parents or brothers ever again permit their wives, daughters or sisters to be seen at another ball or dance?"

See "*No Harm in Dancing*," pp. 29-39, 45; and "*Ethics of the Ball-room*," pp. 18-20.

In the language of a PROMINENT BAPTIST LADY, of Montgomery, Ala., we say: "Young lady, avoid the *Ball-room*, the attractive, perfumed, intoxicating atmosphere, the brilliant lights and sweet music which are snares to the soul, as poisonous to the heart as the sting of the asp to the body, or the slanderous tongue to your reputation. Christ can not go with you there; you leave him outside. He has no fellowship with the *Enslaver* of the soul. Your mission on earth is a noble one; you value not your influence, your power, as you ought. Then how important that you set a pure and holy example to brother, husband and friend. Your presence is the sunshine of their life. If you lead the way into temptation, will they not follow? Think, fair, thoughtless woman, you may lead the most precious one of your heart either into darkness and death, or into light and life. You will sooner or later have to give an account

to a merciful but just Judge. See to it that you are not weighed in the balances and found wanting." See *Religious Herald*, Jan. 14, 1871.

We close the testimony of Baptists against Modern Dancing with MRS. SALLIE ROCHESTER FORD, of St. Louis, who truthfully remarks:—"There is a class of Christians who are ever ready to assist the world in its specious arguments for dancing. But these Christians are not the ones who wield the most influence for the cause of Christ. They are usually persons who are worldly in their tastes, and whose maxims, even in matters of religion, are of a worldly character. They are not the Christians who deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Jesus. They are not the Christians who are found at the prayer-meeting—beside the bed of suffering, nor giving of their substance to the cause of Christ.

"It is sadly true that there are a few who stand in the pulpit as ambassadors of God to dying men, who urge that there can be no harm in the 'square dance,' and that the subject of dancing is beneath the dignity of the pulpit. But these men will be found lovers of themselves, seekers of popularity; men who ingratiate themselves into the favor of the multitude, and who shun to 'declare the whole counsel of God.' Of such let churches and good men beware. They are of the class that Paul calls 'grievous wolves,' 'men speaking perverse things.'" See *Ford's Christian Repository* for Oct. and Dec., 1877.

We might add the testimony of Congregationalists, Disciples, and others, whose ablest and best ministers and writers strongly oppose Modern Dancing, but our limits forbid it; and we close this branch of the subject with,—

6th. *The testimony of the American Tract Society, embracing all Protestant denominations.*

As this national Society has the approval and support of all evangelical denominations in the United States, and as it publishes nothing but what all indorse on this or any other subject, it may justly be regarded as the *embodiment* of the views entertained by the various bodies of Christians on all points pertaining to morals and religion. Able men and women of different denominations have written against modern dancing, and this great Society, with the approval of all, has published their united testimony against this pernicious practice, and the most intelligent and pious members of all churches circulate and read its publications with approval and profit.

Finally on this point we ask, will any Christian, in the light of Scripture and these unquestionable Facts, dare to defend modern dancing, much less practice it? That professor of religion who persists in dancing or encouraging it in others, in the face of God's word and the combined testimony of so great a cloud of witnesses against it, must be fearfully wrong either in heart or head, or in both. As it is written: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death." Prov. 14 :

Hence it is evident that all churches and denominations regard Modern Dancing, based as it is on the *German Waltz*, as a gross violation of the *spirit* of the Seventh Commandment, as explained by our Lord in Matthew 5: 27, 28, and as legitimately leading in multitudes of cases to the *actual* violation of said Commandment. This is unquestionably the *verdict* of the Holy Scriptures, attested by admitted Facts, and indorsed by the wise and good of all Churches. There is, perhaps, no other question of morals on which Christians so universally agree as on this, although some churches *tolerate* the pernicious practice among their members. In the truthful language of the venerable Dr. Jas. H. Brookes, of St. Louis: "*Fashion*, which is often a fool, and still oftener a fiend, even while wearing a smiling face, has succeeded in enthroning *the Waltz and her still more lascivious Sisters*, as the recognized queens of our best society, and under their sway, it is fast becoming *our worst society*."

TESTIMONY OF THE WORLD AGAINST DANCING.

Not only do the wise and good of all churches and denominations bear united testimony against modern dancing, but many intelligent and prominent *men and women* of the world, in high positions, testify against it as demoralizing and licentious in its tendency. We have room only for a few quotations.

The author of "*The Dance of Death*" says: "It is often urged that dancing can not be desperately wicked, be

cause it is '*tolerated*' by all except those of bigoted and narrow religious views.' A greater mistake was never made. I assert that there are hosts of merely moral men who never permit their families to take part in 'round dances.' Nor is this the result of religious bigotry. With most of them 'religion,' in the popular sense of the word, does not enter into the question at all: they are not too *pious*, but too *chaste* to dance. In their eyes, this familiar 'laying on of hands' is essentially indecent, and they can not see that the fact of its being done in public makes it any *less* indecent."

Accordingly, GEN. ALBERT PIKE, late of Washington, D. C., said: "*The Waltz is only fit for houses of prostitution; and I have never been able to understand how any father could permit his daughter, or any husband his wife, to waltz with other men. Yet this is the thing that is tolerated, defended, and encouraged all over the land, and to which many Christians (so called) are lending countenance, and which they openly sustain by their practice! In the name of God and humanity, for the sake of our fair daughters and loved sons, in behalf of the peace and safety of home, what are they thinking about?*"

Again, in speaking of the dance, *another able writer* says: "It is a war on honor; it is a war on physical health; it is a war on man's moral nature. This is the broad 'avenue through which thousands press into the brothel. The dancing-hall is the nursery of the divorce court, the training-shop of prostitution, the graduating school of infamy."

And GAIL HAMILTON, a popular female writer, in speaking of modern dancing, says: "*The thing in its very nature is unclean and can not be washed.* The very pose of the parties suggests impurity. I must go further than this, and assert that the *pose* and *motions* of the parties can not be spoken of by a young lady without danger of committing a *Double-entendre*, at which many a nice young man will laugh in his sleeve."—*Ethics of the Ball-room*, pp. 21-23.

Accordingly, A LADY of intelligence and wealth, accustomed to move in fashionable society, speaking of the dancing at our great watering-places, recently said: "It is positively *immodest* and *immoral*."

