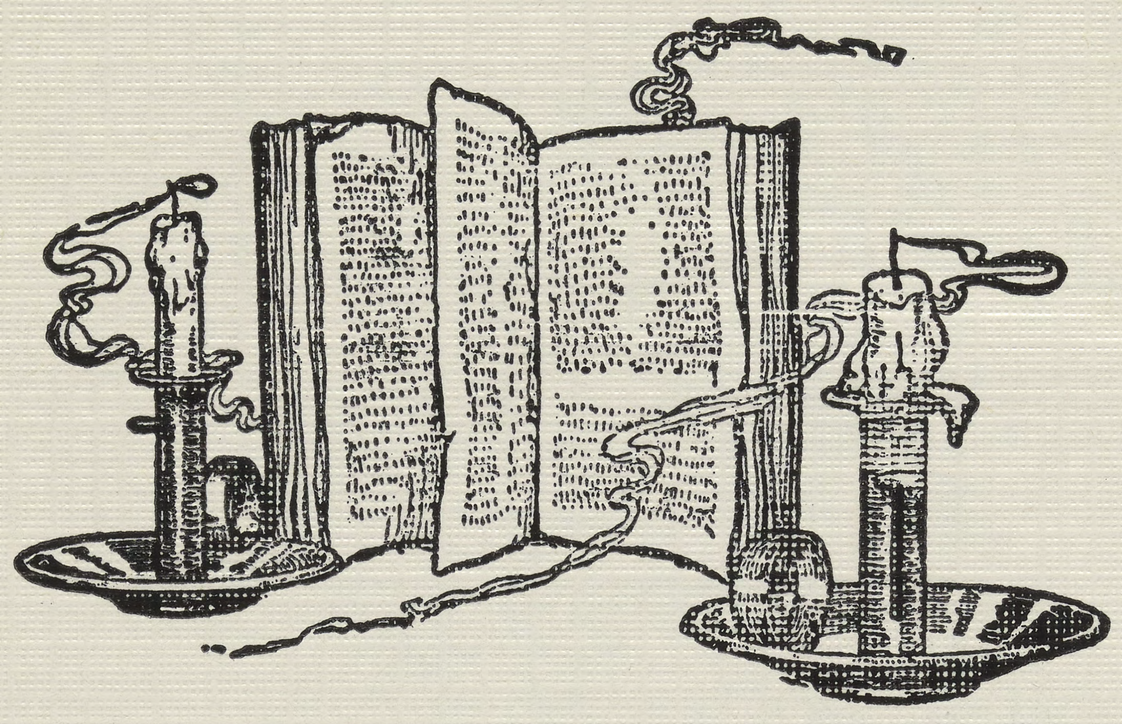
SHALL I?

ABRIDGED EDITION

BY HAROLD F. SAYLES

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SHALL I?

ABRIDGED EDITION

Short Scriptural Studies.

BY

HAROLD F. SAYLES,

EVANGELIST.

INTRODUCTION BY

GEORGE WILLIAMS, ESQ.

OF LONDON, ENGLAND.

Founder of the Y. M. C. A.

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HEAR YE THE WORD OF THE LORD.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is *profitable for doctrine*, for *reproof* for *correction*, for *instruction* in righteousness.—*Second Timothy 3:16.*

DEDICATED TO MY FATHER;

WHO

LEFT ME, IN MY YOUTH,

THE LEGACY OF A GODLY EXAMPLE

AT THE FAMILY ALTAR OF THE HOME,

IN THE OFFICE OF HIS PROFESSIONAL LIFE,

AND BEFORE THE CHURCH ON THE LORD'S DAY;

ALL OF WHICH,

HAS BEEN WORTH MORE TO ME

THAN SILVER AND GOLD.

HEAR YE THE WORD OF THE LORD.

And be not conformed to this world; but be ye *transformed* by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.—***Romans 12:2.***

INTRODUCTION.

THE circumstances in which young men are placed with regard to their avocations, and the employment of their leisure, renders it important, especially in large cities and towns, that due recognition should be given to their need of opportunities for proper recreation and exercise. But it is generally conceded that in recent years, the passion for amusement has grown to undue proportions, and a license, amounting almost to recklessness is too often manifested, even by the professed followers of Christ.

This betokens moral and spiritual danger. The papers contained in this little book raise a a well timed note of protest and warning. They seek to stem the flood-tide of worldiness that sweeps strongly and broadly in our era.

In my judgment it is just the book to be placed in the hands of young men to whom it cannot fail to be permanently useful. The subjects dealt with are those which exercise the thoughtful attention of most young men, certainly of all Christian young men, and the clear, comprehensive, and scriptural treatment of them will, I am persuaded, help all honest inquirers in their search after right conclusions upon such subjects.

I have watched life thoughtfully for nearly 50 years—especially have I felt a growing interest in young men. I have ever recognized in them vast possibilities for good or evil and the supreme importance of the consecration to Christ of the mind and heart of fresh young manhood. I gratefully welcome, therefore,

every effort to help and stimulate them to true nobility of character. The great demand of the age is for genuine, consistent, consecrated young men, not mere sentimentalists, but *men* whose lives shall be a practical commentary upon Christ's Sermon on the Mount. This is not easy—nay it is only possible through the power and grace of Christ. It is hard to breast the tide. The forces of evil are too strong for human resistence. Christ is the soul's supreme necessity. It is in His strength alone that we may hope for final victory. But this is certain to those who are in vital union with Christ. In the *crisis* moments of life, when, in the secret chamber of our own personality, decisive battles are fought upon which depend tremendous issues, it is the Divine power which Christ gives that enables us to overcome and to conquer for righteousness and for God.

I plead with young men to "be out and out" for Christ. To take sides with and for Him. To "stand up for Jesus," as His courageous and valiant soldiers, everywhere and always, and, because I believe this unpretentious little book will help strengthen them in breasting the tide of compromising worldliness, I commend it heartily and unreservedly, and bespeak for its circulation the generous co-operation of those interested in the cause and welfare of young men.

Yours truly,

London, England. GEORGE WILLIAMS

Chapter One.

Dancing.

HEAR YE THE WORD OF THE LORD.

It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *anything* whereby thy brother *stumbleth*, or is *offended*, or is *made weak.—Romans 14:21.*

Dancing.

AMONG the different amusements offered society to-day we think there is none that reaches more, or has as great an influence as the dance. We believe that it may be rightly called the "queen of amusements."

We wish to say that in speaking upon this subject we desire to deal with it wholly from the standpoint of a Christian who has promised to take God's word as his rule and guide in all matters, regardless of public opinion and personal desires.

We shall spend no time upon the immoralities of the dance, for we believe that all honest persons will agree that there is no amusement which has done so much to lower the standard of *thought, conversation, action and living*, as the modern dance.

