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1568/4

ANSWER

TO

Mr. MARK DAVIS'S

THOUGHTS

ON

DANCING.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

*Serious Considerations to dissuade Christian-
Parents from teaching their
Children to Dance.*

By THOMAS OLIVERS.

Ubi est saltatis ibi est Diabolus. CHRYSOST.

Nemo sobrius saltat. CICERO.

London:

PRINTED BY CHARLES PARAMORE,
CHAPEL-STREET, HOLYWELL-MOUNT;
AND SOLD BY G. WHITFIELD, AT THE CHAPEL,
CITY-ROAD; J. PARSONS, PATERNOSTER-
ROW; C. RIEDEL, CROWN-STREET,
SOHO. M, DCC, XCII.

1568/4.





AN

A N S W E R, &c.

ABOUT sixty years ago God raised up Mr. Wesley and others, to call sinners to repentance. In doing this they cried aloud, not only against gross and flagrant wickedness; but also against the vain and fashionable Amusements, which were so eagerly followed by all orders and degrees of people. In a short time they saw their labours crowned with abundant success: multitudes being convinced of the evil of their doings, turned from sin and folly unto the living God.

• These desiring farther assistance in working out their salvation, united together in what we call Societies, and desired Mr. Wesley, and his fellow-labourers, to watch over, and instruct them in running the race so lately set before them. This request was readily complied with: when partly by ser-

mons and exhortations, and partly by various writings, we endeavoured with all our might, not only to guard them against what all men allow to be sinful; but also against such instances of conformity to the world, which too many deem perfectly innocent.

In less than twenty years the number of these Societies was vastly increased. And as the members thereof used all diligence in business, together with all frugality, they greatly increased in wealth: so that many who at first had but small beginnings, in a short time grew considerably opulent. One consequence of this was, as their families increased, and their children grew up, they endeavoured that these might have a better education than some of themselves had experienced.

To this end they sent them to religious boarding-schools; and urged as one reason for so doing, that they would be less in the way of business, less liable to be corrupted by irreligious servants they were often obliged to keep; and because, at such schools, they would be taught whatever was necessary to make them useful members of society;

ciety; while their religious principles and morals would be effectually preserved.

‘ In a course of years, many of the parents becoming persons of considerable property, were not content that their children should be taught useful knowledge only, but desired that they might learn something entertaining. And as music has always been looked on in this light, by the generality of wise and holy men, and has not only been used in the Church on earth, but is represented as a very particular part of the employment of Heaven, we did not object to the Methodist-children learning it: suppose it was of that sort which might be used in the service, and to the glory of God.

“ The children being at boarding-schools, and many of them under the hands of music-masters, what followed but that these young Methodist-quality must dress like the other young gentlemen and ladies (for all are gentlemen and ladies in a boarding-school!) On seeing this, good Mr. Wesley took the alarm; and strongly, and in every possible way, cautioned the people against conforming to the fashions of the world: and, in particular, not to dress either themselves or their children in a manner unbecoming persons professing godliness.

In process of time the scandal of the cross in a good measure ceased; on which many worldly people wished to have their children brought up in Methodist-schools: only they said, they *must* be taught to dance. For many years all our school-masters, and school-mistresses, rejected this proposal as absolutely inadmissible, and would by no means receive a single scholar on any such terms: and, to their honour be it spoken, many rejected it to the end; chusing rather to give up the business than to follow it at the expence of a good conscience, or contrary to the rules of the Society. But all were not thus minded; for first one, and then another, rather than lose opportunities of enlarging their schools, were prevailed on to teach dancing: by which means many of our people who abounded in wealth, and were, sometimes, less eminent in religion, suffered their children to learn to dance.

Mr. Wesley seeing the dangerous tendency of this evil, and that it gained ground apace, in 1785, proposed it as a point worthy the attention of Conference; when, after mature consideration, it was condemned. But that not proving effectual, to put a stop to this and other instances of worldly conformity,

formity, he preached and wrote against it more than ever; and almost with his dying breath cried out, "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, &c."

But notwithstanding these endeavours to prevent it, many instances of worldly conformity gained ground, and, among the rest, several of our schools continued to employ dancing-masters; and others began to do the same who had not done it before. This alarming the Preachers who were the successors of Mr. Wesley, when they met together in Conference, last July, after deeply deploring the loss of him who had so long been at their head, and considering that the care of this great body of people now devolved on them; with much prayer to God for his assistance, they set their shoulders to the burden, and determined to do all in their power to guard and help the people now committed to their care.

In order to this end, among many other important questions they proposed the following:

"Quest. 32. Have we not made too great advances towards conformity to the world?"

"Answ. We fear we have.

"Quest.

“Quest. 33. How shall we prevent it?”

“Anfw. Those school-masters and school-mistresses who receive dancing-masters into their schools, and those parents who employ dancing-masters for their children, shall be no more members of our Societies.”

When this rule was made known in London, my old friend and fellow-labourer, Mr. M. Davis refused his compliance: in consequence of which, his name was left out of the list of preachers. On seeing this he published his defence in a pamphlet intitled, “Thoughts on Dancing, occasioned by some late Transactions among the people called Methodists.”

As Mr. Davis seems to have fully exerted himself on the occasion, and as many of our young people are too well prepared to receive doctrines of this kind; either his tract must be answered, or else we must abrogate our rules on this subject, and so let dancing, and all its consequences, overflow us like a flood.

It is, therefore, partly from conviction, and partly at the request of several very materially concerned, that I undertake this work; which I hope to execute to the
 satisfaction

fatisfaction of every impartial reader, and at the same time, without giving any additional offence, even to Mr. Davis himself.

Page 4. Mr. Davis says, "When I read this answer I was both surprized and grieved; because I considered it rather calculated to give offence, and stir up strife, than to correct a fault." To this I answer; It is impossible it should give much offence to a body of people, who, in general, hold dancing, and all other vain amusements, in an abomination: so far from it, that I believe nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand, will rejoice that the immediate successors of Mr. Wesley have such zeal for God, as determines them to nip such evils in the bud; although, by so doing, a few of the most wealthy among us may take offence. But suppose it offended a far greater number, is that a sufficient reason why those who have the care of such a body of people should suffer the follies of the world to steal in among them? Things offensive to individuals have always been executed in the Church of God; and so they must be to the end, or truth, purity, and good order will not be preserved.

Ibid.

Ibid. Mr. Davis adds, "I hoped this rule
 "or law, like some others concerning dress,
 "tobacco, &c. made by Mr. Wesley some
 "years ago, would sleep respecting execu-
 "tion, and consequently, might be confi-
 "dered as merely expressive of the private
 "opinion of the framers." Rules, and laws,
 merely expressive of private opinions! Was
 it ever heard of before that rules were made,
 and laws enacted, only to express private
 opinions? When Mr. Davis gives his pri-
 vate opinion he says, I think, or I believe so
 or so; but when he makes a law, he says, it
 shall, or it shall not be done. Now this is
 the way that the law against dancing is ex-
 pressed, "Let none that employ dancing-
 "masters remain among us."

But Mr. Davis "hoped that this rule or
 "law would sleep like some others con-
 "cerning dress, tobacco, &c." With re-
 gard to the rule against dress, this has not
 altogether slept; for Mr. Wesley always put
 it in force in what we call the Band-Society,
 for which it was principally intended. And
 as to tobacco, Mr. Davis knows this was
 prohibited under the following restriction,
 "Unless prescribed by a physician." Now,
 as to many who made use of tobacco, it
 was

was prescribed by a physician, or some other medical-man, or else by the advice of a friend who had found it useful in flatulencies, defluations, &c.

But suppose some have taken it up as an useless habit, there is no comparison between conniving at a pipe of tobacco, and suffering dancing, with all its consequences, to steal in upon us: for he must be wonderfully short-sighted, or else very partial to his own interest, who sees no more danger in permitting fiddling and dancing to be practised among a religious body of people, than even in suffering a young woman to wear a fine cap, or an old man to smoke a pipe of tobacco.

Page 5. Mr. Davis says, "Nov. 2. I called on Mr. James Rogers at the Chapel-house, and asked him whether it was meant to drop the subject of dancing, or to bring it on next quarterly-meeting—told him jocosely, that I intended to speak to the point; and added, our law ought not to condemn any man before he is heard, and we consider what he saith. To which he replied, The Preachers in London cannot alter a rule of Conference: consequently, saying any thing among
" them

“them will answer no end.” Undoubtedly Mr. R. was right; for the Conference were the framers of the law, and the Preachers in their several districts, were only the executioners thereof: therefore, as it would be absurd for a criminal to offer to dispute a law before an inferior magistrate, whose only business is to put it into execution; so it was equally absurd in Mr. Davis to make such a proposal to Mr Rogers, whose only business in this case is, to execute, not to mend the law, or to dispence with it.

Ibid. Mr. Davis says “I am sorry thus to be dragged into a public controversy by men with whom I hoped to live in the most cordial friendship, my few remaining days.” And what hinders but that he may? As for my part, I have long viewed Mr. Davis as a sensible and honest man, and only lament that his situation in life has led him into so great an error; therefore, so far as I am concerned, I have not the least inclination to treat him with the smallest degree of disrespect, or any way contrary to brotherly love: and as to my brethren, though they think it their duty to enforce a rule, made in so solemn a manner, I hope not one of them will entertain any disgust against him.

him any farther than the business in hand requires.

Page 7. Mr. Davis, speaking of Mr. Wesley, says, "I will venture to assert, "from his well-known discernment and consummate prudence, that he ranked dancing "among the *res indifferentiæ*, respecting religion; innocent or sinful, according to "the mind and circumstances of the persons "practising." This is impossible. For had this been the case, how came he to make an express rule against it, and publish it to all the world? Besides, if he had looked upon dancing in that light, he would have made an exception in favour of it in his censures on the other vain amusements of the world, which certainly he never did: so far from it, that I have more than once heard him say, "Music and gardening are the only innocent diversions;" but not a word in favour of dancing.