In conclusion, we add what a *purely secular* paper of wide circulation says of *dancing*:

"A great deal can be said about dancing; for instance, the chief of police of New York city says three-fourths of the abandoned girls in that city were ruined by dancing. Young ladies allow gentlemen privileges in dancing, which taken under other circumstances, would be considered as improper. *It requires neither brains nor good morals to be a good dancer.* As the love of one increases, the love of the other decreases. How many of the *best* men and women are skillful dancers? *Not one.*

"In ancient times the sexes danced separately. As Alcohol is the spirit of beverages, so *Sex* is the spirit of the dance; take it away, and let the sexes dance separately, and dancing would go out of fashion very soon. Parlor dancing is *dangerous*, and leads to the Waltz. Tip-

pling and parlor dancing sow to the wind, and both reap the whirlwind. Put dancing in the crucible and apply the acids, weigh it, and the verdict of reason, morality and religion is, 'weighed in the balances and found wanting.'"

Such is only a *specimen* of the world's testimony against modern dancing, all going to prove that it legitimately and necessarily tends to the violation of the Seventh Commandment. In view of all these Facts, how can any husband, father or brother allow, much less encourage, a wife or daughter or sister, to engage in the demoralizing and licentious dance?

IV. IT IS A FACT, THAT MODERN DANCING GREATLY
DAMAGES THE HEALTH, PIETY AND USEFULNESS OF
THOSE WHO PRACTICE IT, AND ESPECIALLY
YOUNG LADIES.

A ball dress exposes the person just as much as decency will at all permit; and the protracted and fatiguing exercise of dancing, often till long after midnight, and then the change from a heated room to the cool night air in returning home, greatly imperils health, and young ladies not unfrequently contract colds from which they never recover. The writer has preached not a few Funerals of young persons, directly traceable to the exposures of the fashionable dance. But to say nothing here of the injurious effects of dancing on health, its prodigal and sinful waste of money and time, its inevitable diversion of the mind from serious things, its foster-

ing of pride, vanity and love of display, its resistless power to excite the animal passions and lead to vice, and its numerous other evils, we would call special attention to its *damaging effects* upon the piety, usefulness, and happiness of dancing Christians, especially upon *young Christians*. The very *desire* to dance is *sinful*, and should be firmly resisted by all Christians; *as it is written*: "When lust (or evil desire) is conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished (or indulged), bringeth forth death." James 1: 15.

Dancing not only leads to backsliding, but is itself a *fearful departure* from God. It grieves the Holy Spirit, and quenches His holy fruits of "love and joy and peace" in the heart. It creates and nurtures an absorbing love for this worldly amusement, and destroys all interest in spiritual and holy things, so that dancing church members will gradually *absent themselves* from the prayer-meeting, from the Sunday-school, and from the preaching of the Gospel; and will attend the dancing party, ball or hop; and often dance till late hours on Saturday night, and thus unfit themselves for the services of the Sanctuary on the Sabbath. Dancing is death to religion in the soul.

Accordingly, Dr. Jas. H. Brookes, of St. Louis, says: "I solemnly declare that I have never known a member of the church who indulged in this evil practice without a *shocking declension* of religious life, without ceasing sooner or later to attend the prayer-meeting, without exhibiting less and less interest in the ordinances of God's

house, without sinking into a state of indifference to the claims of the Redeemer, and without being betrayed sooner or later into the commission of other sins, naturally growing out of dancing."—*May Christians Dance?* p. 43.

In an active pastorate of nearly half a century, embracing six large churches in towns, city and country, the writer has witnessed many instances of *backsliding* from dancing, some of which he was not able to reclaim, owing chiefly to the direct or indirect interference of pleasure-loving and worldly-minded parents, and the want of proper church discipline; but in every case he succeeded in saving them from the ruinous practice, where parents coöperated with him, and his churches backed his efforts. With kind and timely attention, converted dancers may be reclaimed without exclusion, and the unconverted had better be out of any church, until they repent and are converted.

Dancing not only damages the health and piety of those Christians who practice it, but it is ruinous to their *usefulness and happiness*. In a published Sermon, showing that "DANCING IS SINFUL," and presenting some "*Reasons why Christians should not dance*," REV. FRED. D. HALE, a model young pastor and evangelist of Louisville, Ky., says: "*It ruins his influence over the unconverted. Ask any penitent soul, seeking freedom from his burden of sin, if he prefers one from the ball-room to lead him to Christ. I hear it often remarked by outsiders that it*

is inconsistent for church members to dance. *The dancing Christian is a stumbling-block in the way of others.*"

Our blessed Lord, in addressing Christians, says: "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." (Matt. 5: 13.) Dancing destroys the life and power of religion in the soul, and paralyzes the influence of Christians; they lose the savor of piety in the heart, and, like Samson shorn of his locks, they become weak and worthless.

But the damaging effects of dancing extend beyond the limits of time. To the extent that it diminishes the happiness and usefulness of Christians in this life, to that extent will it diminish their reward of bliss and glory in the life to come; and if saved at all, it will be with great loss, their evil works being burned at the last day. With what regret and shame will the dancing Christian meet that Savior, "who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Titus 2: 14.

Accordingly, the *Religious Herald* says: "Social dancing is a *sinful pleasure*. Any pleasure is sinful that begets a disrelish for religious duties and pleasures. That social dancing does this, will be acknowledged by all who indulge in this amusement. Who feels as much like praying in secret after a night's revel of this sort as before?"

V. IT IS A FACT, THAT MODERN DANCING GREATLY
BURDENS THE HEARTS OF FAITHFUL PASTORS, AND
HINDERS THEIR USEFULNESS IN MANY WAYS.

Every true pastor loves the people of his charge with a pure heart fervently, and strives to promote their present and eternal welfare. He has no greater joy than to see them walking in the truth, and no greater sorrow than to see them walking in the paths of sin and folly. It affords him real pleasure to commend them for well-doing, and gives him real pain to be compelled to rebuke them for evil-doing; but necessity is laid upon him.

Pastors are solemnly bound to declare "all the counsel of God," whether men will hear or forbear; to "reprove, rebuke and exhort, with all-long-suffering and doctrine;" to cry aloud and spare not, and to show God's people their sins and transgressions; and it is at their peril to neglect it. No pastor, therefore, can innocently connive at modern dancing, or hold his peace in regard to its demoralizing and licentious tendencies; but he should faithfully warn his people against the pernicious practice, and guard them against corrupt and dissolute men, who would seduce inexperienced and pure-minded young Christians into sin and shame. True, this is an unpleasant part of a pastor's duty, and requires great prayerfulness and prudence; but he is sworn to be faithful, and dare not shrink from the painful task: for he watches for souls as one that must give account to God. Heb. 13: 17.

Every pastor is set as a watchman unto his people;

and, therefore, he should warn them from God, according to his word. *As it is written*: "When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." Ezek. 33: 7-9.