It leads first to impure thought, second to improper conversation, third to immodesty of action, and last to immorality of living. A chief of police in New York city has said that three-fourths of the women and girls that are living lives of immorality, have been led from the path of virtue through the dance. And yet in the face of this testimony, many a Christian mother, praying for the soul and life of her daughter, sends her to the dancing school that she may be taught manners(?) and gracefulness, and be able to "*appear well*" in society. Give to me for my daughter, the careful christian culture of home, rather than the mannerisms of so-called society life, taught by a dancing master, who, in many cases, is a licentious character.

As has been said, we desire to treat this question wholly from a christian standpoint, therefore we will begin by looking at the Christian's calling, the position in which he is placed by his acceptance of Christ, and what his attitude should be before the world.

> If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because *ye are not of the world*, but I have *chosen you out of the world*, therefore the world hateth you. John 15:19.
> *They* are not of the world, even *as I am not of the world.* John 17:16.
> For our conversation *(citizenship) is in heaven* from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.
> Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. 2 Cor. 6:17.

These verses tell us that we are *not of this world any more than was Christ.* That our *citizenship* is in heaven, and for this reason we should *come out from among* the world's people and live a separated life.

> And *be not conformed* to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God. Rom. 12:2.

How many are conformed to this world trying to walk with one foot in the *narrow* way, and the other in the *broad* way; trying to see how *far from God*, and how near to the world they can live, and not be lost. Christ says that it is impossible for us to *serve* the world and Himself.

> No man can serve *two* masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye *can not serve God and mammon.* Matt. 6:24.

The *modern dance* is worldly in its *origin*, *influence*, *tendencies*, and *results*.

"But," some one says, "the Bible sanctions dancing, and says there is a time to dance."

The dancing of the Bible is as different from the dance of to-day, as light is different from darkness, good is different from bad, or heaven is different from hell. The dancing of the Bible, as some one has said, was always

1st, "A religious act both of true and idol worship."

2nd, "It was practiced exclusively on joyful occasions, such as national feasts and great victories."

3d, "It was performed usually by maidens in the *day time*, in *open air*, in highways, fields, or groves."

What a difference between this dance, and the dance of to-day which is shared in by the good, bad, and indifferent, of both sexes! A young lady of spotless character in the fond embrace of a man whose life and record is so black that if she knew it, she would not be seen on the street with him, or allow herself to be left alone with him in her own parlor. This recreation, so called, but which in reality is dissipation, is enjoyed in closely-heated rooms, with poor ventilation, and at an hour when the body ought to be at rest.

4th, "There are no instances of dancing found in the Bible, in which *both sexes united* in the exercise, either as an act of worship or amusement."

5th, "Men who perverted the dance from a sacred use to purposes of amusement, were called infamous."

6th, "There is no record in scripture of dancing as a social amusement, except of the *vain fellows devoid of shame*; of the *irreligious families* described by Job, which produced *increased* impiety, and ended in destruction; and that of Herodias, which terminated in the rash vow of Herod, and the murder of John the Baptist. The pet verse quoted from the Bible in de-

fense of dancing, is Eccl. 3:4. "There is a time to mourn and a time to dance." "Since the Jewish people knew nothing of dancing except as a *religious ceremony* or an *expression of gratitude and praise,* this text is a declaration of the fact that the providences of God sometimes demand *mourning,* and sometimes *gladness and praise."*

Now that we have seen that the Christian is called *out of this world* and is no more of it than Christ was of it; and more, that the popular dance of to day is worldly in its origin, influence, tendency, and end, we ask,

"Ought the Christian to engage in it?" No! is the immediate answer of the *leading spiritual workers* of all the denominations including the Bishops of the Episcopalian and Roman Catholic churches. For their testimonies see "May Christians dance," by Rev. James H. Brookes, D. D., a most complete book upon this subject, and costing but 25c.

If Christians dance, they are yoking themselves up with unbelievers, and God does not sanction this.

> *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers*: for what fellowhip hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth, with an infidel? 2 Cor. 6:14, 15.

If Christians dance, they are not only being unequally yoked with unbelievers, but they are being led to friendship with the world, against which we are warned.

> Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God. Jas. 4:4.

This does not mean that we are to be unfriendly toward the unconverted—far from it.

because we can never win them to Christ unless we show them Christ's love through us; but we are not to enter into associations with them in sharing a worldly life and giving them encouragement in doing those things contrary to the will of God. How could a wife enter into social relations with a circle of society that perfectly ignored her husband, never recognizing him upon the street, unwilling to accept him into their company, never saying anything in his favour, but rather against him, and going so far as to make profane and insulting remarks in regard to him in the presence of the wife? She could never make them her friends, but she might treat them kindly and attempt to win them to her husband, whom they may have wrongly judged and treated. How can Christians, the bride of Christ, enter into friendship with the world which is spurning her bridegroom and insulting Him in her face! Shall she laugh with them and in their fond embrace whirl on in friendship? God forbid. Again, if Christians dance, they are not only going to be led to form worldly friendships but to *love the world* in an unholy manner.

> *Love not the world*, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, *the love of the Father is not in him*. 1 John 2;15.

Again, dancing will lead to the feeding of the old nature, the flesh, and we are exhorted not to do this.

> But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *make not provision for the flesh*, to fulfil the lusts thereof. Rom. 13:14.

But some ask, what harm is there in my having a little dance, especially with those I know and in a private way, shutting out bad company, and keeping good hours? This is always the question to which this subject leads. Why does not the Christian ask, after seeing

that he is *called out of the world*, with a separation *equal to that of Christ's*, and when he sees that his Lord and Master has exhorted him not to make friends with, and love the world and so make provision for the flesh,

"What good will it do me to dance?" Shall I be stronger spiritually, and be better fitted for life and its work?" You have heard of the lady who advertised for a coachman. Three men applied for the position, and to these she put this question. "If we were to go out for a drive, how near would you dare drive to the edge of the cliff, and feel no danger?" The first said "*one yard*," the second, "*one foot*," but the third said, "I would not care to drive any nearer than was necessary," The lady took the man giving the last answer.

Let us say, when considering this amusement that has slain its hundreds of thousands, not How near can I go to it and there be no danger? but, I will not go '*any nearer than is necessary*." The question has been asked "What harm is there in a parlor dance?" In closing, let us answer it.

A SUPPOSED CASE.