Page 9. Mr. Davis says, "None, I hope, "will set themselves up for judges, until "they have with candour made themselves "acquainted with the nature of the dispute." This certainly is right. But I am very apprehensive that the greatest part of the people called Methodists, think themselves so perfectly

fectly informed concerning the folly, and evil tendency of dancing, that they will hardly come to Mr. Davis, or any other, for more perfect information; but if any should think otherwise, and so read his book, with a design to be better instructed in the doctrine of dancing, doubtless they ought to do it with candour.

Ibid. Mr. Davis says farther, "I sincerely pray, that none may indulge a resentful or censorious spirit, whatever the result of this enquiry be." I answer; though I sincerely wish his prayer may be heard, yet I fear thousands will feel such resentment, at the thought of an old Preacher, employing so much good sense and learning in behalf of dancing, as will awaken their holy indignation to a very high degree.

Again he says, "I have only consulted my Bible, human-nature, and my own situation in life, in revolving the subject in my mind." It is certain he has consulted his Bible; and so have many others on a great variety of occasions equally as absurd as the doctrine of dancing. Again, he says he has consulted "human-nature;" I fear he has not consulted the whole of it on this occasion. For had he done this, he

he would have found that there is a spirit in man which is in a fallen condition, and then have looked out for something to raise and heal it, which would prove far more effectual than dancing: he adds, I have consulted "my own situation in life." I verily believe, if it had not been for this, Mr. Davis had never consulted his Bible or human-nature on dancing. But if he had consulted his Bible only on this head, he would have found there that a family may be supported without the help of a dancing-master; for he would have found that the blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, Prov. x. 22. He would have found that the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly, Psal. xxxiv. 11. and that if we seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all these things shall be added unto us, Matt. vi. 33.

Having made such observations on his preface as I thought necessary, I proceed to the most material part of his work, viz. to consider his arguments in support of dancing. But before we do this, we must consider what we mean by dancing. And there is the more need of this because danc-

ing has not always been the same in all places.

According to all accounts, dancing among the ancient Jews, and others was for many ages quite inartificial; consisting of skipping, leaping and jumping, and a great variety of other gambols: hence Mr. Davis himself tells us, page 15, that the Hebrew verb רָקַד, raked, is rendered by Buxtorf, falire, subfalire, to leap, to jump, to skip. But as this is not the dancing intended in the present dispute, it is nothing to the purpose.

The dancing now under consideration I call, A practical Science, the end of which is either emolument, or else vain and idle amusement.

And, first, I call it a Science; because it is a theory consisting of a number of rules, arranged in a regular order. Secondly, I call it a practical science, because its theory is not intended to be a matter of mere speculation; but rather consists of rules which are to be put into practice. Thirdly, I said, the end of which is either emolument or amusement: it is emolument in those who dance for hire, either in public or private, as well as in all who make a

- livelihood

liveliness thereof by teaching it: but the general design of it is mere amusement. Fourthly, I call it *vain* amusement; because it does not answer the end. Amusement is nearly the same as diversion. Now diversion, properly speaking, is intended to relieve the body or mind from the severity of too intense labours; that after this relief we may resume our labour with greater advantage. But dancing will not do this; for it rather fatigues and dissipates our powers, than revives and strengthens them; hence it is that however unfit for labour persons have been before dancing, they have been abundantly more so after it. Again, I called it an *idle* amusement; because it originates in idleness, and is generally followed by idle persons. Those who are quite intent on useful labours, either of the body or mind, have little inclination for dancing; of consequence are seldom, if ever, exercised therein. Secondly, it is generally followed by idle persons. The persons most addicted to dance are either such as think they have little or nothing else to do, or else such as know they have business, but are too idle to do it. Now it is *this* dancing, and this only, which is the subject of our present dispute.

Page 11. Mr. Davis says, "Dancing, so far as we mean to take it under consideration, may be viewed, I. As a natural manner of expressing our joy." I answer, It is not so natural a manner of expressing it, but that there may be dancing when there is no joy expressed; nor is it so natural but that there may be joy expressed when there is no dancing.

And, first, It is not so natural but that there may be dancing when there is no joy expressed. In idea, the joy which is expressed must be prior to the expression of it, as that joy is the foundation on which the expression is built, or the source from whence it flows, Now I ask, is it because dancers have cause to rejoice, and therefore do actually rejoice, that they go to dance, in order to express that joy? Do they not rather dance without any prior joy exciting them to it? Do they not dance in general merely for the sake of dancing, while their hearts are as far from rejoicing as the heart of an oak? Nay, do they not frequently dance in order to sooth their sorrows, to banish their fears, and to drive conviction quite away? It is certain, then, that persons may
dance

dance when no joy is the cause of it, or can be expressed thereby.

Secondly, It is not so natural but that there may be joy, and every proper expression of it without dancing. When our Lord rejoiced in spirit, Luke x. 21. doubtless he properly expressed it; but did he dance in order to that end? So when the Virgin Mary said, My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, she expressed it in a very "natural manner," yet we have no account of her dancing. Again, We are told, Acts v. 41. That Peter and John went away from the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ; but it is not said that they danced in order to a full and proper expression of it. St. Paul saith, Phil. iv. 10. I rejoice in the Lord greatly; but he gives no account in what manner he danced to express it! Heb. x. 34. tells us that the Hebrew-Christians took joyfully the spoiling of their goods: and no doubt but they expressed their joy in a very natural and becoming manner, though we have no account of their dancing. Once more, when St. Paul said, Phil. iv. 4. Rejoice in the Lord always, he hardly expected the Philippians to

dance always in order to express it in the most "natural manner."

Besides, there have been innumerable instances of rejoicings, on a great variety of occasions, which have been very fully expressed, without so much as a single thought of dancing; therefore joy may be expressed in a very natural manner without the help of dancing.

Ibid. Mr. Davis says farther, "Dancing considered as gestures of nature, excited by pleasure, especially in youth, who are always greatly disposed for action; is as natural, and as innocent, abstractedly considered, as smiling, laughing, or any other manner of expressing our joy. This kind of dancing always has, and always will be practised by human beings on certain occasions." From this account, compared with the following pages, we learn, that by gestures of nature, Mr. Davis means, leaping, skipping, jumping, &c. But this is not the dancing prohibited by Mr. Wesley and the Conference. It never entered into their thoughts to forbid these either to children or grown persons, suppose they were done with decency, and when they were any way necessary. But the dancing which we

forbid,

forbid, and which Mr. Davis has here undertaken to defend, is that Scientific Dancing, which is in common use, and which is taught by our dancing-masters. All, therefore, that he has said concerning gestures of nature, excited by pleasure, and expressive of joy, serves only to puzzle the question, and to hide the true state of it from his readers.

Again, If this dancing which consists of leaping, jumping, and skipping, are gestures of nature, and are as natural to us as smiling, laughing, &c. and if "our first exertions in this way are generally as unpremeditated, as laughing, crying, &c." what need of a dancing-master to teach it? Surely, in this case, a dancing-master, that is, a leaping-master, a jumping-master, or a skipping-master, is as absurd and needless as a smiling-master, a laughing-master, or a crying-master.

Page 12. "Children when greatly pleased, or greatly angered, as naturally dance as they laugh or cry." Do they naturally dance minuets, jigs, hornpipes and country-dances? And if they do it so naturally, what need of the trouble and expence of a master to teach them? Again, if "Children
" when

“when greatly angered—naturally dance,” is the dancing which is the natural effect of that anger, a natural manner of expressing their joy!

Ibid. “If the joy be innocent, our outward expression of it by dancing can have no more guilt in it than there is in a joyful countenance, or a joyful tongue.” I answer; multitudes, whose joy was unquestionably innocent, shewed it both by a joyful countenance, and a joyful tongue, yet never shewed it by artificial dancing: witness Christ and his Apostles, and myriads besides.

But “David, we are told in 2 Sam. vi. 14, 16, leaped and danced before the Lord with all his might.” True; but in what manner did he dance? certainly not in that way now under consideration. For Mr. Davis himself tells us that “There are three verbs in the Hebrew language, each of which is translated to *dance* in our English Bible.” The first of which is “קָדַד,” *rakad*, which Buxtorf renders *salire sub-salire, to leap, to jump to skip*. This verb is used in Psal. cxiv. 4, 6, where it is said the mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs. And in Psal.

"xxix. 6. describing the awful effects of
 "lightning and thunder, under the majestic
 "idea of the voice of Jehovah which maketh
 "the cedars of Lebanon to skip like a calf,
 "Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.
 "And in its participial form in 1 Chron.
 "xv. 29. Michal, the daughter of Saul,
 "looking out at a window, saw king David
 "dancing and playing." I have quoted this
 passage at large because it gives us the opi-
 nion, not only of the great Buxtorf; but
 also of Mr. Davis himself.

Now according to both these authors, the
 dancing of David before the ark consisted
 only of leaping, jumping and skipping: of
 skipping like rams and young lambs: of
 skipping like a calf and a young unicorn;
 and therefore it is nothing to the present
 purpose, seeing it bears no resemblance to
 the dancing taught in our schools, which is
 prohibited by the Methodists.

And that the dancing of David was of the
 sort mentioned above, and not of that gen-
 teel and fashionable sort now in use among
 princes and others, appears from the sneers
 and contempt which Michal shewed on the
 occasion. For it is said, 2 Sam. vi. 16.
 That when Michal saw king David leaping
 and dancing before the Lord, she despised
 him

him in her heart. And the reason she gave for this is mentioned verse 20, because he uncovered himself to day, in the eyes of the servants of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself. It was therefore on account of his uncovering himself, and leaping and skipping in a most inartificial and rustic manner, or as Montanus and Calasio render the word *גברו* in *morem capræ saltabit*, in the manner of, or like a goat, which caused Michal to despise him, and to upbraid him with imitating the vain and shameless fellows.