Now, dancing should be checked at the *very beginning*, and children should not be allowed to *learn* to dance. If the habit be not formed, they will never desire to dance; but if they be trained in the parlor, it will be no easy matter to restrain them from the ball or the hop; and once they become enamored with the dance, there is no arguing with the blind passion. The difficulty is greatly increased when parents suffer their children to be taught the art of dancing, and when they plead that it is a genteel and innocent amusement. Thus the passions and prejudices of children are arrayed against a pastor's faithful efforts to restrain and teach them the truth on this subject, and it is next to impossible to save them from the demoralizing and ruinous practice. Surely, if such parents and children only knew a *pastor's heart*, and the great trouble their conduct gives him, they would deny themselves the unholy pleasures of the dance, even though it might be as dear to them as a right eye!

None but pastors can fully know the great trouble dancing gives them. The late GARDINER SPRING, D. D., for

more than fifty years the faithful and honored pastor of the Presbyterian Brick Church, New York, but gave the experience of pastors generally, when he said : "Dancing has been a source of more trouble to me in my Church than all other causes of disquietude combined."

In addition to these and many other sources of disquietude and trouble to pastors, Dancing members and their pleasure-loving and worldly-minded parents and friends often remove faithful and efficient pastors from fields of great usefulness, to the lasting detriment of the churches. In a long pastorate in middle, northern and southern Kentucky, and in many protracted meetings both in Kentucky and Tennessee as a voluntary evangelist, the writer has witnessed not a few instances of such removals from dancing.

For instance, the Baptist church in the city of M—— had two *extremes* on the subject of dancing, headed by the most influential men and women in the city, and was in danger of an open rupture. The pastor was efficient and faithful, and highly esteemed in love by both parties ; and he gave the Bible view of Dancing, taking the *middle* ground on the subject, and showing that modern dancing is unscriptural, and evil in itself and in its tendency, and yet not the greatest of evils, as one party maintained. The sermon satisfied all, except one prominent deacon and his family, and the only way he could remove the pastor was, to discourage and persuade the members privately that they were not able to raise the pastor's salary, much as he professed to love him. He

succeeded in starving the pastor away, to the great injury and lasting regret of the entire church.

Again, a pious and wealthy Deacon of a Baptist church in the village of — sent a lovely daughter to a popular school in Louisville where dancing was taught. She returned home enamored with waltzing, and, with the help of a few dancing friends, she enlisted quite a number of young church members in the dance. The pastor first tried in vain to dissuade them, but the deluded young lady persisted, quoting the city churches and pastors as allowing and approving the evil practice. The pastor was urged to preach on the subject, and presented it Scripturally and temperately, but she avowed her purpose to dance; and the church was forced to arraign her. But the relatives and friends of the dancing girl sympathized with her, and thus one of the best young pastors in the State was compelled to leave a useful field, to the great damage of the church and community.

Again, in the town of — the children of two influential Deacons had been encouraged by their mothers to dance and became leaders in the fashionable amusement. The church had Standing Rules against dancing, but hesitated to enforce them. After private efforts had failed to stop the evil, the pastor preached against dancing, and urged the church to enforce its Rules or rescind them. Just then he was invited to another field, and being advised by one of said deacons to accept, he decided to resign his pastorate, where he had the confidence and esteem of the entire church and community, and might

have been permanently useful there, but for modern dancing.

And again, a fashionable and wealthy church in the city of — recently lost a most efficient and useful pastor, who had preached against modern dancing, chiefly by the opposition of a few wealthy and worldly-minded lovers of the dance.

These are but *specimens* of hundreds of instances where a few pleasure-loving parents and their dancing children have removed faithful and successful pastors from fields of great usefulness, and many churches are suffering the sad consequences. It is one of the most fruitful causes of pastoral changes, and the churches ought to discipline and restrain such dancing factions, and thus protect and retain their pastors.

Nor is this all. By cruel parental encouragement and indulgence, many fair daughters and noble sons have been led on in the giddy dance from bad to worse, down to endless ruin, "where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched;" and eternity alone can answer the momentous question: "*What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall he give in exchange for his soul?*" (Matt. 16: 26.) A fearful reckoning awaits all those who aid and abet in thus leading souls down to perdition.

VI. IT IS A FACT, THAT MODERN DANCING IS ONE OF THE GREATEST OBSTACLES TO THE CONVERSION OF DANCING SINNERS, AND ACTUALLY PREVENTS THE SALVATION OF MANY.

As we have shown, dancing is utterly incompatible with our holy religion, and intelligent dancers are aware of the fact. Yet such is their love for this fascinating amusement, that it is exceedingly difficult for them to abandon it. Dancing unfits the mind for serious reflection, and excites "fleshly lusts," which grieve the Holy Spirit and war against the soul. The devotee of the dance must decide either to abstain from the sinful practice or give up the hope of salvation. This very fact creates a fearful struggle in the mind of an awakened dancer; and the danger is greatly increased when "the children of light" mingle with the ungodly in this "unfruitful work of darkness."

In a long and laborious ministry, the writer has witnessed many sad examples of this kind among seekers of salvation. *For instance*, in a glorious revival at Russellville, Ky., in which a large number were converted, an accomplished daughter of Judge E. was an anxious seeker of salvation for days. She was a belle of the town, and a leader in fashionable dancing. Her great difficulty was to give up the dance; at length, she sent for the writer and frankly stated her troubles. After a faithful conversation and earnest prayer with her, the pastor left, with a solemn warning to abandon the dance forever, or she would be lost. By humble and penitential prayer,

she was enabled to give up the besetting sin, and to trust Christ for salvation. That night she offered herself to the church for membership, stating that her love for dancing had well-nigh ruined her soul, and promised to abandon the evil practice forever.

This accords with the experience and observation of pastors generally. In the truthful language of Dr. Jas. H. Brookes, of St. Louis, we say: "There are hundreds of ministers who can testify that they have seen revival influences rudely checked, and awakened sinners suddenly sunk in the fatal slumber of spiritual insensibility, by an ill-timed dance. If dying confessions mean anything, its pleasures are often purchased at the price of the soul; and in the day of judgment the appalling fact will be revealed to the gaze of an astonished universe, that the professed disciple of Jesus who gave to this evil practice his countenance and support, lived to curse, rather than to bless, his unbelieving associates who were influenced by his ruinous example." And this is true not only of dancing children, but also of *Christian parents*, who encourage and favor the giddy dance by their presence or otherwise.