I will suppose I am invited with a number of christian young people, to the residence of a friend for a pleasant time. During the evening some one sits at the piano and begins playing some of the popular airs of the day. At once one suggests a dance, a square dance (that is old-fashioned now you know, and not considered as bad as the waltz or German.) A set is quickly formed. I am sitting with a young lady *noted for her consistent life and faithful service*. We are talking pleasantly when I am solicited to help form the set. The young lady *knowing nothing of the dance* excuses me and the dance begins. At once the

party in the other room begin forming a set and the young lady with whom I was talking is asked to join it. Not knowing how to dance she asks to be excused; but she is urged and assured that she can easily learn, and will enjoy it. She yields reluctantly, her conscience smiting her. She asks herself the question, "*Ought I to dance?*" and immediately the devil says, "Mr. Sayles is dancing and he is a Christian; if he dances you can," and so the young lady is urged on against the voice of her conscience *by my example.* She enjoys it, is fascinated by it, in fact is *carried away* by its fascination. Soon she is seen often at the dance, and through the friendships formed at these, is led to neglect her christian duties. She is not seen at the prayer meeting, she gives up her class at Sunday school, and goes the way of the world. Seeing her peril, I go to her and remonstrate with her, and tell her it is not right. What does she say? She turns upon me and "*strikes me with my own stick.*" She says, "Mr. Sayles, *you set me the example.* I was led to dance *because you did.* I thought, if you danced I could. I began through your example, and could not stop after once beginning. You have no special fondness for it, and it does not hurt you. But I have been "*swept off of my feet.*" Our supposed case pictures what has taken place again and again. A young Christian led astray through the example of an older one, and when it was thought that "*no harm*" could come through the latter's example.

> It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, *nor anything* whereby thy brother *stumbleth*, or is *offended*, or is *made weak*. Rom. 14:21.

The *anything* of this verse includes dancing, I am sure. How many are stumbling and falling over the example of the Christian *in the parlor.*

Is Dancing Consistent?

Christians are to be unlike the world, and distinguishable from it. This idea of separateness runs through all the warp and woof of Scripture. And it clearly does not imply a separation from the *grossly* evil of the world. This is specifically and positively commanded. Christians are pledged and sworn to obedience from their very profession. The separation involved in non-conformity is from worldliness—from the worldly spirit. It is a demand that the whole tone and bent and current and spirit of the Christian life shall be different from that of the worldly life—so different that it shall be manifest *to the world* that the people of God are pilgrims and strangers on the earth; that they are walking with God; that they are a peculiar people, called out of the world while still remaining in it—God's witnesses, living epistles, the salt of the earth, distinctive, chosen, set apart, recognizable everywhere as having been with Jesus, and as holy in all manner of conversation.—*Rev. Herrick Johnson, D.D.*

Chapter Two.

The Theatre

HEAR YE THE WORD OF THE LORD.

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.*—*Psalm 1:1.*

The Theatre.

IT seems strange that any intelligent person with a desire to see purity in the lives of men and women, can ask the question, "What wrong is there in my going to the theatre?" when it is acknowledged to be *that* which leads as many into lives of immorality as any known agency for sin, unless it be the dance. How can any Christian uphold, encourage, and attend the theatre, when it is frowned upon and condemned by *writers* of plays, by *actors* and *actresses*, as well as by those that *witness* them. Macready, a man known throughout the world in theatrical circles, wrote, as he retired from the stage, "None of my children, with my consent, under any pretense,

SHALL EVER ENTER THE THEATRE,

nor shall they have any visiting connection with play actors or actresses.

Hannah Moore wrote that the judgment forced upon her by her observations of the theatre was, that "the fruits of the spirit and the fruits of the stage perhaps exhibit as pointed a contrast as the human imagination can conceive."

Surely after these testimonies we may well give heed to the scriptural exhortation:

> Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away. Prov. 4:14-15

A Christian ought not to attend the theatre because.

1st. It will lead him into bad company. Its situation is bad. Find a theatre and near by,

generally in the same building, you will find the place for wine, woman, and wickedness. This is true regarding all theatres, more or less, especially in our large towns and cities. In fact, theatrical men have proven to their own satisfaction that they can not carry on their business without these adjuncts of evil.

The theatre leads into bad company because the performers are *licentious as a class.* No doubt there are those who endeavor to live a pure life, but they are few and far between. Dr. Johnson has well asked the question, "How can they mingle together, as they do, men and women, and make public exhibitions of themselves as they do, in such circumstances, with such surroundings, with such speech as must

OFTEN BE ON THEIR LIPS

to play the plays that are written, in such positions as they must sometimes take, affecting such sentiment and passions—how can they do this without moral contamination?"

The theatre is sometimes spoken of as a "school of morals." If the theatrical presentation of the play affects the actors as it does, can we expect a much better effect upon the audience? This leads me to say further that the theatre leads into bad company because the audience is very largely made up of

A BAD CLASS.

We doubt not there are many moral and Christian people that attend the theatre for one reason or another, but the larger per cent, by far, are loose in morals. There you find the man who has lost all love for his home, the careless, the profane, the spendthrift, the drunkard, and the lowest prostitute of the street. They are found in all parts of the house; they crowd the gallery and together

shout aloud in the applause greeting that which caricatures religion, sneers at virtue, or hints at indecency.

> Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are *true*, whatsoever things are *honest*, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are *pure*, whatsoever things are of *good report;* if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, *think* on these things. Phil. 4:8.

Stop a moment, my Christian friend, and ask yourself: "Is there anything *true* and *honest* about the theatre?" As a rule the plays are a *dishonest* representation of life, and the worse side is that which most of our play houses set forth. The whole play from beginning to end is *unreal.* Is there anything *pure* or of *good report* in the theatre?

Even the plays of Shakespeare, which are considered the best, have had to be trimmed and pruned down to make them decent; and then, where is one that has not its vile character, its drunkard, its profane swearer, its profligate, robber or assassin? And as for the *average* plays, they are notorious for shameless indecency, and it is a noticeable fact that the caste is falling lower and lower. It is true, as Dr. Johnson has said: "Its exhibition of woman was never so shameful, and its appeals to lust were never so frequent and vile." And as another has said, "The virtue exemplified in the favorite plays tramples with contempt on all the commandments, especially the *third, fifth,* and *seventh,* upon the clever transgression of which, especially the last named, depend the charms of

THE MOST CAPTIVATING PLAYS.

Take for example the popular play that has had such a run, "Camille." What is it? In the words of one better able to judge than I, "Camille is an elegant, fascinating prostitute,

making her audience sympathize with her through all her sin—yes, pity, love and adore her." Is there a *good report* coming to us from the theatres? Did you ever hear of an immoral man or woman being made moral? Did you ever hear of an unconverted man becoming a Christian? What is the report that comes to our ears regarding the theatre? Here it is: "The stage is outrageously *profane*, unblushingly *indecent* and terribly *immoral*."

> For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Luke 6:43.

As the theatre is a corrupted institution, therefore you need not look for good fruit, or *good report* coming from it.

The theatre has incurred the disapproval, yes, the condemnation of the good and the wise of all ages. At its first appearance 500 years before Christ, it received the censure of the virtuous—Jew, Pagan, and Christian spoke against it.