Page 14. The next instance Mr. Davis produces in favour of dancing, is Jephthah's daughter. His words are, "In Judges xi. 3, 5. we are told, that Jephthah, returning "from the slaughter of the Ammonites, was "met by his daughter and her companions "with timbrels and with dances." With regard to this passage I observe, first, that the instance is so remote, and the circumstances are so different, that if we allow it to be any argument in favour of modern dancing, it must be owned to be a very far-fetched one. But I do not allow it to be any argument at all; for the dancing which the

the Methodists forbid, and which Mr. Davis is now defending, is artificial dancing: that is, the dancing which is taught and practised by art. But will Mr. Davis say that there was any such dances in Israel in the days of the Judges? I believe he will not. And yet we allow, there was that among them which we call dancing; such as leaping, jumping, skipping, &c. by which the people expressed their gladness on a great variety of occasions: and this, or something like it, was the dancing of Jephthah's daughter and her companions.

Should it be said, "But they came with timbrels; therefore it must be dancing by rule, seeing it was dancing with music:" I answer, it is certain that the music of those times, and long after, was as rude, and inartificial, as their dancing possibly could be; and therefore I conclude that their dancing must be equally inartificial, and, of consequence, that it bore no analogy to the dancing now in dispute. The truth of the matter seems to be this: Jephthah returning from the slaughter of the Ammonites, his daughter and her companions went out to meet him, playing on timbrels, and with such other expressions

C

pre fions

pressions of joy as became their sex, and the solemnity of the occasion.

Ibid. Mr. Davis' next proof is in 1 Sam. xviii. 6, 7. where it is said, the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music: and they answered as they played and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. Now on this passage I observe, first, that it is said; The women came out of all the tribes of Israel: that is, they came in great multitudes; even thousands upon thousands. Now if we add to these all the men who came before them, with them, and after them, there must have been quite too many for artificial dances; for we all know that in some dances, a single couple will occupy the greatest part of a considerable room. Now if there were only twenty thousand present, it must take up the whole side of a country, to make sufficient room for such a number to dance regularly and artificially. Secondly, these dancers must be uncommonly industrious in their dancings; for they must, first observe tune and time in playing with their hands: secondly, attend to all the diversity of

of steps, in artificial dancings, with their feet: and make the responses with their voices, some of them crying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and others replying, David his ten thousands, which is too absurd to be supposed. But the truth seems rather to be this. When the people heard what Saul and David had done, they gathered together, in multitudes from all parts, and expressed their great joy in a promiscuous manner, and with such triumphant sounds and motions as cannot possibly be expressed by artificial dancing.

Ibid. What is said in 1 Kings i. 40. concerning the coronation of Solomon, is nothing to the purpose. The words are, And all the people piped with pipes, or, as it is in the margin, with flutes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them. Now I observe, first, that there is not a word, or a syllable, either in the text, or in the marginal reading, concerning dancing. But if we allow Dr. Robertson's rendering of the Hebrew word, בַּתִּילִּיב, "come after him tripudiantes ad tibias, dancing to flutes," that dancing could be no other than that mentioned above in the case of David, Jephthah, and

the people in the days of Saul; for is it not ridiculous to suppose that "All the people, perhaps to the amount of fifty or a hundred thousand, who were rending the earth with their shouts, &c. should have room, time, opportunity, or even inclination to dance artificial dances? Let those judge, who were present at the coronation of his present majesty, if any thing of this kind either was, or could be done.

Ibid. Mr. Davis says, "Exod. xv. 20, 21, "relates, that Miriam the prophetess, the "sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, "and all the women went after her with "timbrels and with dances: and Miriam "answered them, Sing unto Jehovah, for "he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse "and the rider hath he thrown into the sea. "This story favours the foregoing con- "jecture. May we not suppose that Mi- "riam and her company of women formed "themselves into a separate choir, and that "their joyous motions were regulated by "music, vocal and instrumental, while they "repeated the triumphant words of the "twenty-first verse?" I answer, we have no reason to believe any such thing; but quite the contrary.

To

To make this appear let us, first, consider the state of the Hebrews, both men and women. A little before this they were in absolute slavery in Egypt, where their forefathers had been for four hundred and forty years: secondly, that for a long time they had suffered most cruel oppressions, which were intended, not only to prevent their flourishing: but even to destroy them. To this end they were appointed to labour in the most servile employments: such as making of bricks. And lest this should not oppress them enough, they were obliged to make the full quantities, even without straw: so that the men may, with great propriety be called, The brick-makers of Egypt; and the women, the brick-makers' mothers, wives, sisters and daughters. Now was it ever known that such women were great adepts at artificial music and dancing? And can we suppose that while the men were toiling under the rod of their task-masters, their women were improving under the tuition of their dancing-masters! and that they were doing this, even while their cries and groans were entering into the ears of the God of heaven? It is certain, then, that unless they did this, they could know no-

thing of artificial music and dancing: and that whatever music and dancing was found amongst them, must be of the lowest and most inartificial kind: much inferior to: that which is now found among our modern brick-makers and their families. Mr. Davis's supposition then, that Miriam and her company of women formed themselves into a separate choir, as our modern musicians and dancers do, is quite groundless; for all we can suppose they did was, to sound, in a rude and artless manner, the imperfect instruments they brought out of Egypt, and to shew such other demonstrations of joy, as is natural to a poor and oppressed people, just escaped out of the jaws of destruction.

Page 15. Mr. Davis says, "David in "Psal. xxx. 11. says, addressing himself to "Jehovah,, Thou hast turned my mourning "into dancing." I answer; in the other translation, which we have in our Common-Prayer-Book, it is rendered, Thou hast turned my heaviness into joy. Accordingly Dr. Hammond hath paraphrased it, "At length my prayer hath been heard, and all my sorrow and affliction exchanged for joy." And he observes in his note on the place that "the copy of the 72. anciently,

"as.

“as well as now read. it *εις χαρὰν*, into joy,
 “and so is followed, by the Latin, Syriac,
 “and Arabic.”

Again, Mr. Davis informs us that in “Psal.
 “cxlix. 3. it is said, Let them praise his
 “name in the dance.” I answer, the mar-
 “ginal reading is, Let them praise his name
 with the pipe. Again, “In Psal. cl. 4.
 “Praise him with the timbrel and the dance.”
 I answer, Here again the margin reads it,
 with the pipe: so that in neither of these
 places is there any thing certain concerning
 dancing; especially as it is now taught in
 our schools.

Mr. Davis saith again, “Psal. lxxxvii. 7.
 “is rendered by Buxtorf in his Hebrew
 “Lexicon, *Et cantantes æque ac tripudi-*
 “antes: .i. e. as well the fingers as the
 “dancers shall be there.” To this I an-
 swer, the text is, As well the fingers as the
 players on instruments shall be there. In
 the other translation it is, The fingers also
 and the trumpeters shall be there. In the
 margin of Dr. Hammond’s paraphrase it is,
 “but the fingers as well as the minstrels shall
 “come,” and in his note he saith, “*שָׂרָם* the
 “fingers *כְּבַחֲלִילִים* as, or like, the minstrels,
 “shall recite or count.” In the same note

he observes again, "As at the removal of
 "the ark, the singers go before, and the
 "minstrels follow after, the singers begin
 "and lead the tune, as the precentors, and
 "the players on instruments followed after,
 "as the choir; so here the singers are sup-
 "posed to begin, and the minstrels or play-
 "ers on instruments, taberers-tympanistæ,
 "saith the Jewish Arab, follow to the same
 "tune" From what has been said it is
 evident, that there is nothing said about
 dancing, either of one sort or another.

Ibid. Mr. Davis says, "From these pas-
 "sages we may certainly conclude, 1. That
 "dancing was practised in the religious
 "worship of the Jewish Church, and 2. That
 "it was connected with, and consequently
 "regulated by, music both vocal and in-
 "strumental." I answer, that no such thing
 appears from any passage which he has
 quoted. And that it was no part of the re-
 ligious worship of the Jewish church ap-
 pears from hence, that though we have a
 full and particular account of all the officers
 of the Tabernacle and Temple, we have
 no account of the dancers, either masters
 or others.

In 1 Chron. xv. 18. we are told that Zechariah, Ben, Jaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, &c. were the heads of the porters. Then over the fingers, Heman, Afaph, and Ethan were appointed to found with cymbals of brass. Then Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, &c. were over the psalteries on Alamoth. Mattithiah, &c. were over the harps on the She-minith to excel. Chenaniah, chief of the Levites was for, or over the song, because he was skilful. Berechiah and Elkanah were door keepers for the ark. And Shebaniah, &c. did blow the trumpets.

I have been the more particular here, to shew that, though we have so distinct an account of all the services, and officers of the tabernacle and temple, even from the high-priest down to the meanest porter; and particularly of the several sorts of music, and the masters thereof; we have not one syllable concerning dancing-masters: which is an infallible proof that there were no such beings employed in any part of the "religious worship of the Jewish Church."

As to Mr. Davis' critical observations on the Hebrew verbs, all that is material in them has been taken notice of above; and therefore,

therefore I next proceed to consider the proofs of dancing which he has brought from the New Testament.

And first, Mr. Davis quotes Matt. xi. 17. and its parallel place, Luke vii. 32. where our Lord saith, We have piped and ye have not danced. To this I answer, If the dancing here spoken of is to be understood literally, we must say that our Lord and the Baptist literally piped; which certainly was not the case. All therefore, that can here be meant is, that there was something in the preaching of Christ and the Baptist which bore some resemblance to children piping to their fellows; and something in the Jew which resembled the others refusing to dance. But suppose we were to understand the words literally, without any metaphor or allusion; what resemblance is there between the dances of children in the street, and those taught by modern dancing-masters?