It is a fatal mistake to suppose that the ungodly can be won to Christ by conformity to their vain amusements. On this point Christian wives are in great danger of erring. "More than once," says Dr. Brookes, "during a busy ministry of many years, I have known the believing wife yield to the solicitations of an unbelieving husband, and accompany him to the theatre, or

participate with him in the hilarities of the dance, on the specious plea, that by relaxing a little her high-toned Christian principle, she would make her religion more genial, and thus gradually win him over to the cause of Christ. *I have never known an instance in which this plan succeeded.*" (*May Christians Dance?* pp. 70, 71.) Christianity allows no compromise with sin and worldly conformity. "Then said Jesus to his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matt. 16: 24.) "Abstain from all appearance and every form of evil."

VII. IT IS A FACT, THAT NO VALID EXCUSE CAN BE
OFFERED IN FAVOR OF MODERN DANCING,
ESPECIALLY OF THE WALTZ.

1st. Says One, "*I can see no harm in a square dance in the parlor or private party; it is a genteel amusement, and improves the manners of young people.*"

If dancing could be confined to this, there might be no great harm in it. But the parlor or private dance is the nursery of the public ball or hop, and legitimately and almost invariably leads to promiscuous dancing and the Waltz: just as moderate drinking tends to drunkenness, and progressive Euchre tends to gambling. It is an undeniable fact that the square dance leads to the round dances and waltzing; indeed modern dancers are satisfied with nothing short of the Waltz and her more licentious sisters. Modern dancing differs essentially from ancient dancing. The old-fashioned square dances are too slow

for this fast age, and would be regarded as a *penance* rather than a pleasure in a modern ball or hop; the round dances and waltzing are all the fashion at the present day. A ball or a hop would be regarded a failure now without the Waltz; a species of dance we have shown to be demoralizing and licentious in its tendency. Yet this is the favorite dance of modern society.

Accordingly, a popular writer on Dancing, in describing the six round dances practiced in Washington, D. C., and at other places of fashionable amusement, remarks:—"Very particular attention should be paid to the WALTZ. Of all the dances it is the most important, being the foundation of all. When the Waltz is thoroughly learned, the other dances are easily and readily acquired."

But we have shown that dancing in all its forms, and especially the German Waltz, is evil *in itself* and evil in its *tendency*. In the truthful language of Dr. B. M. Palmer, of New Orleans, we say: "Promiscuous dancing between the sexes is *essentially voluptuous and demoralizing*;" and as for the Waltz, it is "UNDISGUISEDLY LICENTIOUS." Or with Dr. Alva Hovey, we say: "PASSION! PASSION!! *and nothing else, is the true basis of the popularity of the dance.*" Hence we conclude with Dr. S. R. Wilson, that "The promiscuous dance is *incompatible* with modesty," and that "this amusement can never with propriety be participated in by Christians."

Now, if this amusement could be confined to the square dance, or even to the cotillion and Virginia Reel, it would be less objectionable. But experience and observation

prove that this is next to impossible. The square dances create a *taste* for the round dances, and usually, if not invariably, lead to them. Says Dr. Alexander, "The step is so easily taken from apparently innocent dancing to that which is free, *indecent*, AMOROUS and LICENTIOUS, that a *tender conscience will find it safest to reject all*."

As to dancing improving the manners of young people, facts prove that it is not essential to ease and gracefulness; for many who never danced, are just as accomplished and graceful as those who excel in the art. It is a delusion of dancing masters and mistresses, that ease and gracefulness can be obtained only in the dancing-school.

2nd. "*That young people must and will have amusements, and if they be denied the dance, they will despise religion.*"

It is true that young people crave and must have amusements, and they should be encouraged and indulged in harmless and rational pleasures. But modern dancing is neither harmless, improving, nor rational. While it does no good, it does much harm. It is not promotive of real happiness: this the writer knows from experience, as well as from observation. It is not a necessary accomplishment; many who never dance, are just as accomplished as those who practice it. It is a sad mistake to suppose that ease and gracefulness of manners can be acquired only in the dancing-school; facts abundantly prove the contrary.

There is nothing intellectual in dancing; it is a mere bodily exercise, and requires neither brains nor morals; a stupid *African* or even a *Monkey* may be taught to excel

in the art. Neither is modern dancing a *social* amusement, in the real sense of the term ; it is a mere physical performance, and rob it of its *amorous pleasures*, and there would be no occasion to preach or write against it ; for it would die of itself. Take, for instance, the floating, swinging, wearisome *Waltz*. What is there graceful, intellectual or social about it ? A young lady in the embrace of a young man !

But there are ennobling, innocent and rational amusements in which the young may profitably and safely participate. If the time and money wasted in preparing for the giddy dance were expended in purchasing and reading interesting and instructive books and magazines, young ladies and young men would be qualified to entertain themselves and each other in a rational, social and useful manner, worthy of their noble natures. And such intellectual, moral and social enjoyments as far exceed that of modern dancing, as an intelligent lady or gentleman exceeds a baboon or a monkey. Parents and pastors should select and supply their children and young people with such means of entertainment and instruction, and share the pleasures with them. Churches should provide CIRCULATING LIBRARIES of choice and entertaining books and magazines for their young members. Such enjoyments are worthy of intelligent beings, and would cost parents far less than dancing apparel and dancing-schools.

As to the young despising religion if they be denied the pleasures of the dance, it would be the lesser of two

evils to deny them these sinful pleasures and save them the guilt of indulgence; for they will certainly despise religion if they become enamored with dancing. The devotee of the dance loses all love for religion; the love of the one necessarily expels the love of the other. Hence it is that no one desires to dance who enjoys religion; the Christian must leave his first love before he will engage in dancing.

But *young Christians* ought not to need the corrupting and demoralizing pleasures of the dance; they have, or may have, higher and purer pleasures,—even joy unspeakable and full of glory, and the peace of God which shall keep their minds and hearts through Christ Jesus. In fact, Christians never desire and relish the degrading pleasures of the dance, until they fall into sins of neglect and transgression, and lose the enjoyment of religion. And the only remedy for this evil is, to remember from whence they are fallen, and repent and do their first works; and then, and not till then, will they be truly happy again. Rev. 2: 3-5.

4th. "*There is no use to oppose dancing, for it can not be stopped.*"

Well, that may be true, so far as graceless professors and ungodly sinners are concerned. But it is not true of *real Christians*, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, though they may have been led into the dance and lost the joy of God's salvation. They are still His *children*; and when they learn the evils of dancing, as they certainly will sooner or later, then they will repent and

break off their sins by righteousness. To all his wandering and wayward children, God says:—"Return unto me, O ye backsliding children, for I am married unto you; I will heal your backslidings and love you freely."

But not so with graceless professors and ungodly sinners. We are told, that in the last days, "Evil men, and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived;" that "men shall be lovers of *pleasures*, rather than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof;" and that "many shall follow their pernicious ways." (2 Tim. 3: 1-5; 2 Pet. 2: 2, 14.)

