
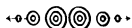


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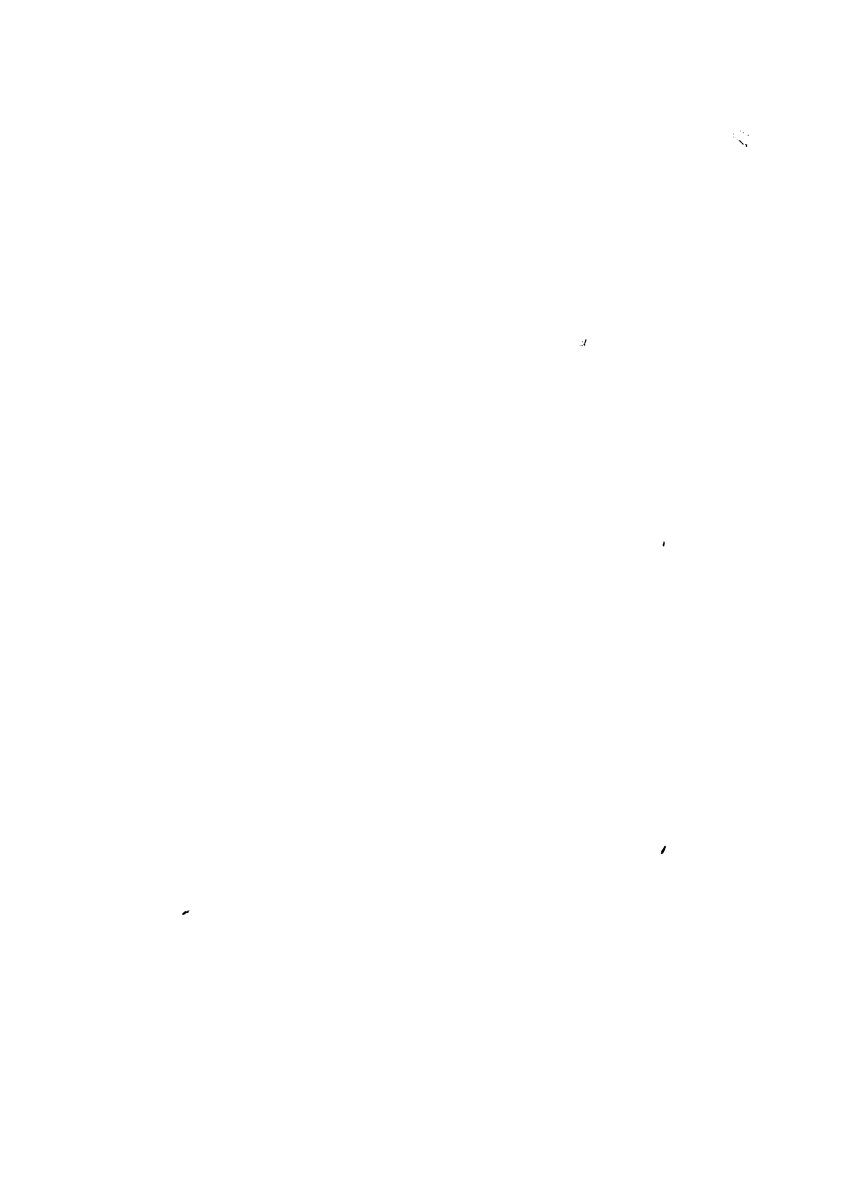
The Christian and the Dance

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THE
Christian
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BY
Rev. Wm. S. Campbell.



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READ WITH PRAYER.

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE DANCE.

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THERE are some things which a Christian must not do because they are sinful in themselves; there are some which he must not do because they tend to evil; there are others which he must not do because, while they may not injure him, they will injure others.

Almost all Christians agree that some forms of dancing are wrong in themselves. But let us leave out of consideration the question whether dancing is wrong in itself, and see whether upon other grounds it is right for the Christian to engage in the modern dance in any form.

I. God in his holy word lays down but one code of morals for the government of HIS people, and all Christians are to regulate their conduct by this one code, regardless of their position; there is one law for pastor and people.

Few, if any, congregations would be willing

for their pastor to dance; and were he to do so they would consider that he had committed a great wrong, and had done the church and the cause of Christ much injury.

But some one says: "The pastor must be better than others, for he has to set an example to the flock." But God does not require an example to be set which he does not require to be followed by those for whom it is set.

In 1 Peter i. 15, 16 we read: "As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." Thus we see that God measures the holiness which he requires of each one, not by that of another, but by his own holiness. It will not do, then, for any one to say God enjoins upon his pastors a higher degree of holiness than upon himself. If it is wrong for the pastor to dance, it is wrong for the private member.

II. The history of any church or congregation shows that the Christian who habitually engages in dancing is not a soul-winning Christian. The command is, "Let him that heareth say, Come." (Rev. xxii. 17.) That is, every one who has heard the gospel call is to repeat it, so that others may be led to Christ. The dancing

Christian does not endeavor by earnest personal effort to lead souls to the Saviour. Look among those of your own acquaintance and see. The soul-winning Christians are not found among the dancers.

Christian, do you want your crown to glisten with bright jewels, the souls of those who by your instrumentality have been led to Christ? Or are you willing to meet your Saviour empty handed?

Leave the dance, and do the work of the Master, and receive the reward.

III. Every branch of the Christian church has condemned dancing and warned its members against its evils. Is not the united voice of the whole church entitled to some deference? "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." (Heb. xiii. 17.)

Your church condemns dancing not because it desires to deprive you of any pleasure or to restrict your rights, but because it watches for your soul as one that must give account; and if this duty has been faithfully performed the

account can be rendered with joy, and its faithfulness will be profitable for you.

You have no right to remain in any organization and do that which it condemns as against its principles, and which it says is the cause of injury to itself.

Most branches of the church have not laid down any law of discipline on this subject; nor have they done so in regard to stealing, cursing or murder. The church lays down general principles, by which each special case is to be determined.

V. And further: the world says the Christian who dances is not living a consistent life. No Christian has a right to do that which will injure his influence over the unconverted. It is the consistent life that exerts an influence for good: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matt. v. 16.)

Even supposing that there be no harm in dancing, if it interferes with the Christian's doing good to his fellow-men, it must be given up. Paul says that even what is lawful must be given up when it becomes an offence or cause of stumbling to others. "If meat make

my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." (1. Cor. viii. 13.)

The sinner convicted of sin and seeking for salvation does not go to the dancing Christian to be led by him into the way of life.

The dying sinner does not send for a dancing Christian to come and pray with and for him that God may have mercy upon him and save his soul even at the eleventh hour.

Nor does the dying Christian, whose heart is troubled, and who feels the need of sympathy, comfort, and encouragement, select a dancing Christian to sit by his bed-side during those last moments in which the soul is being prepared for its immediate entrance into heaven.

Looking at these plain matter-of-fact considerations, is it right, my Christian friend, for you to dance?

"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord " (2 Cor. vi. 17.) And where is separation between the church and the world more needed?

VI. There are some Christians who, although they do not dance themselves, countenance it in others. It is an old axiom of law that he who aids or encourages another in wrong-

doing is himself a participant in the crime and a sharer of the guilt.

The Christian who does not dance, but allows dancing in his house, or permits his children to dance, or attends a dance "just to look on," as he says, is aiding and encouraging others to do that which he feels it would be wrong for him to do himself. If dancing is wrong, you do wrong in encouraging it even by your presence.

"And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her (*i. e.*, Babylon, the world as the enemy of the church), my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Rev. xviii. 4.)

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Psalm i. 1-3.)