Again, Mr. Davis says, "Matt. xiv. 6. and its parallel place, Mark vi. 22. inform us, that the daughter of Herodias. *ἡ θυγάτηρ ἧραίου* danced and pleased Herod." Very true; and by so doing was the cause of one of the greatest murders ever committed.

mitted on earth. But would good Mr. Davis seriously propose the dancing of a strumpet, before a debauched and an adulterous king, as an example for our imitation! that is, would he wish the Methodist-matrons to teach their daughters to dance as the daughter of Herodias did, who "Tripped on the toe, in a most im-
 "modest manner, says Mr. Trapp, as they
 "used to do in their Bacchanals?" I know Mr. Davis would shudder at the thought; and, therefore, I wonder at his quoting this instance.

Again, he says, Luke xv. 25. mentions the "return of the prodigal son celebrated
 "in his father's house with music και χορῶν
 "and dancing." On this passage I observe, first, that the whole story is a mere parable, as every one knows: secondly, that in all parables a great variety of circumstances are introduced, only for the sake of making the narrative complete; and, thirdly, that for this purpose instances are sometimes introduced, for wise and moral purposes, which, in themselves, are unwise and immoral. Take one instance. The Lord is said to commend the unjust steward. Now would not Mr. Davis shudder if he heard any one recommend

recommend injustice, because the Lord is said to commend it? And yet there is better reason for so doing, than for recommending dancing from what is said in this parable; seeing it is not, either here, or any where else in the Bible said, the Lord commended dancers or dancings.

“ But there is a passage, says Mr. Davis, “ in Acts iii. 8. which I wish to be particularly noticed; because I really think it “ militates in favour of all that I have said “ concerning dancing, as an innocent expression of joy, and even allowable, in “ some circumstances, in religious worship.” One would think from the manner in which this passage is introduced, that Mr. Davis had his grand argument in reserve, which was to give strength and weight to all the rest; but in my opinion it is so far from that, that it is the weakest of all. However, let us see what it is.

Page 18, “ The impotent man, says Mr. “ Davis, who had never walked, being miraculously endued with strength in his “ limbs by Peter, in the name of Jesus “ Christ, *leaped up* from the ground where “ he had lain, *stood and walked*, and his “ loving grateful heart urging him publicly

"licly to acknowledge the inestimable fa-
 "vour received, he entered into the Tem-
 "ple with Peter and John not only *walking*,
 "but *leaping and praising God.*" On this
 "passage I observe, first, that the impotent
 man is said to be so lame from his mother's
 womb that he was carried wherever he
 went; of consequence he never could be under
 the tuition of a dancing-master. Secondly,
 that when he was restored, ~~he~~ leaped up,
 stood, and walked, and entered into the
 Temple walking, leaping and praising God.
 Now Mr. Davis endeavours to prove, from
 a deal of Greek and Hebrew criticism, that
 the leaping here spoken of signifies dancing.
 For this purpose he says, "The Greek
 "verb *αλλομαι* *salio*, I leap or jump, from
 "which the participles *αλλομενος* leaping,
 "and *εξαλλομενος* leaping up, are formed,
 "comes from the Hebrew verb *חלל*, *chala*,
 "saltare, tripudiare, to leap, to dance, to
 "skip along." To this I answer, Suppose
 the Greek and Hebrew words may be
 rendered, leaping, jumping, dancing, skip-
 ping, Mr. Davis knows that every inter-
 preter, commentator, &c. ought to chuse
 that term which best agrees with the subject
 under consideration, and not that which

does not agree with it at all. But the terms, walking, and leaping, best agree with the lame man, entering into the Temple in a joyous manner, immediately after receiving so miraculous a cure: and therefore our translators must be in the right in rendering the words; walking and leaping, and praising God.

But suppose they had rendered them, walking and dancing, &c. I should be glad to know what sort of dancing it was; whether artificial, or inartificial? If it was artificial, consisting of minuets, jigs, hornpipes or country-dances, I shall be glad to know, first, who was the dancing-master that taught him? and, secondly, who were his partners! Surely good Mr. Davis will not say that Peter and John were either the one or the other! Though they were the only persons we have any account of, who spake to him, took him by the hand, lifted him up, and walked with him into the temple.

If it was inartificial dancing, consisting of leaping, jumping or skipping, then it is nothing to the purpose, as we have no dispute with Mr. Davis on that head. For we allow in all our schools what are called play-

play-grounds, where the children are permitted to leap, skip, and jump, to exercise their limbs, unbend their minds, and preserve their health and vigour of spirit.

I have now done with Mr. Davis' Scriptural account of dancing, and should be sorry to see so much Greek and Hebrew criticism employed on so paltry a subject (very little of which is at all to the purpose) if I did not hope that it will convince his friends and the public that he is well qualified to instruct youth in the learned languages. And I must beg leave to say, that I am so fully satisfied concerning his abilities and care in every respect, that I should count it a privilege to have a son under his tuition in all things, his dancing only excepted.

Page 19. Mr. Davis next proceeds to shew the great advantages of learning to dance. To this end he observes, Secondly, that "Dancing may be considered as an art whereby we are taught good carriage, a graceful and easy way of moving our limbs, and a genteel manner of address." I answer, These may be learned without the help of a dancing-master; instance, multitudes of the rich Quakers, both male

and female. For though these hold dancing in abomination, yet it is a fact that thousands of them have as good a carriage, as graceful and easy a way of moving their limbs, and as genteel a manner of address, as any who have spent much time and money under the instruction of a dancing-master.

Ibid. "But a bad carriage (Mr. Davis means, a carriage which is not improved by a dancing-master) is very hurtful to health." If so, what an unhealthy body of people must the bulk of mankind be: particularly the farmers, with their children and servants! With regard to health, I must beg leave to observe further, that for every single person who has suffered in his health, for want of learning to dance, there have been thousands who have lost both health and life together by means of dancing.

But "Many children, says Mr. Davis, particularly females, grow up deformed through our inattention to their carriage in early infancy." I answer, there are fewer instances, in proportion to the numbers, of deformed persons among the common people, who never learned artificial dancing,

dancing, than among those who have had the most finished education.

“But they contract ungraceful, awkward “habits of sitting, standing and walking.” To this I answer, who stand or walk with more gracefulness and accuracy than the common soldiers in our marching regiments? Who stand more exact? Who use their hands, arms, legs and feet with more exact propriety? and yet, though they were awkward and clownish to the last degree, till they were even grown up to manhood; with only the instruction of a corporal and a serjeant, who themselves were absolute clowns a very few years before, all their awkwardness and clownishness is perfectly removed. Now I should have a very poor opinion of masters or mistresses of boarding-schools who could not do as much, by precepts and examples, as a serjeant and corporal can so expeditiously do for a number of clownish recruits.

Page 20. “But the man called a dancing-master can teach these things sooner and “better.” I deny this. A serjeant or a corporal can teach them full as well, and in a much shorter time, than the most accomplished dancing-master in the world:

and no wonder, seeing the dancing-master must attend to the particular bows, scrapes, steps and capers of his different dances; while the serjeant or corporal attends only to what is essential to the business in hand: which would be the same did masters and mistresses of boarding-schools undertake, by precepts and example, to teach their scholars a graceful attitude and action.

“But it may be objected, says Mr. Davis, “this is teaching them to dance; and when “they grow up they will frequent balls and “assemblies, and in these places gratify all “the vanity and lust of their heart, throw “away their money and time, form bad “connexions, and ruin themselves probably “in this world and in the next.” To this I answer in general, that there is more danger of these consequences by learning to dance, than there would be in not learning it; for certainly there have been many instances of these evils following the learning to dance; but not one that I ever heard of where persons did not learn it, and *because* they did not learn it.

To this Mr. Davis replies. “It is not “true in fact, that all young people who “have learned to dance thus abuse this part
“of

“of their education.” I answer; to follow the most direct and most natural tendency of what we are taught, cannot be called an *abuse* of it, whether the thing itself be good or evil. Now the most direct and natural tendency of learning to dance when children, is, that they follow it when grown up to maturity, by going to balls and assemblies, and by that means gratify all the vanity and lust of their hearts. “But perhaps, says Mr. Davis, not one in ten is very fond of the amusement, even of those whose parents think it neither criminal nor dangerous.” (a word to the wife!) “that their children should occasionally attend balls, assemblies, &c.” I believe it will be found on enquiry that nineteen out of twenty of those who have learned to dance, as well as of those who are now learning, are very fond of the amusement: and for the truth of this I appeal to the feelings of the young people themselves, and also to the observations of their tutors and parents, and of those who are constantly about them.

Mr. Davis goes on, “If when your son grows up to manhood, he unhappily becomes extravagantly fond of dancing, he will pursue the amusement for some time, whether

“or no he was taught in his childhood.” If he becomes extravagantly fond of dancing without being initiated into it by his parents, whatever the consequence may be, they are clear; but if it be owing to any instruction or encouragement they afforded him in his childhood, the blame will primarily and principally fall on them.

Page 21. Mr. Davis says, “You have
 “had your child taught to read, and you
 “wish him or her to contract a fondness for
 “reading. You are at last gratified in
 “your wish. But the only books your son
 “will read are the loosest novels and plays
 “which he can lay his hands on; or those
 “artful metaphysical treatises which have
 “been published against christianity by
 “men who are free-thinkers, because they
 “would be free-livers. Was it wrong to
 “have had these children taught reading
 “in their childhood, because they now
 “make a bad use of the education they
 “then received?” I answer, the case is in
 nowise parallel. For reading is one of the
 most excellent and useful accomplishments
 any parent can give his son; and whether
 the son makes a right or wrong use of it,
 the parent is to be commended for having
 performed

performed a most necessary duty towards his child: if therefore the son abuses the benefit, he only is to blame. For instance. If a parent puts a pious book into the hands of his son, that he may improve by it in the knowledge of religion, the parent is to be highly commended for what he has done; but if the son throws it into the fire he only is blame-worthy. But this cannot be said of dancing; seeing, as I have shewn above, it is, in itself, an unnecessary qualification, and seeing the evils attendant on it are not abuses thereof; but follow almost of unavoidable consequence: so that the parent is the original cause of them all.