This, however, by no means justifies Christian parents in *allowing*, much less in encouraging, their children to participate with the ungodly in the licentious dance. Nor does it justify Churches and pastors in permitting their members to disgrace their profession and dishonor our holy religion, by uniting with the wicked in this voluptuous and demoralizing amusement. Parents should exercise their authority and exert their influence to restrain their children from this vortex of ruin; and both churches and pastors should instruct, persuade and watch over their young members faithfully, and thus guard them against this worldly amusement. And if any persist in the pernicious practice, they should be delivered over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that their souls may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

5th. It is said, "*that many Christians favor dancing, and some practice it.*"

True, some worldly-minded Christians encourage dancing, and a few practice it. But such Christians, though informed on other subjects, have not prayerfully and thoroughly examined the subject of modern dancing in the light of Scripture and Facts, or they would neither encourage nor practice it. After all that is claimed by dancers and their apologists, comparatively few real Christians favor or practice dancing, and no very pious persons either approve or participate in it. The overwhelming majority of the wise and good of all churches and denominations regard modern dancing in every form as both unscriptural and of evil tendency, and unitedly testify against it; those who favor and practice it are the *exceptions* to the general rule, and have no just claims to superior piety.

DR J. M. PENDLETON stated a general truth when he said: "In a ministry of fifty years, I have never known a pious dancer." Piety and habitual dancing never go together. A Christian may be drawn into the dance, but the more he indulges, the less piety he possesses, for dancing is destructive of piety.

6th. It is said that, "*the city churches and pastors favor dancing, and allow it in their members.*"

True, some city churches *tolerate* dancing among their members, but very few, if any, *approve* of it; the great majority oppose the practice, and try to restrain it. The pastors, almost without exception, regard dancing as unscriptural and evil in its tendency, and do what they can to restrain their members from it. After all, there is

much less dancing among city churches than dancing members in the town and country churches claim. Occasionally a backslidden country member goes to the city and plunges into the dance, supposing that it will introduce him and his family to the first circles of society. Now and then an enthusiastic dancer from the city visits her country cousins and figures largely in a country dance. She reports the city churches and ministers as allowing, if not favoring, dancing, and says that nearly all practice it in fashionable circles. This emboldens country and village dancers, and they quote the city churches and pastors as friends of modern dancing. True, some church members of doubtful piety favor the dance, and a few practice it, but the pastors and pious members all oppose the pernicious practice.

But if dancing were approved and practiced by all city churches, as dancing members maintain, that would by no means justify the evil practice; dancing must be viewed in the light of Scripture and Facts, and judged accordingly. Still it is true that much of the dancing troubles in town and country churches comes from the *laxity* of city churches, and those churches should be more faithful and prompt in discipline, both for the good of their dancing members and those of sister churches. Instead of conniving at and tolerating the evil practice among their members, they should oppose and restrain it.

7th. It is charged that "*the churches tolerate worse things than dancing among their members.*"

If this be true, as it may be in some instances, it would

not justify modern dancing ; for the indulgence of one sin can not excuse or palliate another sin. It is lamentably true that discipline is greatly neglected in many churches, and thus Christ is wounded in the house of his friends. But dancing must be judged according to its *own merits*, and not by comparison with other evils. As we have shown, Modern Dancing is evil in itself, and leads to greater evils, and, viewed in the light of its associations and tendencies, there are few greater evils in the churches. Still we would advise forbearance, patience and prudence in dealing with young and inexperienced members ; for often they are less blamable than their parents and misguided friends. In most cases, pastors can save them from ruin, with the coöperation of parents, and no effort should be spared to reclaim them. But they should not be allowed to persist in the sinful practice.

8th. *We are told that, "the dance might be reformed and rendered harmless and useful."*

The same has been said of the *Theatre*, and the experiment has been tried again and again, but in every instance it has proved a failure. It is not of God, but of the world ; and it can no more be reformed than Satan can be made a saint. The same is equally true of *modern Dancing*. More than once has the attempt been made to reform the dance, and to-day it is more corrupt and more corrupting than ever before. It is intensely worldly ; and it excites and nourishes the basest passions of our fallen nature. The fashionable dance of modern society is essentially evil, and reformation is morally impossible.

Accordingly, DR. W. C. WILKINSON, Professor in the Chicago University, remarks: "The dance, then, to say it at once and plainly, is an *immoral* amusement, immoral I mean *in itself*. . . . Can we forget that it is the best use which is liable to the worst abuse? Do we not know that the relation of the sexes, which was to have overthrown the world like a fountain of Paradise, has been perverted into the prolific cause of more crime and misery than any other single thing that can be named? And shall I not cry shame upon a *usage* that, under cover of respectability, regularly titillates and tantalizes an animal appetite as insatiable as hunger, more cruel than revenge?"—*The Dance of Modern Society*, pp. 57, 63, 64.

Modern Dancing is, as has been shown, a demoralizing and licentious amusement, and can never be reformed. In the language of Gail Hamilton, we say: "The thing in its *very nature* is unclean, and can not be washed. The *very pose* of the parties suggests impurity." Bishop McIlvaine, of Ohio, speaking of the "*Theatre and Dance*," says: "The only line I would draw in regard to these is, that of *entire exclusion*." And the venerable Bishop Meade, of Virginia, speaking of dancing, remarks "*That it is in itself wrong, improper, and of bad effect.*"

Modern dancing, then, can never be reformed and rendered harmless; it is an evil tree, and necessarily bears evil fruit. The only remedy for it is that of "*entire exclusion*" and *total abstinence* from it.

Other excuses for dancing are offered by its advocates

and devotees, but these are about all that merit an answer.

Such, then, is *Modern Dancing in the Light of Facts*: 1. It legitimately leads to greater evils, and tends to immorality and irreligion; 2. That Modern Dancing, including the German Waltz and French Round-dances, unavoidably tends to and often results in the actual violation of the Seventh Commandment; 3. That the wise and good of all churches and denominations bear united testimony against Modern Dancing; 4. That dancing imperils the health, and greatly damages the piety and usefulness of those Christians who practice it; 5. That it burdens the hearts of faithful pastors, and greatly hinders their success in many ways; 6. That it is one of the greatest obstacles to the conversion of dancing sinners, and actually prevents the salvation of many; and 7. That no valid Excuse can be offered in favor of Modern Dancing.

CHAPTER III.

PRACTICAL DEDUCTIONS FROM THE SUBJECT.