Rollin affirms the theatre to have been the chief cause of the decadence of Greece. The Emperor of Rome, Augustus, was urged by Ovid to suppress it for the sake of national safety. The early Christians in avowing their loyalty to the Cæsars, pledged themselves as ready to appear in their service in any place but the *heathen temples* and the *theatres*.

If there was danger when the theatres were carried on in a simple way, what must be their influence now when facilities to make wickedness attractive are multiplied tenfold!

After *thinking* on the effects of the bad company found in and about the theatre, we can surely say with David,

> 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*. Psa. 1:1.

2nd. The theater weakens our moral and spiritual life.

One of the avenues through which sin enters the soul, is the eye.

> For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the *lust of the eyes*, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 1 John 2:16.

Through the lusting of the eyes, men and women have lost the priceless jewel, modesty.

The people of our so-called "best society," and Christian people, many that have been looked upon as active workers, sit now and gaze upon scenes in our theatres, *without a blush*, that twenty-five years ago would not have been countenanced. When the Black Crook was first given to the public, only men attended it; but now many who call themselves ladies, attend, and blush no more than the men.

Yes! the moral and spiritual life of many a Christian has been weakened by the eyes gazing upon the scenes of the theatre.

> And if thine eye *offend* thee, *pluck* it out and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire. Matt. 18:9.

If we do not pluck out an offending eye, the least we can do is to *keep away* from the places where, through the use of our eyes, our souls suffer.

Read David's resolution. He could well make this after having fallen, through looking upon a nude woman.

> I will set no wicked thing before my eye. Psa. 10:3.

The Christian, through attendance upon the play house, creates a relish for worldly things, and so spiritual things become distasteful.

> No man also having drunk *old* wine, straightway desireth the *new*, for he saith *the old is better*. Luke 5:39.

Wine in Scripture is typical of *joy*. Old wine of the joy or pleasure of the old or carnal nature. New wine of the joy or pleasure of the new nature. This verse says after we have been satisfying the old natures we will not straightway desire the new. How true this is, that after we have been attending the theatre, we are not very anxious to go to the prayer meeting.

3d. Attendance upon the theatre causes the Christian to *set a bad example*; and how little we realize the destructive power of this. How many of our young people are

LED TO STUMBLE AND FALL

over the inconsistent example of an older Christian. Are you, my reader, a professed follower of Christ, and yet one that frequents the theatre? I fancy I hear some one say, "I am a Christian, and agree with you in regard to the evil effects of an average theatre. I never attend them, but occasionally I go to hear a first-class play, when some actor like Booth, Irving, or McCullough, comes along, and I can not see any harm in going to a play given by such a man. In fact, I go away feeling determined to make more of myself." Just so, the genius of the man moves you and stimulates you along some line of thought, but you are not moved any more than you have been by some lecturer or preacher. The actor, if he had stood upon the platform, without the trappings of the stage, would have electrified you in the same way.

> There is a way which *seemeth right* unto a man, but the *end thereof* are the *ways of death*. Prov. 14:12.
>
> Woe unto them that *call evil good*, . . . that put *darkness for light*, . . . that put bitter for sweet. Isa. 5:20.
>
> Woe unto them that are wise *in their own eyes*, and prudent *in their own sight*. Prov. 5:20-21.

The point is here my friend. You *discriminate* carefully and go *only* to what you call a moral show, but you forget that in this you are countenancing, and helping to support, an institution, that tears down the moral and spiritual welfare of our country a thousand times faster than the church can build it up; and you are also setting the *example of theatre-going* to some who *can not* and *will not* discriminate as you do.

4th. Last I wish to say that your attendance upon the theatre, not only leads you into bad company, hurts your moral and spiritual life, and sets a bad example, but it

HURTS YOUR INFLUENCE.

To illustrate: Some time ago a gentleman teaching a large class of young men in a Chicago Sunday school, desired to attend a theatre for the purpose of seeing a celebrated actor. He was not a theatre-goer, and thought that no harm would come from it.

He had no sooner taken his seat, however, than he saw in the opposite gallery some of the members of his class. They also saw him and began commenting on the fact that their teacher was at the theatre. They thought it inconsistent in him, lost their interest in the class, and he lost his influence over the young men. That teacher tied his hands by this *one act*, so that he could not speak out against the gross sins of the theatre. We know that there are many other things a Christian may do that will as surely tie his hands, but two wrongs will not make a right. If going *occasionally* to a theatre may cause some one to stumble or fall, I pray you *give it up for Christ's sake.*

The Effects of the Theatre.

Every popular amusement which bids for the support of God's people must submit to this test,—Wherever a Christian cannot take Christ and a clean conscience with him, he has no right to go.

The theatre, in these days, asks for the suffrage and support of church members. But its advocates always present to us, in argument, an *ideal play-house*, whose actors are virtuous people, whose dramas conform to Christian morality, and which rigidly excludes every kind of sensual temptation. Such a puritanic theatre would be entitled, at least, to respectful treatment from the Church, But every person of common sense knows that *the actual average theatre* is no more like this ideal play-house than the average Pope is like St. Peter, or the average politician like Abraham Lincoln. A puritanic theatre would become bankrupt in a twelve-month. The great mass of those who frequent the play-house go there for strong passionate excitements. They go for the very object which makes it dangerous to a servant of Jesus Christ. I do not affirm that every popular play is immoral, and every attendant is on a scent for sensualities. But the theatre is a concrete institution, it must be judged in the gross, and to a tremendous extent it is only a gilded nastiness. It unsexes womanhood by putting her publicly in male attire—too often in almost no attire at all.—*Rev. Theo. Cuyler, D.D.*

Chapter Three.

Card Playing

HEAR YE THE WORD OF THE LORD.

And he that *sent* me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone; for I *do always those things that please him.*—*John 8:29.*

Card Playing.

THE question is often asked, "Is it right to play cards?" and the cards referred to are those with clubs, spades, etc., on their face. We believe as a Christian that it is wrong. It would be difficult to make an argument against them *per se*, and to many it seems hard to denounce the Euchre deck and not the cards used in the games called "Authors" and "Logomachy;" but the discrimination between them must be, as with the dance, on account of their

PECULIAR FASCINATION,

and liability to abuse, either in gambling or by a waste of time.

First, we would observe that card playing is a *questionable* amusement. After such testimonials as "Cards are the *tools* of the gambler," and "the handling of cards is a *prelude* to gambling," and in face of the fact that many will never be able to see a Christian playing cards without feeling that he is inconsittent, and classing him with the worldly-minded, we are compelled to say, that, *at least*, card playing is

A QUESTIONABLE AMUSEMENT.