Page 22. Mr. Davis tells us that "Mr. Wesley many years back, made rules concerning tea, tobacco, snuff, dress, &c. which he found by experience, too minute, and too frivolous, to be executed with rigour—he therefore rather recommended than enforced his rules." The rules Mr. Davis speaks of, if I mistake not, are what we call the Band-rules; and when Mr. Wesley forbade tea, tobacco, &c. to the Band-Society, it was with this limitation, "Unless prescribed by a physician." Accordingly many left off these

these till they were advised to take them again, in order to prevent the consequence of breaking off long habits. Take one instance among many. Mr. J. G. who had for many years taken snuff, threw away his box; but was forced to take it again to prevent his growing stone blind. But what are snuff and tobacco compared to dancing? seeing these, at the very most, are only private and insignificant amusements, while dancing opens the door to the most public and dangerous follies of life.

Ibid. "But he [Mr. Wesley] never ventured to make any rule or law condemning "dancing." Here, at least, my old friend is under a great mistake. For in the Minutes of a Conference, held in London, in the year 1785, we have these words;

"Quest. 24. Is it right to send our children to a dancing-school?"

"Ans. It is entirely wrong. Neither do we think it right for any that keep boarding-schools to admit a dancing-master into their house." By this minute Mr. Davis sees, that "making laws for the exclusion of dancing-masters was not wholly left to Mr. Wesley's wiser and more zealous successors to accomplish."

As

As for Mr. Davis' hear-say stories concerning Mr. Wesley's telling the married women, "I have no objection against your daughters being taught carriage, address, and even to dance a minuet," I have nothing to say; but sure I am that in the year 1785 both he and his brethren in Conference made a rule or law against it: at least, against their being taught so to do, by a dancing-master, while at a boarding-school. And the same answer will suffice concerning what he heard of employing a dancing-master in Kingwood-School, to give the boys an outward polish: only I must add, that there never were any of these gentry employed in that school from the first erection of it, to the present day.

But "The natural tendency of such rules is, especially when they are concerning things of an indifferent or doubtful nature in morals, rather to give offence than to do good." To this I answer, that the things now under consideration were not of an indifferent or doubtful nature to Mr. Wesley and the Conference, in the year 1785, nor to the late Conference in 1791, however indifferent and doubtful they may now appear to Mr. Davis and others.

"While

"While the religion of the heart, says
 "Mr. Davis, is preached and practised
 "among us—while our preachers are men
 "of piety, christian zeal and prudence;—
 "while the doctrine of Jesus our Saviour, and
 "the life of Jesus our pattern are inculcated
 "upon us; we shall hardly be troubled with
 "persons in our connexion who notoriously
 "deviate from the christian character." I
 answer, Though we have reason to bless
 God that all these helps are still found
 among us; yet every one feels in himself,
 and sees in those about him, that in order to
 preserve our purity, and to keep us from
 conformity to the vanities of the world, we
 need every other help, both human and
 divine. Hence all well-regulated com-
 munities, besides the doctrines of the gospel,
 and the holy example of Jesus, have had
 rules, laws and canons to regulate and guard
 the conduct of their members.

Page 23. But these Mr. Davis calls
 "Absurd, narrow and superstitious laws or
 "rules, by which mistaken zeal, has at-
 "tempted to explain and enforce the ex-
 "cellent general precepts of God's word."
 I allow this has too often been the case: but

it

it does not follow that it is so in that now under consideration. The excluding of dancing and dancing-masters from a religious body of people, who for upwards of fifty years have been crying out, night and day, "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind," is scriptural, rational, and consistent.

But Mr. Davis tells us in his preface, page 4, That he hoped this law would "sleep respecting execution," as do many of the laws of the Church of England, the Church of Scotland and the Quakers. See page 24. I answer, If a law was made to sleep, respecting execution, had it not better never been made at all? unless good Mr. Davis will say (what I know he will not) that it was only intended for a bug-bear to frighten the Methodists from employing too many dancing-masters! But if we were to make laws, and then suffer them to sleep as to execution, would not this sleeping in a short time be as fatal to us, in things of a spiritual nature, and be a cause of as deep lamentation, as it is to the most pious members of the Church of England, the Church of Scotland and the Quakers?

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kers? To prevent this, let the Methodists make wholesome laws, and then put them into execution; and by so doing keep both their laws and themselves awake.

“But what is worst of all; says Mr. Davis, page 24, some I fear, of our oldest and best preachers are sometimes found with such a pinch of snuff in their fingers as would make me sneeze for half an hour; or with a pipe of tobacco between their broken teeth, as would send me to bed sick and lightheaded; and, moreover, if I am not wrongly informed, some great men among us drink their brandy and water so strong as would make me, who am nearsighted, see double; and others can swallow down a whole pint of porter, which would really set me so fast asleep that I should not be able to see at all; and yet these are suffered to preach useful sermons although guilty of such peccadillos.” I am glad Mr. Davis has shewn his wonted candour on this occasion, by calling these by so soft a name, as peccadillos; and am really sorry that truth and justice forbid my calling his dancing by so soft a name.

But

But lest some of his readers should not be so candid as to call them peccadillos, I must beg leave to make a few observations on the particulars he has mentioned.

And, first, as to snuff; I have observed above that many who had long accustomed themselves to take it, before their conversion, and had left it off in obedience to the rule, were obliged to take it again to prevent dangerous consequences to their heads and eyes. As to tobacco, "A guilty conscience needs no accuser;" therefore I am obliged to confess that I am guilty of holding a pipe of tobacco between my "broken teeth." And if my old friend Mr. Davis should really intend me, I thank him for his candour in mentioning only this peccadillo, after all the weakneses and imperfections he must have known in me in the long course of between thirty and forty years.

But as to this, it may be necessary to observe, that after the small pox, I had a violent tickling cough, with a large discharge of acid water, which nothing could prevent till I tried the smoak of tobacco; which scarce ever failed giving me present relief. And when I have tried to leave it off, my

complaint returned with nearly the same violence I experienced forty years ago, so that I was obliged to resume it again. My smoaking then, strictly speaking, is no violation of any rule of the Methodist-Society: and if any of my brethren smoak, without any such necessity, let them fall under Mr. Davis' censure; but I cannot say I ever knew one.

As to any thing that bears the smallest resemblance to excessive drinking, I thank God I am clear; for I never drank, at one time (I mean, at one sitting; &c.) so much as a single pint, either of porter, cyder or ale; no, nor one glass of rum, brandy or gin, except a single glass of brandy which I once threw down in a hurry, mistaking it for white wine, which I soon mixed with about a pint of cold water to prevent the bad consequences thereof: so that it is no wonder that I was never any more drunk in all my life than I was the first hour I was born.

And as to my brethren, I solemnly declare before God, that though I have been intimately acquainted with them for upwards of forty years, I never saw any of them, who shewed the least sign of immoderate drinking, except a single feeble
old

old man, who seemed to be a little, and but very little, overcome by the strength of liquor, disguised by sweetness, which he drank in a warm room after travelling in a very cold winter day. And if others have seen more, perhaps one or two in the course of eight or ten years, they have always been reprov'd, suspended or silenced, according as their crime deserved. It would therefore be unkind and unjust if any should so far misconstrue Mr. Davis' words, as if he insinuated that this holy and useful body of men were intemperate; seeing all he intends is, that they are inconsistent in laying such a stress on dancing, while they allow themselves in peccadillos equally trivial.

Page 25. Mr. Davis says, "You will observe, brethren, I do not mean by any thing I have said to encourage or defend the practice of frequenting balls, assemblies, &c. I know, from the experience of my youth, how dangerous such entertainments are for young minds." I wonder then he does not see that whatever has any tendency towards it must be of dangerous consequence, and that learning to dance in childhood has this tendency,

I allow there are many things which may be learned in childhood, such as those which are coarse, laborious and disagreeable, which have no natural tendency to cause us to follow them in after-life; but if they are matters of mere amusement, which afford pleasure, the case is widely different. Now dancing is of this sort; therefore learning it in our childhood must give us a propensity to it when grown up to years of maturity.

Ibid. Mr. Davis says, "Many parents likewise, who are not only good friends to the Methodists, but also in our connexion, being neither convinced nor softened by the knock-down arguments of a threatened exclusion, will persist in having their children taught by a dancing-master, carriage, address, &c." I answer, perhaps they may. But then it must be remembered, that many parents among us are now grown rich; and it will be well if the consciences of some of these are not grown less squeamish, that is, less tender; and therefore, though Mr. Davis may only intend the prosperity of his school, and his own convenience, yet his arguments and eloquence may have such weight with these as to cause them to stand out stiffly
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against the more wholesome admonitions of their teachers. But as to these, there cannot be "many," seeing ninety-nine out of every hundred of our people hold dancing, and all other vain amusements, in as great contempt as ever.

Page 26. Mr. Davis says, "With regard to school-masters and school-mistresses in the Methodist connexion, they are indeed in a singular predicament. The few of whom I have any knowledge have not a third, perhaps not a fourth part of their scholars, from among the people called Methodists." This I am inclined to think is very true; for which I am sorry. And I am the more so, because I know that the Methodists and their religious acquaintance are now so numerous, that if they exerted themselves as they ought, our school-masters and school-mistresses would have plenty of scholars without applying to people who have no fear of God themselves, nor pay any regard to religion in the education of their children. But if any of the wealthy Methodists should be so lost to all prudence, as to send their children to schools, where carriage, address, dancing, and other fashionable amusements are taught in

preference to religion, it is a dreadful sign, that they know but little of the duties of parents, that they have but a small regard for the eternal interest of their children, and that they are very far from loving their christian-brethren as they ought. And as to teaching children carriage, address, &c. no man need be ashamed of his son's behaviour in any company, or on any occasion, whatever his fortune or future situation in life may be, after having passed under the hands of Mr. Davis, Mr. Hulett and others, without the impertinent and supercilious aid of a dancing-master.