Hence we learn,—

1st. *That Modern Dancing is condemned both by Scripture and Facts.*

This has been sufficiently shown, and need not be repeated. It violates both the letter and spirit of the Bible, and its whole tendency is to evil in all its forms.

It legitimately leads to the violation of the Seventh Commandment, as interpreted by our Savior in Matt. 5 : 27, 28, and often leads to its actual violation. It greatly injures those Christians who encourage and practice it, and hinders the salvation of sinners; while it burdens the hearts of faithful pastors, and grieves good brethren and sisters, and thus mars the peace and harmony of churches.

That professor of religion, therefore, who can see no evil in modern dancing, must be wrong in head or heart or both. Though dancing in the abstract may not be a sin *per se*, yet taken *as it is* with its unavoidable accompaniments, it is not only a worldly amusement which *leads to sin*, but is *sinful in itself* and in its *tendency*; and, therefore, it should be avoided and discountenanced by all Christians and friends of morality.

2nd. *That it is the duty of Christian parents to discourage and restrain dancing in their children.*

The chief difficulty is with parents, especially *mothers*. They neglect to exercise their authority at the proper time and in the proper way; and let others encourage and lead their children into the dance. They should begin *early* and not allow their children to *learn* to dance, and thus prevent the taste from being formed. They should be firm but mild; keep them from dancing associates and dancing parties; if possible, accompany them to their social gatherings and watch over them; explain dancing to them and show them its dangers and evils; exercise parental authority over them, and thus check

the evil in its *buddings*. If the *taste* be not formed in childhood and youth, very few, if any, will ever desire to dance. At the same time, allow them proper indulgence in things known to be harmless and safe; above all, interest them at home, and furnish them with entertaining and useful reading adapted to their ages, and thus make them prefer home to any other place. Parents can and ought thus to control their children in this thing and save them from the evils and dangers of modern dancing, and finally save their souls.

But alas! many Christian fathers and mothers do not know the evil nature and sinful tendencies of modern dancing, and hence are quite willing that their children should dance. Indeed, some parents seem more than willing that their children should participate in the evil practice, and freely spend money to dress and train them for it. Instead of opposing dancing, they apologize for it, and plead that it is a harmless amusement and a necessary accomplishment. And a few aspiring and proud-spirited mothers aid and abet the pernicious practice in their children, while they shield themselves behind their unconverted husbands. It is not strange that the husbands of such wives are unconverted. The wonder would be, that they should ever be converted, with such examples before them.

Now, God has made it the duty of parents to govern their children, and equally the duty of children to obey their parents. But Modern Dancing is one of the most fruitful causes of disobedience to parents, and often leads

children to lie and deceive. In the language of Major W. E. Penn, we say: "One of the greatest sins committed by children and young people is *disobedience to parents*. It is one of the greatest, because it is one of the first, and if cultivated becomes the cess-pool of iniquity. I claim that the *love* of dancing is the most fruitful source of disobedience to parents. If anything will cause children to disobey parents, it is to be forbidden to attend a ball or dance when their hearts are set upon it. *They will go and dance, and then deny it*. For all this disobedience and lying, parents generally are far more to blame than the children, because it is the parents' fault that they ever *learned* to dance. Some parents have an idea that dancing is a necessary branch of education, that it makes their children *graceful*, but never look far enough down the line to see that they are opening the way to graceful disobedience, lying, drunkenness, gambling, prostitution, and every other sin and crime. They are opening the very gates of hell to their children."—*No Harm in Dancing*, pp. 53, 54. Hence we learn,—

3rd. *That it is the solemn duty of young Christians and young married professors to abstain from dancing in all its forms, and to avoid dancing parties and balls.*

Not only is it their duty to "abstain from all appearance and every form of evil," and to "be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of their mind;" but it is also their duty to "cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God," and to "lay aside every

weight and the sin which doth so easily beset them, and run with patience the race that is set before them, looking unto Jesus." As we have shown, Modern Dancing has the appearance of evil, and is itself a most fruitful form of evil; that it is conformity to this world; that it is demoralizing and licentious in its tendency; and, withal, a most fascinating amusement; it is therefore among the sins that most "*easily beset*" the young, which they are required to "*lay aside*," let it cost whatever sacrifice and self-denial it may.

Now, our blessed Lord, who denied himself the bliss and glory of heaven, and who loved us and made himself an offering and sacrifice to God for us, expressly requires *self-denial* and *cross-bearing* as conditions of discipleship. Therefore it is both the duty and interest of all his disciples to *deny themselves* the pleasures of the dance, though they be as dear to them as a right eye or right hand, and to take up their *cross* and follow Him through evil as well as good report. (Matt. 5: 29, 30.) No disciple who knowingly and willfully refuses to do this, can reasonably expect Christ to acknowledge him before his Father and the holy angels at the last day.

Now, if dancing were an innocent amusement, still it would be sinful in Christians to practice it, because it gives offense to good brethren and sisters, and wounds their consciences, while it hinders the salvation of sinners. But we have shown from Scripture and undeniable Facts, that modern dancing is evil in *itself* and evil in its *tendency*, and therefore all Christians should abstain

from it, and give their influence against it. It does no good, but injures those who practice it, and injures the cause of Christ and grieves the Holy Spirit.

But young Christians and young married professors of religion should not only abstain from dancing in all its forms, but they should *avoid* dancing parties and balls. The only safety is to *keep away* from such places; and if they should chance to attend social gatherings where dancing was not expected, they should leave whenever it commences. No Christian should either go or stay where dancing is practiced. It is not only dangerous to attend dances, but it is also *sinful* to aid and abet the evil practice by our presence and smiles. This is true of Christians who never dance, as well as those who indulge in the practice. It is wrong for any Christian to attend dancing parties and balls.

Hence we learn,—

4th. *That it is the bounden duty of all churches to oppose and restrain Dancing among their members.*

Dancing is a complicated evil, and should be managed with great prudence and wisdom. Many intelligent Christians on other subjects, have not carefully investigated this subject in the light of Scripture and Facts, and hence do not understand the demoralizing and licentious tendencies of modern dancing. While they doubt the *propriety* of the practice, therefore, and had rather their children and young members should not dance, still they quietly yield to it as a kind of necessity. But we have shown that modern dancing, and especially Waltzing, is

evil in *itself* and in its *tendency*, that it is a *sin against Christ*, and, taken as it is and as it ever must be, it is one of the *most fruitful sources of evil* in the churches.