Rev. Theo. L. Cuyler tells us, "An eminent clergyman of New York once said in a published discourse, that on coming into the parlor of a prominent and benevolent Christian gentleman, on a certain evening, he found him sitting at a whist-table with his family. He was surprised, but did not feel like censuring so good a man, who was supposed to be acting conscientiously. The minister did not tell the whole story. He failed to tell us that the sons

of that whist-playing Christian *did not turn out well.* Many a well-meaning parent has given "an inch" to temptations, and his children have been emboldened to "take the ell."

> And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always *those things that please him.* John 8:29.
> For I have *given you an example* that ye should do as I have done unto you. John 13:15.

Jesus says that He did *always* those things that *pleased the Father.* In this He surely has *left us an example.* Shall we not endeavor to follow it?

If Christ did *always* that which pleased the Father, He surely never did anything that was *questionable* or that had even an *appearance* of evil in it. Every honest Christian must admit that there is an *appearance* of evil in card playing.

Let us heed the exhortation of the Spirit,

> Abstain from all *appearance* of evil. I Thess. 5:22.

By so doing we shall please tho Father.

Second, Card playing is a *dangerous* amusement.

Card playing for pastime or as an innocent amusement, soon becomes a passion; and when once fixed, a man will forego home, family, business and pleasure, and suffer the loss of all for the

EXCITING SCENES OF THE CARD TABLE.

That accomplished writer, the late Dr. Holland of Springfield, Mass., said: "I have all my days had a card-playing community open to my observation, and I am yet unable to believe that that which is the universal resort of the starved soul and intellect, which has never in any way linked to itself tender, elevating, or beautiful associations, the tendency of which is to unduly absorb the attention from more

weighty matters, can *recommend itself* to the favor of Christ's disciples. The presence of culture and genius embellish, but

CAN NEVER DIGNIFY IT.

"I have this moment," said Dr. Holland, "ringing in my ears the dying injunction of my father's early friend, 'Keep your son from cards. Over them I have murdered time and lost heaven.'" 'Fathers and mothers keep your sons from cards in the home circle. What must a good angel think of a mother at the prayer meeting asking prayer for the conversion of her son whom she allows to remain at home playing cards for pastime? But some one says, I would rather my son would learn to play cards at home than go away into bad company and learn. It will be better if he does not learn at all. If he learns to play at home, it will often be a temptation for him to play when thrown among strangers whose influence will be anything but good for him.

If your son becomes an expert in the handling of cards at home, there will be a great temptation for him to go outside and gamble.

The single step from playing for sport to playing for money has been very greatly shortened by the

PROGRESSIVE EUCHRE PARTIES.

These parties in many cases are nothing less than gambling parties, because the "favors" used have failed to stimulate the game sufficiently, so that the quarters, halves and dollars are now put up, and it is true, that in a *progressive* way, many of our young men are becoming gamblers.

Many a parent has taught his son to play cards; that son has become a gambler; and when expostulated with by the parent, the son has said, "Father, mother, you taught me to

play cards, my first lesson in gambling I received at your hands."

Imagine the grief taking possession of a mother's heart, as she hears this

TESTIMONY FROM HER SON.

For the good you *can*, or desire *to do* for your son, if he will play cards, he better learn elsewhere than *from you* at home. "A game that is dangerous *anywhere* is *not safe at home.*"

A teacher was pleading with his pupils against gambling, when one of them asked, "Do you play cards?" He admitted he did. It was useless for him to urge that he never played for money. In his scholars' eyes cards and gambling were inseparably connected. He saw that he had lost his influence with them, and he felt it deeply. When he went home he threw his pack of cards into the fire and has never played since.

> All things are lawful for me, but all things *are not expedient*: all things are lawful for me, but all things *edify not*. 1 Cor. 10:23.

While there was no law against the Sunday school teacher referred to, playing cards, he saw that it was *not expedient*, and caused the boys in his class to *stumble*, instead of being *edified*.

> Do all things without murmurings and disputings; *that ye may be blameless* . . . . in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom *shine ye* as lights in the world. Phil. 2:15. (See marginal reading.
> Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or *whatsoever* ye do, *do all to the glory of God*. 1 Cor. 10:31.

Can a Christian play cards with any degree of assurance, or certainty that he is going to glorify God by so doing, when the amusement is *questionable*, *dangerous*, and inseparably associated with all that is evil?

This leads me to say further that card-play-

ing is a *destructive* amusement. How many a Christian has lost his interest in spiritual things by falling in with a card-playing circle. Our progressive euchre parties have choked the growth of the seed of truth in many a Christian's soul. We are told in Luke 8:14, that the *thorns* springing up with the seed sown by the sower, represent the cares, riches, and

PLEASURES OF THIS WORLD.

How the thorn of card-playing has choked out the truth and hindered the growth of many. You seldom find our card-playing Christians interested in working for the souls of others. They may in some cases keep up a religious life, attend prayer meetings and services on the Lord's day. They may go so far as to teach in the Sunday school, but the one that does this will generally be found among those who are spoken of as. "lovers of pleasure *more* than lovers of God. Having *a form of godliness* but denying the power thereof." 1 Tim. 3:4,5.

More. The cards have not only done destructive work for the Christian, but they have done a far more destructive work for many of our young men, *morally*.

Take the testimonies of those in our penitentiaries, and almost to a man they will testify that card-playing threw them into bad company, led them into sin, and was one of the causes of their downfall. A prisoner in a jail in Michigan wrote a letter published in the *Temperance Banner* in which he gives a motto for our young men beginning thus: "Let cards and liquor alone and you will never be behind the grates."

In a railroad train sat four men playing cards. One was a Judge and two of the others were lawyers. Near them sat a poor mother; a

widow in black. The sight of the men at their game made her nervous. She kept quiet as long as she could, but finally rising, came to them, and addressing the Judge, asked, "Do you know me?" "No, Madam, I do not," said he. "Well," said the mother, "You sentenced my son to States Prison for life." Turning to one of the lawyers she said, "And you, sir, plead against him. He was all I had. He worked hard on the farm, was a good boy, and took care of me until he began to play cards, when he took to gambling and was lost." How many a mother can give just such a tale of destruction brought to her boy through cards.

How can Christians encourage the game when these results are constantly seen. There is a large number of our Christian people who will not take a decided stand against this amusement which is dragging so many down, and by this attitude they are wounding their brethren, and in this, are sinning against their Lord and Master.

> But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their conscience, *ye sin against Christ* 1 Cor. 8:12.

In your game you "cut your cards." Cut them, my friend, *forever*. Save yourself and others.

The Lawfulness of Cards.