Ibid. "Of the many who have been under the tuition of a dancing-master in my house, I do not know that even one has abused this part of his youthful education, by throwing away his money and time in frequenting places of public amusement for the purpose of dancing." I answer, They might do this frequently without its coming to Mr. Davis' ears: especially as these things are often done in secret, even without the knowledge of parents: add to this, that many of Mr. Davis' scholars live in London, while he himself lives six or eight

eight miles off in the country. But suppose they have been kept from dancing and other public amusements, there is no thanks due to those who qualified them for such practices, and thereby were the authors of such evil propensities as might have led them astray.

Page 27. But he says he knew "Two or three who were not taught dancing when children in my house, acknowledge, that they procured instruction, in their apprenticeship at a considerable expence, and that with no small injury to their mind and morals." From this account we learn, first, that some children who are not allowed to dance at school, yet have a strong propensity to it, otherwise they would not afterward be so eager to procure instruction for themselves: which demonstrate that dancing is not such an indifferent thing to children, as has been above hinted, and that all they want is only to learn thereby how to stand and move on all common occasions. Secondly, I observe, that learning to dance may be hurtful to youth, both in their mind and morals; which is evident from their own confession to Mr. Davis. I apprehend it will make no difference whether

ther they were taught at school by masters of their parent's chusing, or^d by those they afterwards chose for themselves; seeing, according to their own confession, it was not so much the master who hurted them, as their following their own evil propensities. Besides, the youth who does not indulge his dancing-propensity till in his apprenticeship, is saved from that indulgence till about fourteen years of age; but he who learns it at school, begins the indulgence by the time he is five or six years old: which, besides the loss of so much time, the young practitioner gets his evil propensities more deeply rooted, and, on all occasions, shews himself a great adept when grown up to manhood.

Having finished the argumentative part of his book, Mr. Davis proceeds to sum up the evidence, which he says he will do as faithfully, and in as few words as he possibly can.

And, 1. He says, "Dancing viewed as gestures of nature, expressive of our passions, must be as innocent, abstractedly considered, as laughing, crying, talking, or walking." This may be true if by gestures of nature he means, leaping, jumping, skipping,

ping, &c. suppose they are done at a proper time, and in a proper manner. But if by gestures of nature he means artificial dancing, the contrary, I trust, has been proved above.

Ibid. "I should never reproach a child, "or a grown person, with either sin or folly "who jumped for joy, as we commonly express it; on receiving a favour, or hearing "good news." I answer, I know not who does: certainly the Methodists do not.

Again Mr. Davis says, "The fact is, nature will sometimes break through all "the restraint of what we call human prudence and decorum, and yet no sin is "committed." What the Methodists call human prudence, in the good sense of the word, is that which restrains these vicious exertions of nature; how then can nature break through all these restraints without committing sin? Besides, are they these violent exertions of nature, breaking through all the bounds of human prudence and decorum, which cause Mr. Davis's scholars to wish to learn dancing? if so, the learning thereof cannot be a very amiable or desirable accomplishment.

Page

Page 28. "2. Dancing, continues Mr. Davis, is frequently mentioned in Scripture, as an innocent expression of joy." Leaping, jumping and skipping are; but not artificial dancing, such as is taught by dancing-masters, which is the only dancing now in debate.

"But it is recorded there (in the Scriptures) as an established mode of religious worship among the Jews." Does good Mr. Davis assert this! What a proof have we here, that a wise and good man may be sometimes off his guard? If it is recorded in Scripture that dancing was an established mode of worship among the Jews, let those records be produced and I will believe them; but certain I am there are no such records in all the Bible. But it "was practised even by some of the first converts to Christianity; Acts iii. 8. Acts xiv. 10" To this I answer, these passages refer only to the two impotent men, who on receiving miraculous cures, one is said to leap and walk, and the other to leap up, stand and walk, and to enter the temple praising God. And are these all the instances Mr. Davis could find among the first converts to Christianity! "But it has been practised, according

" according to history, both by individuals
 " and christian-congregations, on certain oc-
 " casions." I answer, I do not remember
 that Mr. Davis has given us an account of
 any individuals, except the two impotent
 men just mentioned, who were dancers
 among the Christians of former ages; but
 in page 13, he has produced an instance
 from bishop Patrick of congregations who
 danced. " The Abyffinians (said the good
 " bishop from Ludolphi Historia Æthiopica)
 " meet together in their churches on the eve
 " of our Lord's resurrection, and employ
 " the whole night in singing, dancing and
 " clapping their hands, accompanied by
 " several instruments of music, till morning
 " light." And Mr. Davis might have
 added that they did this, or something like
 it; on various other occasions. For Lu-
 dolphus tells us that " On their January
 11th, which is the midst of their summer,
 and at the feast of Epiphany, they com-
 memorated our Saviour's baptism with
 hymns:" that then " the king with all his
 " nobility, the metropolitant with his cler-
 " gy, the nobles with the plebians, old and
 " young, throwing themselves into rivers
 " and ponds, before sun-rising, plunging

“and diving over head, &c.” But this is turned into a kind of sport, says the same historian, rather than a pious festival; the young men “leaping, and dancing, and “swimming, and ducking one another, and “filling the neighbouring fields with whooping and hollowing.” Ludolphus adds, “They have singing priests, with very harsh voices; use cymbals, morris-bells, kettle-drums; skipping and dancing, as if they “would make the floor ring again, which “they call, exulting and clapping hands to “the God of Israel.” Moreover it is well known that they circumcise their children, pray for the dead, and use many other superstitious and ridiculous customs which Mr. Davis himself would be sorry to see brought in among the Methodists. The authority of the Abyssinians, therefore, can have but little influence in the present case; especially as we have a great number of superior authorities to produce against it.

- The Primitive Fathers spoke of dancing as a most atrocious and scandalous evil; so St. Ambrose: “None may dance but the “daughter of an adulteress; but she who is
- “chaste, let her learn her daughter prayer, “not dances.” Again, saith he, “What “modesty

“modesty can there be where dancers shriek
“and make a noise together?

• St. Hieron saith, “Where the timbrels
“found, the pipe makes a noise, the harp
“chatters, the cymbals strike together, what
“fear of God can there be?” Hieron. lib.
contr. Helvid.

• St. Chrysoftom saith, “Where wanton
“dancing is, there certainly the devil is
“present; for God hath not given us legs
“to dance, but that we should walk mo-
“destly; not skip like camels; but if the
“body be polluted by dancing impudently,
“how much more may the soul be thought
“to be defiled? The devil danceth in these
“dances.” See Hom. 49, on Matt.

• St. Basil saith, “Men and women toge-
“ther, entering into common dances, hav-
“ing delivered their souls to the drunken
“devil, wound one another with the pricks
“of unchaste affections: profuse laughter is
“cherished, and filthy songs, meretricious
“habits inviting unto petulency are there
“used. Laughest thou, and delightest thou
“thyself with an arrogant delight, whereas
“thou oughtest to pour out tears and sighs
“for what is past—Dost thou stir thy feet
“and caper furiously, and dance unhappily,

“whereas thou oughtest to bend thy knees
“in prayer.” See Orat. contr. Ebr.

• St. Augustine saith, “Every caper in a
“dance is a step into a deep jakes.”

Besides these we have large accounts of
dancing being condemned and prohibited
by councils and synods in former ages.

• In the council of Laodica it was decreed
that “Christians should not go to weddings,
“&c. (habere vel saltare) bleat or dance;
“but sup or dine chastely as become Chris-
“tians.” See c. 52.

• The universal council of Constantinople,
&c. forbid dancing, especially at weddings,
Alsted.

Besides these, dancing has been con-
demned by a great number of other coun-
cils, &c. Take a list of them in the words
of a late learned writer. It was condemned,
he informs us, “In concilia Choreas dam-
“nant, ut Basiliense, Carthaginense, quartum;
“Agathense, &c. & Decreta prohibent: lege
“institutum Zachariæ caus. 26. can. Siquis,
“&c. De Conciliis lege distinct. 34. can.
“Presbyteri, & de consecratione dist. 1. can.
“Qui die. & de Conf. dist. 5: can. Non
“Oportet. Steph. Tzeged Loc. commun,
“p. 438. who quotes also St. Augustine
“contra

" contra Petilianum, c. 6, & S. Chrysoftom,
 " Hom. 56. sup. Genes. and in Matt. 14,
 " &c. Marlorat in Matth. c. 14. Calvin in
 " Matth. 14, &c. Tzegedine also cites
 " against dancing the Councils of Laodicea,
 " Agath. Ilerdian, Altifiodore. Besides
 " Canons (de quibus caus. 26. q. 7. can.
 " Siquis. Also lib. 3. Decr. Gregorii can.
 " cum decorem, &c. & lib. 3. Clementinarum.
 " Tit. 14. c. 1.) as also Philosophers, Plato in
 " Protagor. l. 17. Cicero pro Murenà,
 " Aimilii Probi in vit. Epaminonde; and in
 " another table, Peter Martyr, Erasmus,
 " Pellican, Calvin, Aristotle, Seneca, Ma-
 " crobius, Sallustius, Plautus, Polux, &c.
 " Pope Clement the 5th, Innocent the 3d,
 " &c." To these I shall add a few more
 of those Christians who bore testimony
 against dancing.

The ancient Waldenses, it is said, make
 dancing to be a breach of the Ten Com-
 mandments.

Angel. de Clavasio is full upon the point.
 Quem. vide, page 55, where he makes
 dancing a mortal sin.

Cardinal Bellarmine inveighs very bit-
 terly against it, and cites the authorities both
 of the Greek and Latin Fathers as on his
 side. Con. 6. 3. 19, 20, 21.

The titular Bishop of Geneva, (S. Fr. Sales) is very severe, but at last concludes that they [dancings] are like mushrooms, the best are bad and dangerous, at least nothing worth. See Sale's Introd.

Cardinal Barrowmeus saith, when he was a young man at the University, he and his companions prevailed with one of their professors, a grave young man, to go with them to a ball, who having observed—&c. told them, It was an invention of the devil to destroy souls. See Author of the Educa. of a young Gentleman.