Now, dancing members should be faithfully admonished, properly instructed, and kindly urged to abandon the evil practice. If looked after in due time and lovingly treated, very few converted dancers will persist unto exclusion; but if any refuse to yield, and let their love of this worldly pleasure lead them on in dancing, they should be excommunicated for their own good and that of their churches, and for the honor of Christ and religion. If converted, it will lead them to repent and break off their sins by righteousness, *provided* parents and all church members sustain the action of their churches, and treat the excluded as brethren and sisters guilty of error and wrong-doing, and pray for them.

It is infinitely better to preserve the honor, purity and peace of Christ's churches than to retain a few disorderly and worldly-minded members of doubtful piety, let their wealth and position in society be what they may. In fact, it is sinful and dangerous to retain such "disorderly walkers" in the churches; for "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," and that church which knowingly indulges its members in this evil and ruinous practice, thereby becomes a partaker of their evil deeds. No Christian church, therefore, can innocently and safely indulge its members in this demoralizing and licentious amusement, which is condemned both by the letter and spirit of God's word and by the combined testimony

of the wise and good of all churches, and even by the world.

Now, it is exceedingly important that the churches of all denominations should sustain each other in maintaining a Scriptural and watchful discipline over their dancing members. In no other way can the evil be successfully controlled and the churches be kept pure and prosperous. On this vital point, some modern Baptist churches and pastors are becoming delinquent; and even the Presbyterians, whose higher judicatories and best ministers have borne such able testimony against modern dancing, give evidence of relaxing in discipline in regard to this growing evil. Very recently, an intelligent young man of standing and wealth, who indulges a hope in Christ, said to a Baptist minister: "My views in the main harmonize with the Baptists, but I have made up my mind to join the Presbyterians, who will allow me to dance." When the late Dr. N. L. Rice was pastor in Bardstown some years since, the Session was accustomed to arraign, not only dancing members, but those also who merely remained at a dancing party where dancing was not expected. Both consistency and duty require that *all* the churches of Christ should exercise a watchful and controlling discipline over their dancing members, and if any defiantly persist in the pernicious and sinful practice, they should exclude them from their fellowship and communion. If some churches neglect this Scriptural duty, it tends to embarrass and paralyze the discipline of the other churches.

There is a *mania* in many churches for numbers, and hence a strong temptation to connive at dancing and retain dancing members. It is bad policy, as well as sinful; neither dancing Christians nor dancing sinners can respect any church that thus neglects proper discipline for the sake of numbers. While great forbearance and prudence should be exercised, it should be known by all that dancing members will be excluded, if they persist in the evil practice.

Accordingly, DR. T. T. EATON, the popular pastor of Fourth and Walnut Street Baptist Church, Louisville, and Editor of the *Western Recorder*, in an address on "*Amusements*," remarks: "Modern amusements do not recreate, but exhaust. It has been well said, 'Life would be worth living but for its amusements.' But the moment an amusement ceases to be innocent, it is the duty of the church to protect her members from the evil influence. Those members who indulge in the sinful amusement, and those who allow those they control to engage in it, should be subjected to a *wholesome discipline* by the church. The command is peremptory, 'Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly.'" — *Western Recorder*, of Nov. 24, 1887.

But if it be proper and right for one church member to attend and participate in private dances or public balls, then it is proper and right for all to do so; and if it be proper and right for all church members to attend

and participate in such dances, how can it be improper and wrong for pastors to do the same? And yet if a minister of Christ were even to attend, much less participate in such giddy and godless amusements, not only the church members, but the world also would denounce it as glaringly inconsistent and shamefully wrong in him; and, like Samson shorn of his locks, he would be powerless for good, and weak like other dancing Christians.

But a wealthy and worldly-minded brother objects, that our language is too severe in regard to modern dancing, and that he sees no harm in it, and would leave his church rather than abandon it. Very well, it would certainly be a blessing to the churches to get rid of all those members who love the dance better than they love Christ and his cause, let their standing and wealth be what they may. We have nothing to lose, but everything to gain, by maintaining a Scriptural and watchful discipline in all our churches; and it should be faithfully and promptly exercised, without respect of persons. God requires rigid discipline in his churches, and he has ever blessed that church which maintains a wholesome and controlling discipline. As to our language, we are speaking of a most fruitful evil, and hence use plain and strong language. Still we would advise moderation, patience and prudence in dealing with dancing young members, and let exclusion be the last resort.

Hence we learn,—

5th. *That it is the duty of pastors to do everything in their power to prevent and restrain their people from dancing.*

As a means of prevention, pastors should preach, talk, and distribute Books and Tracts on modern dancing, showing its evils and dangers. No one thing, perhaps, is doing so much at present to dwarf the piety of young Christians and prevent the salvation of sinners as modern dancing; and it is the bounden duty of pastors to cry aloud and spare not, and to show God's people their sins and transgressions on this important subject. Nor can any pastor innocently connive at or hold his peace in regard to this growing evil, much less excuse and encourage it among his people. And it is the solemn duty of churches to coöperate with and sustain their pastors in restraining and reclaiming their young people from this soul-destroying evil. Parents, and especially *mothers*, should cordially coöperate with pastors in saving their children from this fascinating worldly amusement.

As for those pleasure-loving and worldly-minded professors and time-serving ministers who aid and abet dancing, if not practice it, they are to be *pitied*, as well as blamed. They thus array themselves against the Bible and against the wise and good of all churches, and associate themselves with the ungodly and worldly in this corrupt and corrupting practice. Well, if they have no higher and purer enjoyments, it would indeed seem cruel to deny them the pleasures of the dance. While they may imagine themselves "rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing," they know not that they are spiritually "*wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*;" and they should heed the counsel of Jesus

in Rev. 3 : 17, 18. A fearful reckoning awaits such carnal professors and hireling preachers at the final judgment.

But all real Christians and true ministers of Christ have nobler and purer enjoyments, and hence have no relish for the demoralizing and licentious dance. In fact, no Christian desires to dance until he or she backslides and loses the joys of salvation. And young Christians in this condition are in peculiar danger of yielding to the fascinations of the dance, and need special attention. Pastors, therefore, should look after them with ceaseless vigilance, and kindly preach and talk, if not write, against dancing in all its forms, and guard them against its evils and dangers. As watchmen on the walls of Zion, pastors can not innocently hold their peace on this subject. A good Book or Tract on modern dancing will greatly assist pastors in preventing, restraining and reclaiming their people from this fascinating amusement, and will remain when they must leave.

Hence we learn,—

6th. *That this subject appeals to all Christians and friends of morality and religion.*

It appeals primarily to parents, and particularly to mothers. Viewing modern dancing in the light of Scripture and Facts, how can parents, and especially Christian parents, allow, much less encourage, their children to prepare for and participate in this demoralizing and licentious amusement? As we have shown, dancing is not a necessary accomplishment, nor is it refining to young

people; for many of the purest and most refined young ladies and young men never indulged in the dance of modern society, or attended a dancing-school.