In regard to the lawfulness of certain pursuits, pleasures and amusements, it is impossible to lay down any fixed and general rule, but we may confidentially say that whatever is found to unfit you for religious duties, or to interfere with the performance of them, whatever dissipates your mind or cools the fervor of your devotions, whatever indisposes you to read your Bibles or to engage in prayer, wherever the thought of a bleeding Savior or a holy God, of the hour of death, or of the day of judgment, falls like a cold shadow on your enjoyment, the pleasures which you cannot thank God for, on which you cannot ask His blessing, whose recollections will haunt a dying bed, and plant sharp thorns in its uneasy pillow; these are not for you. These eschew; in these be not conformed to the world, but transformed by the renewing of your minds—"Touch not, taste not, handle not." Never go where you cannot ask God to go with you; never be found where you would not like death to find you; never indulge in any pleasure which will not bear the morning's reflection. Keep yourselves unspotted from the world; not from its spots only, but even from its suspicions.—*Dr. Guthrie.*

Chapter Four.

The Use of Tobacco

HEAR YE THE WORD OF THE LORD.

What! know ye not that your body is *the temple of the Holy Ghost* which is in you, which ye have of God, and *ye are not your own?* For ye are *bought with a price;* therefore glorify God *in your body,* and in your spirit, which are God's.
—*First Corinthians 6:19, 20.*

The Use of Tobacco,

"WHAT is the chief end of man," is one of the important questions in the old Westminster Catechism; and the answer which immediately follows the question, is, "To glorify God."

It truly ought to be the desire of every Christian man to glorify the

GOD WHO HAS CREATED

him, *redeemed*, and saved him, and given him every good and perfect gift he enjoys.

There are a great many Christian men who are praying daily to be used of God in influencing men unto a holy and consistent life, and thus glorify His name, who are at the same time indulging themselves in a habit which thousands of our wisest, most consistent and respected Christians consider not holy, but harmful,

NOT PURE, BUT POLLUTING;

a habit whieh never brings *grace* with it, but often causes *disgrace* to follow it.

We refer to the tobacco habit. The Word of God we find has been given us. not only for doctrine and instruction, but also for *reproof* and *correction*.

> All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for *reproof*, for *correction*, for instruction in righteousness. 2 Tim. 3:16.

Now we believe there are many Christian men using tobacco. who, if they were to be brought to look at the matter from a Scriptural standpoint, would find themselves being *reproved* and *corrected*; and in order to be *consistent*, would have to give it up.

1st, The use of tobacco encourages *selfishness.* A man who loves his pipe will have his tobacco even though his family be denied the

BARE NECESSITIES OF LIFE.

A man some time ago with only a dollar and seventy-five cents went to market. His *family* was in need of flour and meat. He was in need(?) of tobacco. He bought fifty cents worth of meat and a dollar and twenty-five cents worth of tobacco and returned telling his wife that they must "trust the Lord for flour."

Again, a man who loves his cigar will often insist on smoking it in the house, and the members of his family are compelled to sit and bear his nuisance.

A smoker entered a stage coach; "Ladies," said he, "I hope my cigar will not be offensive." They replied, "Yes, sir, it will be quite offensive." He gave a nod and muttered "'Tis so to some," and smoked on. These may be strong cases, but they show to

WHAT THE HABIT LEADS.

My Christian brother, should you not discourage such selfishness? While you are a *gentleman* yourself, and are thoughtful for others, you are classed with smokers, and are found *setting the example* for some one else who may be led into this selfish habit.

Among the fruits of the spirit in the Christian, we find that there should be *love, long-suffering, goodness* and *temperance.*

> And they that are Christ's have *crucified the flesh* with the affections and lusts. Gal. 5:24.

My brother, if you have not crucified your affection for tobacco, do so, because it is a *selfish habit.*

2nd, The use of tobacco is a *slavish* habit. It has gotten such a hold upon man that many say, "It seems to me I can not live without it."

And some have said. "I would give worlds if I could break from this tyrant." It is a match for alcohol and opium. "Sir," said one to a friend, "Do you use tobacco?" "No, sir," was the reply; "*tobacco uses me.*" He confessed he was a slave to the weed. Ought a Christian to be a slave to a habit that no angel would indulge in? There is a true story told of a preacher in the West who was a good man, but much given to chewing tobacco.

One time he was riding on horseback through the country when there came up a shower. Riding up to a cabin he hitched his horse and knocked at the door. A sharp looking old lady answered the summons. The preacher asked for shelter.

"I don't take in strangers—I don't know you." replied the old lady suspiciously. But you know that the Bible says," said the preacher, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have

ENTERTAINED ANGELS UNAWARES."

"You needn't quote Bible," said the old lady quickly, "no angel would come down from heaven with a quid of tobacco in his mouth, as you have," and shut the door in his face.

A slave to the use of tobacco is more quickly taken for a *slave of the devil,* than a servant of the Lord.

> Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, *his servants ye are* to whom ye obey. Rom. 6:16.

No doubt the devil wants you to use tobacco, because it produces "*filthiness of the flesh,*" and is one of the most filthy habits to which a man can give himself.

The word of God is full of exhortations to holiness, and purity of life and practice.

> But fornication and *all* uncleanness, or covetousness, *let it not be once named* among you, as *becometh saints*; neither *filthiness*. Eph. 5:3,4.

Notice, my brother, it says lay aside *all* filthiness and uncleanness. You cannot give this verse a "*private interpretation,*" and claim that it refers to some licentious practice; *all that pollutes* the body should be put away.

Remember your body is the temple of God.

> What! know ye not that your body is *the temple* of the Holy Ghost which is *in you*, which ye have of God, and ye are *not your own*?
> For ye are *bought with a price*: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. 1 Cor. 6:19,20.

Are you going to *pollute* this house of clay by satisfying the "old nature" which dwells there, when the Lord has

PLACED THERE A "NEW NATURE"

which is holy, to be the master, and when the Holy spirit Himself has taken up His abode *in you*? Have you any right to sin against the temple any more than against the Great Occupant of the temple?

God help us to say with the beloved Paul, as we think on the promises given us in the Word,

> Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us *cleanse ourselves* from ALL *filthiness of the flesh* and the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. 2 Cor. 7:1.

Those who have done this, look back upon their old life with deep regret, and are led to say now with the apostle,

> For we ourselves were sometime *foolish*, *disobedient*, *deceived*, serving divers *lusts* and *pleasures*. Titus 3:3.

Every devotee of the weed will confess that the habit is a "*foolish pleasure.*"

3rd. The tobacco habit is an *expensive* habit, and its cost is an *unnecessary* expense. Many a Christian

GIVES MORE FOR HIS TOBACCO,

than for the cause of his Lord and Master. You are a steward of the Lord, what are you doing with His goods put into your hands to use? It is a sin for you to use *His means* in providing for the cravings of an appetite which is unclean, filthy, yes abominable in the sight of God. In doing this you are *making a provision* for the flesh, and you are exhorted not to do this.

> But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and *make not provision* for the flesh to *fulfil the lusts* thereof Rom. 13:14.