M. de Rhodéz saith, Nothing doth more dissipate the spirits than the ravishing harmony, dancing, and charms of women.—Doubtless it was a conviction of this which caused Cicero, long before to say, as I have observed in the title-page, *Nemo sobrius saltat.* No modest man danceth.

I have only to add what Mr. Chambers says, viz. That Cicero reproached Gabinius on account of dancing; that Tiberius expelled the dancers out of Rome; and that Domitian excluded several members from the Senate for having danced. See Chambers' Cyclopædie.

But

But "it [dancing] seems, indeed, says
 "Mr. Davis, so nearly allied to music, both
 "vocal and instrumental, that the arguments
 "which are sufficient to justify the practice
 "of the latter, will also justify the practice
 "of the former." I answer; Music has al-
 ways been a very material part of the worship
 of the Jewish and Christian Churches, and
 is represented in Scripture as one of the
 most principal parts of the employment of
 heaven; but nothing of this sort is said of
 dancing: therefore the arguments which are
 used to justify the practice of music, will not
 justify the practice of dancing.

. Again: "There can be no sin in having
 "our children taught an erect carriage, a
 "graceful and easy way of moving their
 "limbs, and a genteel manner of address."

Answer. If they cannot be taught these but
 by sinful or foolish means, there is, and
 must be sin in the case; seeing this would
 be "doing evil that good might come."

But this notion of learning to dance, for no
 other purpose but to acquire an erect car-
 riage, I fear is only the gilding of the pill. But
 is it not very extraordinary that this should
 not be found out but by a few of *us!* for I
 do not remember that such a thing is once
 mentioned

mentioned by any other author, either ancient or modern.

Again. "If the man called a dancing-master can teach these things sooner and better than any other person, he is the most proper man to be employed on the occasion." I answer; he cannot teach them sooner or better than any other person: a serjeant or a corporal can teach a company of absolute clowns to stand erect, &c. much sooner than a dancing-master can teach a like number of docile children. And the serjeant or corporal can teach them much better: for one of these can teach his aukward pupils to stand erect, &c. without farther assistance, which the dancing-master cannot do; for every one knows, if it was not for the daily and hourly instructions which children receive from their masters or mistresses at school, and also from their parents at home, all the scrapings, bowings and caperings of a dancing-master, for an hour or two in a week, would go but a little way.

Mr. Davis goes on. "If experience affures us, that music greatly assists both in giving and receiving his instructions, the use of music cannot be prohibited."

Whatever

Whatever use music may be of in learning to dance minuets, &c. the common soldiers in a marching regiment, the genteel Quakers, and thousands besides, shew that it is not necessary in order to a good carriage. Besides, I cannot see what need there is of music in order to teach a child, or a grown person to stand erect, to adjust the different members of his body, to turn upon the heel, to open or shut a door, or to make a bow or a curtsy: if I am not much mistaken, the brayings of an ass, or the squalls of a parrot, are as much connected with these, as the sounds of the flute or the violin.

Ibid. Mr. Davis adds, "The expediency of having children thus taught appears in their carriage and behaviour, and after in the degree of health and vigour they enjoy." I answer; The expediency of it does not appear in their carriage and behaviour; seeing these may be acquired a much easier, cheaper, more effectual, and less dangerous way: and as to health and vigour, these may be acquired, and increased by the exercise of the play-ground, &c. without dancing; as is evident from the health and vigour of thousands of children who never learned to dance.

Page 29. "I therefore sincerely wish,
 "continues Mr. Davis, that our brethren in
 "Conference had not taken up the subject:
 "or, at least, had not ventured to deter-
 "mine so decisively and so authoritatively
 "concerning it." See "how doctors dif-
 fer!" For when I saw the minute of Con-
 ference I very much rejoiced at the zeal and
 piety of the preachers, in determining so de-
 cidedly on the subject, in their first meeting
 after Mr. Wesley's decease: and this I did
 as an impartial person, who had nothing
 either to gain or lose by the determination,
 which ever way it went. But I am sorry to say,
 the case of my friend is quite different: he is
 the master of a boarding-school, and has long
 found, or at least thought it necessary to
 have dancing taught, not doubting of its
 innocency: it is therefore no wonder if he
 views the conduct of Conference, in this
 particular, in an unfavourable light; and
 that he should add, "I shall be extremely
 "sorry, if they attempt to execute their rule
 "with rigour." If by rigour he means,
 with any unkindness, or want of brotherly
 love towards any concerned, I also shall be
 very sorry; but if by rigour he means,
 enforcing it without favour or affection, I
 expect

expect he will have cause for extreme sorrow; for why should they so very formally make a rule, if they did not intend to enforce it?

Page 30, Mr. Davis says, "I wish them to keep at a distance as well from superstition as from sin." I am inclined to think, that before he was a school-master he did not view prohibitions of this sort in the light of superstition; but to this day, the Methodists look upon dancing, &c. as conformity to the world; and all rules which forbid it as most scriptural and necessary duties.

• But he says he wishes the preachers "to spend their zeal and their strength on the weightier matters of God's law." Certainly, this is quite right. But Mr. Davis knows that while we are doing this, we must not leave the others undone, Matt. xiii. 13. But let us suppose, for argument-sake, that dancing is a little thing, does he not know that the little foxes will ruin the vine? Cant. ii. 15. and that he that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little? Eccles. xix. 1.

Mr. Davis wishes farther that the preachers may "evidence by the whole of their ministry

• “ministry and proceedings, that they have
 “passed their novitiate state, both in the
 “school of Christ, and in the world.” And
 does Mr. Davis really think that making
 rules to exclude dancing from among the
 Methodists is a sign that those who made
 them are in a novitiate state? What a
 novice then was good Mr. Wesley, who was
 the first framer of that rule in 1785.
 and what novices must several of the
 preachers be, after labouring with him, some
 for thirty, some for forty, and some for
 about fifty years! Now if these give no
 greater proof of a novitiate state, than
 making and enforcing rules against dan-
 cing, few, very few will be prevailed on to
 look on them as a company of novices.

Mr. Davis says next, “If they act con-
 “sistently, they will also drop the names
 “of half a dozen school-masters and school-
 “mistresses in London and its vicinities;
 “and of two or three score of the weal-
 “thiest families in the Methodist-connexion,
 “for the same atrocious crime; namely,
 “for having their children and scholars
 “taught carriage and address by a dancing-
 “master.” I answer, Though they will
 act consistently, yet they will not act pre-
 cipitately;

capitately ; but give time for all concerned to weigh the matter well. But as to those who have already done this, and are come to a resolution not to give up their dancing-masters, on these the rule has been enforced ; and as for others who will not, time will shew what will be their doom.

As for three or fourscore of the wealthiest families in the Methodist connexion, the preachers now living are not to be overawed by these : should those of any future generation be controled by the rich, it will be quite too soon, even then, for money to govern the church : but at present, blessed be God ! there is little danger. For I do not apprehend that many of our present rich families wish to control their teachers, in what they agree on in their public Conferences ; but would rather pluck out a right eye, and cut off a right hand, than endeavour to subvert rule and order ; and thereby weaken the hands of those who are daily labouring for their good. But if two or three should be influenced by Mr. Davis, or others, the preachers cannot help it ; all they can do in such a case is, to leave such refractory ones to God and their own consciences.

However, that these wealthy families may not entertain an unfavourable opinion of dancing-masters; but stand out manfully against their teachers, Mr. Davis tells them he hopes "these will have patience and resolution to bear such treatment, considering it as the fruit of superstitious zeal." To this I answer. Though Mr. Davis is wise and learned, it is strange that he should think himself a better judge of what is superstition than Mr. Wesley and two or three hundred of his fellow-labourers put together! especially as some of these (not to speak of Mr. Wesley) are at least, as wise and learned as Mr. Davis himself, and of longer standing in the work: add to this, that he must be supposed to be partial to his own interest, while they are totally unbiassed on every side.

• Again. "They have not *now*, says Mr. Davis, the influence and power of "Mr. Wesley to screen their imprudencies."—I answer, If the expulsion of dancing and dancing-masters is one of their imprudencies, Mr. Wesley himself led them into it; and therefore they want no screening, in this respect, unless it be
from

from the consequences of following his example.

Mr. Davis tells the preachers that, "They will find it much easier to scatter than to gather." This certainly is a great truth; and I hope our brethren have as great an aversion to scatter as good Mr. Davis himself. However, if dancers, and dancing-masters get in among us, they must be scattered at all events. And as to its being "easier for them [the preachers] to pronounce their fiat than to carry their point," if their fiat be right they have done well to pronounce it; and if they have done all in their power to put it into execution, yet cannot carry their point, they must leave it to God, who does not require impossibilities. But if it should be lost through the opposition of Mr. Davis and others, they alone must bear the blame.

I am glad to hear of Mr. Davis' inviolable attachment to his old friends, and that he desires to preserve the unity of the Spirit: and I should rejoice greatly at his determination to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, if I thought he meant any thing more, than cleaving to his dancing-masters.

Having considered Mr. Davis' arguments in favour of dancing, I cannot conclude without a few observations on the great impropriety of Christian-Parents permitting their children to learn to dance.

As these parents desire their own salvation, it would be absurd to suppose that they did not also desire the salvation of their children. In order to this end they must wish them to be Bible-Christians: that is, they must wish them to be thoroughly acquainted with the principles of our holy religion, possess the tempers, and walk in all the ways described therein. And if they wish this in earnest, they will think it their duty to warn and guard them against whatever may have the smallest tendency to divert their attention, and draw them aside from these important concerns. Now one means of this most certainly is dancing; which will be evident from the following considerations.