Accordingly, the late Mrs. Julia A. Tevis (for more than half a century the honored Principal of "Science Hill Female Academy," Shelbyville, Ky., in which famous school she taught and trained over three thousand young ladies) observes: "I may as well say here once for all, that I believe far more ease and elegance are acquired through the medium of poetical recitations, dialogues, and compositions than in the *dancing-school*. Many of these beautiful little dramatic scenes, containing the purest morality, and into which girls enter with infinite delight, forgetting themselves while personating others, I have successfully proved to be the best means of promoting that gracefulness which is universally supposed to be attained only in the dancing-school."—*Sixty Years in a School-room*, p. 185.

As has been shown, modern dancing is perilous to health, and ruinous to the piety, usefulness and happiness of converted children, and raises almost insuperable obstacles to the salvation of the unconverted who practice it. Christian parents, therefore, should firmly resist and positively prohibit their younger children from even *learning* to dance, and do everything in their power to restrain their adult children from dancing either in private or public. Parents are responsible to God and to the church and to society for the proper government and restraint of their children, while under their control.

But there are innocent and rational amusements and enjoyments in which children and youth may properly engage ; not indeed in card-playing or progressive Euchre, which lead to gambling, but in Croquet and other harmless games : above all, in reading entertaining and instructive books and periodicals, and in discussing their merits and imparting to each other the knowledge thus acquired. If the money and time worse than wasted in preparing for and participating in the corrupting dance, were expended in interesting and instructive literature, young men and young women might fit and qualify themselves to entertain each other in a rational and useful way, worthy of intelligent beings. The want of proper information is one great cause of the prevalence of modern dancing. All can hop and hug, and when their limited knowledge is exhausted, they relieve each other with the demoralizing Waltz and its more licentious sisters.

Churches, therefore, should establish CIRCULATING LIBRARIES of carefully selected Books, literary, religious, and scientific, for the free use of their Sunday-schools and congregations, and pastors should take the lead in this important matter. Fifty dollars would purchase a neat Book-case and supply it with a choice variety of valuable Books in any country or village church, to be enlarged from year to year ; and such a Library would be of incalculable benefit to all classes, young and old. The writer has tested this in some of his churches, and witnessed its beneficial results.

Parents also should supply their children with entertaining and instructive Books and periodicals for home reading, and share the pleasures with them. Such enjoyments are of lasting benefit and worthy of intelligent beings, and would cost far less than dancing apparel and dancing-schools, and save the health and morals of children.

Accordingly, Dr. W. C. Wilkinson, Professor in the Chicago University, remarks: "What a confession for our young men and young women to make, that they find it impossible to get an evening's company to go off well without the dance! How much mental vacuity (or ignorance) does such a confession imply! Oh, young men! Oh, young women!—would it not be better if you should attend lectures of winter evenings—if you should patronize the circulating libraries—if you should subscribe to some of the literary periodicals—if you should organize reading-clubs—in short, if you should spend a share at least of the time and money that you can command, in acquiring such resources of mind that you would not be obliged to whirl each other off into a dance when you assemble for an evening together, lest forsooth you should not be able to think of anything to say, to relieve the awkwardness of silence? . . . Is it not a shame that your golden hours,—all too few,—should be recklessly squandered upon a laborious bodily exercise, in which monkeys might be trained to display greater agility than you, and bears a statelier gravity?"—*The Dance of Modern Society*, pp. 50, 51.

This subject appeals to all young Christians, and espe-

cially to young girls and young wives. In the beginning, God created man male and female, and then made woman a help-meet for man: for this cause shall a man leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh. This union is at once the most intimate, endearing and tender of all human relations, and only *one cause* can sever the sacred union. (Matt. 5: 27-32; Mark 10- 2-9.) Modern dancing, and particularly the *Waltz*, legitimately leads to that cause, and in many cases actually produces it. Hence the instability of the marriage union, and the increasing number of divorces sought and obtained. Therefore it behooves young men and young women, and especially young husbands and wives, to abstain from modern dancing as from "*The Dance of Death*," since it naturally tends to the severance of the marital relation. How can a young man, and particularly a young married man, have implicit confidence in the virtue of a woman who knowingly and willfully persists in the *Waltz* and her more licentious sisters? A habitual waltzing girl is certainly a very unpromising help-meet for any man, and should be chosen as a wife with great hesitancy. Only let Christian girls and Christian wives, when urged to dance, firmly and resolutely refuse, and all right-minded men will esteem them the more highly for it, and both God and conscience will approve the decision. As it is written: "When sinners entice thee, consent thou not." Let each one, when invited to dance, respectfully say, NO, I am a *Christian*; and even the dev-

otees of the evil practice would think more highly of them than if they should yield. A consistent Christian woman is a jewel.

But this subject appeals to young Christians, and especially to young Christian wives, from a *religious standpoint*. Modern dancing, as we have proved, is destructive of personal piety, and unfits those who habitually practice it for every Christian duty. It diminishes their usefulness and happiness, and exposes them to a life of shame and contempt; while it is a sin against Christ, and grieves the Holy Spirit. And *women, above all others*, are responsible for the continuance and prevalence of modern dancing; FOR MEN WILL NOT DANCE BY THEMSELVES. If young ladies and young married women should resolve to abandon dancing in every form, and especially waltzing, the pernicious practice would cease at once and forever. Certain it is that it is not their duty to dance; hence there is *no sin* in abstaining from it, while there is *much sin* in encouraging and practicing it. A weighty responsibility, therefore, rests upon mothers and daughters and young wives in regard to dancing, and God will hold them to a strict account for their conduct and course in this matter.

In conclusion, this subject appeals to husbands, fathers and brothers with peculiar force. In view of all the Facts here presented, how can any husband, father or brother *allow*, much less encourage, a wife or daughter or sister to engage in modern dancing? They *know* its evil nature and evil tendency, and they *know* its demoralizing and

sensual influence; and therefore they are under peculiar obligations to protect and restrain their wives and daughters and sisters from the anti-scriptural and ruinous practice. And if they knowingly and willfully neglect to protect and restrain them from the evil, both God and conscience will condemn them. As it is written: "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin;" and "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," except he or she repent and forsake it. James 4: 17; Ezek. 18: 20; Luke 13: 3, 5.

I have written the words of truth and soberness with a sincere desire to promote morality and religion, and to restrain immorality and vice. The wise and good of all churches will approve, while the ungodly and worldly will oppose; but my appeal is to every one's conscience in the sight of God. In the language of Inspiration I say: "*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*" Phil. 4: 8.

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