The old nature you are to count as *dead*, because in the acceptance of Christ you accept *His death.*

Paul claimed to have died in Christ. He says, Gal. 2:20, *I have been* crucified with Christ (R. V.). And because all of us who have accepted Christ are dead, *judicially*, in Him, he has exhorted us to reckon, or,

COUNT OURSELVES DEAD

to sin *morally.* Rom. 6:11. Do not spend your Lord's money in feeding an old nature which you are to look upon and treat as dead.

4th. The tobacco habit *hurts the influence* of a Christian worker, and this is the most important reason why the Christian should give it up.

We all see, and know from the best authorities, that fearful results come from the use of tobacco. The body, which, as we have noted, is the temple of God, and which should be kept in the best of trim and working order, is affected. Dr. Shaw has specified

EIGHTY OR MORE DISEASES

traced to this as a cause.

The mind which should be kept clear and strong so that we may render the very best service, is often greatly impaired. It enfeebles memory, weakens judgment, and causes idiocy, insanity, and paralysis of mind. These results are fearful, but the moral and spiritual results are still more terrible. Sometimes we hear a Christian say he is willing to give up *all* for Christ, and yet clings to his tobacco idol. This may be the most self-sacrificing act of your life, my brother, and as some one has said, "the criterion to judge whether or not you follow Christ in the crucifixion." Give up your tobacco as an example to others. The young men see you smoke, or chew, and you confirm them in a habit which may

BLIGHT THEIR WHOLE LIFE.

The professors of the Ann Arbor University, who have had experience with thousands of young men, regard the use of tobacco as having a worse effect than the use of liquor, affirming that, "more young men break down in body and mind, and finally go astray as a result of smoking than of drinking, while the former often leads to the latter." Tobacco has stood in the way of the conversion of many a boy and man. Says a college officer, "When anxious for salvation, my cigars stood in my way and delayed my submission to God." How can you encourage this habit by setting the example, when men by it are hindered in saving their souls?

Hear what Paul said in regard to a questionable matter in his day, viz., the eating of certain meats:

> Wherefore, 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. 8:13.

If the apostle was willing to *give up* anything, or *do* anything for the sake of souls, (and the

8th chapter of 1st Corinthians, especially from the 18th to the 23rd verse shows he was) surely, where we in this age see so many stumbling and being offended at our using tobacco, we ought to give it up. In my work I occasionally meet a minister of the Gospel who uses the weed. Shall I tell you of the

CRITICISMS I HAVE HEARD

made concerning his using it? No, I will not, they are too sad to repeat; but I have learned from those who have worked with such, and are competent to judge, that these men perfectly neutralize their work and checkmate themselves in their efforts to meet the great end for which they profess to be living, and all because they *satisfy the cravings* of an appetite of the flesh. How perfectly incompatible with one whose life work is to preach self-denial, holiness and sacrifice!

A leading worker in the State of Illinois, who was once a devotee of the cigar, told me he was one day going along the street, when he saw coming toward him, smoking a cigar, one of the little boys of the Sunday school of which he was the Superintendent. He thought to himself"I must correct the little fellow" He walked along, puffing at his cigar, until he reached the boy, and then holding his cigar behind him he delivered his rebuke, gave his advice, and passed on. Something seemed to say to him, are you not inconsistent to reprove this boy for smoking and yet practice the habit yourself? He an, answered the still small voice, "Yes, and I will never be guilty of the same again," and away went the cigar into the street, and he has never smoked since. Be consistent my brother, do not *tie your hands* so that you *can not* reprove sin.

Shall We Smoke?

I have a firm conviction from medical opinions I have read, and from falls I have observed, that the habit of smoking is very injurious to the bodily health. But this part of the question I leave to scientific men.

My personal experience of smoking began and ended on the same day. When eight years old I smoked a piece of cane which made me sick and cured me effectually. I object to smoking because—

1. It is useless and often a sinful waste of money.

2. It is a dirty habit, polluting the air which others have to breathe, and infecting unpleasantly the raiment and furniture.

3. It often makes votaries selfish, insisting on gratifying the propensity with little regard for the comfort of others.

4. It often excites the appetite for strong drink. Smoking and drinking are sometimes accidental, but far more frequently natural, companions.

5. It is an enslaving habit. It increases its demands. It imperatively insists on gratification Many smokers cannot do without their cigar or pipe, and will resort to various expedients, and put themselves and others to great inconvenience in order to secure their usual luxury. I object to anything which thus enslaves, and which is not absolutely a necessity of life.—*Rev. Newman Hall, D. D.*

Chapter Five.

Social Gossip

HEAR YE THE WORD OF THE LORD.

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil; for *of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.—Luke 6:45.*

Social Gossip.

IS IT FOR CHRISTIANS?

TO a great extent Christian character is measured by one's conversation. It is said that if you want to know what is *in* man's heart. "all you need to do is to observe what he talks about." The heart has been compared to an *engine* that drives the blood to every part of the body. The heart, which represents the will and affection of man, is that which sends out from our lives an influence for *good* or for *bad.*

> A good man out of the *good* treasure of his heart bringeth forth *that which is good;* and an evil man out of the *evil* treasure of his heart bringeth forth that *which is evil:* for of the *abundanee* of the heart his mouth speaketh. Luke 6:45.

If our hearts are *full of good* desires, we shall send out a *good influence*; but if filled with *bad desires,* there will go out a *bad influence.*

> *Death* (or the greatest evil) and *life* (or the greatest good) are in the *power of the tongue.* Prov. 18:21.
>
> Behold we put bits in the horses mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.
>
> Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.
>
> Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. For every kind of beasts. and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind.
>
> But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Jas. 3:3-8.

How many fires have been started, how many wars begun, through a little word spoken by this little member!

> *Keep thy heart* with all diligence; for *out of it* are the issues of life. Prov. 4:23.

Let us heed these words of exhortation given us by the wise man, and resolve with David to use a *bridle* for the tongue as we do for the horse, that we may control it.

> I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue! I will *keep my mouth with a bridle*, while the wicked are before me. Psa. 39:1. Whoso keepeth his *mouth* and his *tongue*, keepeth his soul *from* troubles. Prov. 21:23.

How true this is! a soul is kept from trouble by the mouth and tongue being kept from saying some little thing; because it is generally a *little word thoughtlessly spoken* that kindles some fire of hatred, or starts some tale of scandal. One has said that "It is hard telling what a trifle means. Everything in nature seems to be closely connected with everything else. An undue preponderance of one force

SETS IN MOTION ALL OTHER FORCES.

The eddying of a few particles of air, may give rise to a tornado, a step may start an avalanche, a particle of dust may stop a chronometer; a prick of a pin may destroy a balloon; a pin, bolt, or screw out of place may stop a powerful engine."

So, a little word thoughtlessly spoken, may blast the hopes and prospects of a whole family for life.