First. It is the duty of every christian-parent to use all possible means to bring his child to the knowledge of himself: to make him know that he is conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; that in consequence of this, his inward parts are very wickedness:

that his carnal mind is enmity against God; and that it is from hence that all his outward wickedness proceeds. Now that he may be brought to be thoroughly acquainted with this, the parent ought to endeavour to fix his attention, and to cause him to think as closely of it as his capacity will admit. In order to this end, the parent ought to guard his child against every thing which will divert his attention, and turn his thoughts into a quite different channel. Now it is infallibly certain that setting him to learn to dance, has this tendency, as it fills his mind with thoughts of the pleasing amusement, and of various other agreeable particulars connected with it. It is therefore no wonder that so many Religious, Christian, Methodist-Parents have cause to complain, that their children, even those who are ten, twelve, or fourteen years of age, have no more knowledge of themselves, at least, to any good purpose, than if they were so many young Hottentots! which is really the case of multitudes, of them; particularly of our young dancers. Where then is the prudence, the conscience, the fear of God, the love, the duty that such parents owe to their children, in putting

such stumbling-blocks in their way, as prevent their taking, even, the first step in the way to the kingdom?

. Secondly. If children are in that state mentioned above, both Reason and Revelation declare that it ought not to be a matter of indifference to them; but rather that it ought to fill them with sorrow and shame: that it ought to work in them that holy mourning, that true contrition, in a word, that repentance which needeth not to be repented of: and the more so, because without it they cannot be saved. And that they may feel this sorrow, that they may experience this repentance unto life, parents ought to guard them against every thing which has the smallest tendency to prevent this contrition; and cause them to use every means to raise and perfect it. But will teaching them to dance do this? Have the sounds of the viol, the light, airy, frothy capers and instructions of the dancing master any tendency this way? The case is too obvious to require an answer, or even a moments consideration; for every man, woman, and *child* sees at once that the only tendency of such things must be to drive all penitential sorrow far away.

Thirdly.

Thirdly. Prayer also is a most necessary duty incumbent on all children who are capable of it. And they ought to be taught this as soon as they know good from evil. They ought also to be taught that the heart is to be engaged therein, and also that they must be in good earnest; seeing God is the rewarder of them only who diligently seek him. Now every one who is acquainted with human nature knows what an aversion there is, both in young and old, to this most necessary duty. Ought not parents, then, to be very cautious how they engage their children in any thing which tends to increase that aversion? If they do this, certainly they will keep dancings, and all other vain amusements, as far out of their sight as possible; seeing nothing can be more opposite than the spirit of prayer, and the spirit of dancing.

Fourthly. In order to our salvation, whether we be parents or children, there must be a relish for all the ordinances of God. We must delight in the word and sacrament; in hearing, reading, and meditation; and also in conversing with the followers of Christ. Now I ask even those parents who send their children to learn to dance,

• dance, if they think that dancing has any tendency this way? Partial as they are, they cannot but own the contrary: they cannot but own that, if their children spoke freely, they would own that they have a thousand times more pleasure in hearing the music of their dancing-master, than in hearing any minister of Christ; and that half an hours converse with the people of God, or even with religious children, about any thing serious, would be irksome to them, while the little impertinent prattles of their companions in dancing would, for hours together, be the very joy of their hearts.

• Fifthly. As the work of our salvation is a matter of serious concern, parents ought to teach their children to be seriously engaged therein: to think, pray, read, and hear the word in the most serious manner; and thus to seek the favour and image of God. Now has dancing any tendency to promote this seriousness? Is it not rather as great an antidote against it as can possibly be conceived? For what can be a more effectual guard against, even, a serious thought, than the appearance and performance of a dancing-school?

Sixthly.

Sixthly. Every parent who wishes the present and eternal welfare of his children, ought to teach them to set God always before their eyes; to remember, That he is about their path, and about their bed, and spyeth out all their ways: that there is not a word in their tongue, not a thought in their heart, but he knoweth it altogether. Now if this is really the case, ought not children, at least, by the time they are capable of learning to dance, to be instructed in, and deeply impressed with a sense of this most awful truth? But if instead of doing this, we send them to learn dancing, and other worldly amusements, what wonder that they can spend days and weeks, if not months and years, without having God in all their thoughts!

Seventhly. That parent is dreadfully wanting who does not teach his children to redeem their time. The great work of answering the end of our creation, which is, to manifest the glory of God, and thereby, to secure eternal life, is not the business of a moment. We ought to begin it as soon as we are capable of knowing good from evil, and earnestly pursue it all our days. If so, what time for learning to dance in our youth, and for following it afterwards?
certainly

certainly none at all. The mighty concerns we all have on our hands, demand all our attention, all our care, and all our endeavours: and therefore he who squanders away any part of this momentary existence, knows but little of the importance either of time or eternity.

. Eighthly. Every wise parent, who wishes to preserve his children from destruction, will endeavour to instil into them a deep sense of their danger. To this end he will inform them, that their adversary the devil as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour; and then will strongly urge them to take to themselves the whole armour of God, that they may be able to stand in the evil day: and that they ought to watch in all things lest their inexperienced hearts should be beguiled by the subtilty of Satan. Suppose the parent, after giving such grave, such solemn, such necessary admonitions, should talk of sending these children to a dancing-school, could they possibly think he was in earnest? Could they think he believed one word of the danger he had been speaking of? For would they not naturally conclude, if he really believed the cautions he had been giving them, he could

could not be so inconsistent as to wish them to learn any thing which so naturally tends to set them off their guard.

* Ninthly. The parent who wishes well to his children will guard them against conformity to the world. For if he is wise, he will see how ensnaring the vanities of the world are to youthful minds; therefore he will daily, and almost hourly be ringing in their ears, Be not conformed to this present world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world; and the world passeth away, and the lust thereof. Now if a parent really desires his children to stand clear in this respect, will he, can he put them under the tuition of a dancing-master, whose very profession is, to sow, water, and bring up to maturity, the seeds of folly and vanity.

* Tenthly. A wise and humble parent cannot but wish that his children may learn of Christ to be meek and lowly of heart, that they may find rest unto their souls; and will wish them to appear so in all their outward deportment. And he will urge them to this, by telling them that God resisteth the proud, but

but giveth grace to the humble. But suppose after these important warnings and admonitions, Miss is told that she is going to learn to dance, and that she must mind her master and be very clever; and that she must not suffer herself to be excelled by the first lady in the school: moreover, when she comes home in the holidays she must give her mamma and pappa a specimen of her improvement; and if all is not done to a nicety, there is this fault in her carriage, and ten or twenty more in her ungenteel appearance. Now I ask, after this what notion can this young lady (so called) have of the lectures on humility she so lately and so often received? Will she not think that humility is of no great importance? or else that her parents are dreadfully inconsistent!

Eleventhly. It is the indispensable duty of all Christians, both parents and children, to deny themselves, and to take up their cross daily, and follow Christ. Ought not parents then to labour to instil into their children a true notion of the necessity of this? And ought they not likewise to endeavour to give them a habit of doing it, before the principles of self-indulgence take

too deep root within them? But has learning them to dance any such tendency? quite the reverse, as every one sees at first view. Hence the generality of those who are used to follow dancing, and dancing-masters, have no more desire to follow Christ in the regeneration, than to sink into the bottom of the sea.

Twelfthly. Parents who are not slothful in business, but rather labour to be useful members of society, ought to bring up their children in such a manner, that they also may be useful in their day and generation. But of what use can it be, either to themselves or others, that they are taught to dance? With respect to themselves, will it, either in their childhood, or at any other time, be a means of helping them through the difficulties of this life? or add one pearl to their crown in that which is to come? And as to others, what will they be the better for our learning to dance? Will it give more weight to our instructions, warnings and admonitions? Will it enable us or our children to feed the hungry and clothe the naked? In a word, will it cause our light, our christian-light, to shine before men, that they seeing our good works,

H

both

both we and they may glorify our Father which is in heaven? Certainly nothing of this kind is, or can be expected.

Thirteenth. As all christian-parents are taught to glorify God with their bodies and their spirits which are his, and that they must do this in eating and drinking, and in whatever else they do; they ought to teach their children to do the same. But will teaching them to dance do this? Who will be so absurd, so ridiculous, so profane, as to say, a child glorifies God with his body in learning to dance? or that a grown person does it in the act of dancing?

Fourteenth. Whatever a christian does, in word or deed, he ought to do it in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now I ask (if it is not too absurd to be mentioned) can any parent, while putting his child under the tuition of a dancing-master, say, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ I put my child to learn to dance! And ought not every parent to teach his children also to do all things in the name of Christ? Suppose he has done this, and then hears them say, particularly those who are ten, or twelve years of age, In thy name, O Christ! I am going to dance! Is not the thought almost too shocking

shocking to be mentioned? And yet christian-children must, in effect, thus express themselves, or else have nothing to do with dancing.

* Fifteenth. St. Paul saith that christians ought in every thing to give thanks: that is, they are to thank God *in* every affliction, on account of its not being greater, and to thank him *for* every favour, or *in* the possession thereof. Now I ask, can a christian-parent thank God for giving him an inclination, and an opportunity of getting his children taught to dance? Or can the children themselves thank God for the assistance they have had in dancing? and for the great proficiency they have made therein? If a child of five years old was to mention such a thing, would not one who is only a twelve-month older be ready to reprove the great impiety of such a proposal?

* Lastly. As God has promised to reward his people for all their virtuous actions in this life, no christian-parent ought to do any thing but what he believes is, in its own nature, rewardable. But what reward can he expect for having his children taught to dance? certainly none at all: and therefore

all

all the pains and expence they have been at on this occasion, to say the least, must go without a reward. And the same may be said of their children; for they have no cause to think that Christ will say unto them, on account of their dancing, Well done good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord. All, therefore, that remains for such parents and children to expect, on account of dancing, is, that they be either pardoned or punished; for rewarded they cannot be.

From all that hath been said we learn, that it is absolutely inconsistent with the duty which christian-parents owe to God—their families—and themselves, to *suffer* their children to learn artificial dancing; and that it is more especially so, and at the same time highly criminal, if, in any degree, they have an *active* part therein.

F I N I S.

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