It is said that the heights and recesses of Mount Taurus are infested with eagles, who love to feed upon the cranes dwelling below. The cranes when flying, are prone to make a crackling sound, which is

A SIGNAL OF THEIR APPROACH.

and that arouses the eagles who spring upon them. The older and more experienced cranes, sensible of this besetting weakness or fault, and the peril to which it exposes them, take care to provide themselves, when venturing upon the wing, with a stone large enough to fill the cavity of their mouths. They are thus prevented from making the sound that announces their approach, and by so doing escape danger. Would it not be well for us Christians to take in our hearts that which will prevent us from making a noise with our mouths at the wrong time? What better can we hide in our hearts for this purpose than the word of God?

> Thy *Word* have I *hid in mine heart*, that I might not sin against thee. Psa. 119:11.

So did David, and so may we all *do*.

How should the Christian talk?

This is a very important question, and perhaps we can help to answer it by noting how he *should not talk*.

1st. A Christian's conversation should *not be corrupt*.

> Let no *corrupt* communication proceed out of your mouth. Eph. 4:29.

Language unfit for an unbeliever is sometimes heard falling from the lips of those who bear the name of Christ; language used that savors more of the bottomless pit than the kingdom of heaven. Such ought to pray the prayer of David.

> Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: *Keep the door of my lips*. Psa. 141:3.

2nd. A Christian's conversation should *not be foolish*.

> Neither filthiness, nor *foolish talking*, nor jesting, which are not convenient. Eph. 5:4.

How much there is said by Christians, that had better not be said because of its foolishness. Children are sometimes corrected for their talking, especially when they talk a good deal and *say nothing*, and they have quoted to them the old adage, "Children should be

SEEN AND NOT HEARD.

The Apostle John in his epistles addresses Christians as "children." and some may well be termed such, judging from their conversation. The Apostle Paul says

> When I was a child, I spake as a child, ... but when I became a man I put away childish things. 1 Cor. 13:11.

We think many of our Christians ought to let their manhood and womanhood be seen by their conversation, remembering that God is going to bring us into judgement for this *idle, senseless*, and foolish talking.

> But I say unto you, that *every idle word* that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. Matt. 12:36.

I tell you my friends, some of us will have a mighty long string of *idle* words to account for.

3rd. A Christian in conversation should *speak evil of no man.*

> To *speak evil of no man*, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. Tit. 3:2.

It seems as if some people loved to prey upon the character and feelings of others. As Dr. Talmage says, "They revel in the details of a man's ruin." They say "I told you so." They rush into some store and say, "Have you heard the news? just as I expected, our neighbor has gone all to pieces." Good for him. That professed Christian woman having heard of the

WRONG DOING OF SOME SISTER

in the church, instead of hiding the sin with a mantle of charity, peddles it along the street. She says, "Would you have thought it? I always said there was something wrong about her. I would not speak to her if I saw her on the street. Is it not horrible?" How often, friends, this is what we hear in our stores, on the street, and in our homes, and when we come to inquire into the matter, to get into the facts in the case, it begins in about this way. "Why, our hired man says he saw a friend of his, whose brother's wife's sister overheard something the other evening when passing some men on the street, and,

I GUESS IT MUST BE SO."

Some one has said, "Every one has a garden called Conversation." If the seeds of unkind thought, which blossom into weeds of unchristrian remark, are kept out, the garden will become beautiful; but if allowed to grow they will soon destroy its beauty. One of the worst of weeds to be found in this garden is the weed of "Gossip." We all know the danger of catching cold, if, when in a heated condition, we sit in a cold draught. How many Christians when thoroughly warmed, through listening to a stirring sermon, go and sit down in a cold draught of worldly conversation, and catch a cold that

ENDS IN A SPIRITUAL DECLINE.

We ought to be as careful of our spiritual health, as of our physical. We have noticed that the Christian's conversation should not be *corrupt*, *foolish*, or *idle*, and that he *should not speak evil* of any one.

Let us now note, from the Word, in conclusion, how the Christian should talk.

1st. The Christian's conversation should be *good.*

> Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a *good conversation* his works with meekness of wisdom. James 3:13.

"Kind words," says Pascal, are "easily and quickly spoken; they neither burn nor blast. Though they do not cost much, they accomplish much." There is such a rush of other words, neither vain, idle, hasty, spiteful, silly, empty, boisterous, nor warlike, that it seems desirable to give *good conversation* a chance.

> Let every man be swift to hear, *slow to speak* slow to wrath. Jas. 1;19.

Many times, if we were only a little *slower to speak*, we are sure good words instead of wrathful ones would come from our lips.

2nd. The Christian's conversation should be *exemplary.*

> But be thou an *example* of the believers, in *word*, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. 1 Tim. 4:12.

If we Christians realized more the fact, that we are the "*world's Bible;*" that men listen to us, and watch us more than they read God's Word, we should be more careful how we talk.

3rd. The Christian should *talk about the things of the Kingdom.*

Of the Lord Jesus it is written that, this was largely his subject for conversation.

> To whom (the disciples) he shewed himself after his passion . . . being seen of them forty days, and *speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.* Acts 1:3.

If our mind is set on things above, where Christ is, our speech will soon show it. How many professed Christians will welcome any theme for conversation but that of the *Chris-*

tian life, and, if in a circle, sacred things are spoken of, the conversation is hushed, and things become exceedingly awkward. Why is it? Because to talk about it, *we must live it*; and many failing to live as they should, fear their conversation will not harmonize with their lives. Their hearts are *wholly* fixed on things on the earth, and so they have no *relish* for heavenly subjects.

4th. The Christian's conversation should be *with grace.*

> Let your speech be always *with grace,* seasoned with salt, that ye may know how to answer every man. Col. 4:6.

Matthew Henry has said, "Our conversation need not *always be about grace,* but it should always be WITH grace."

Let us pray David's praver: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. Psa. 19:14.

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A notable example has just been shown among the high places of this nation, of the danger of speaking careless words.

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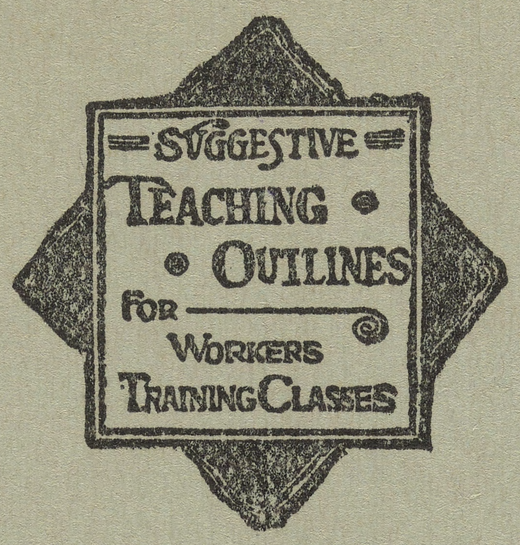
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