

CONTEMPORARY CHURCH OPINION.

The *Churchman*, N. Y., says:—

The English Wesleyan Methodists are daily bearing testimony to the inability of Wesleyanism to do the work for which in the somnolent days of Anglican High-and-Dryism and Low-and-Slowism, it was so eminently fitted to accomplish; namely, the evangelization of the masses by ministers drawn from the classes. At the annual conference in London, it was openly confessed that, so far as Methodism is concerned, the west end of the metropolis with Charing Cross as its centre, is a wilderness, and that if Methodists want to gather in the great masses of the people, they must go to West London, than which, said one lay speaker, "no part of England is so poorly represented Methodistically." Another speaker opposed the motion, on the ground that, where a good work for souls is already being done, Methodists have no right to intervene. This, he admitted, is the case in the district in which they propose to begin aggressive work, as no part of London is better supplied by mission agencies, chiefly belonging to the Church of England. Though this was virtually acknowledged by the conference to be truth—the statement not meeting with even the faintest whisper of denial on the part of the members—the motion to work against the Church was carried by a large majority. The true inwardness of the motif, which induced the conference thus to defy all the precepts of John Wesley, appeared in the speech of one of the most influential non-misterial delegates to the assembly, who openly stated his belief that the establishment of such a missionary centre at Charing Cross would stimulate, not the spirit of evangelizing, but that of Methodism; would bless, not men's souls, but the "whole of Methodism in London." But surely that is to put the Methodist cause first, and that of Christ second; to preach, not Jesus Christ and Him crucified, but John Wesley and the good of Methodism. If such are the sentiments that animate the modern descendants of two such ardent upholders of the preaching of the gospel—not of the pushing forward of a sect—as John and Charles Wesley, it is not to be wondered at, that—as Mr. Hugh Price Hughes, one of their ministers, complained during the sitting of the conference—there is "nothing which the Methodists need so much at present as a morale, a robust confidence in the future of Methodism. The revived life of the Church of England, and the prodigious activity of the Salvation Army, have awakened in the hearts of multitudes of our young people a half-formed, scarcely admitted suspicion that Methodism is played-out, is incapable of adaptation to the necessities of a stirring, democratic age. There has been such an extravagant worship of the 'old lines,' and such a tenacious attachment to deep ruts, that the younger generation is beginning to be tempted to look elsewhere for the opportunities of novel and daring service which young blood craves."

Methodism, therefore, will for the future turn itself to the "upper tendom" of London, to which it undoubtedly owes something, seeing that its first recruits were drawn from its ranks. But, as it has wilfully departed from the principles laid down by its founder, and widened instead of striving to close the breach which separates it from the Church, its influence with the aristocratic and educated classes in the religious world has declined, as much as that of the former has increased, not only among those who dwell in kings' palaces and college halls, but also among the poor, the low-born, and the ignorant.

The *Anglican Church Chronicle*, (Honolulu), says:—

We have no hesitation in asserting our belief that the scanty and insufficient religious teaching of the present day has been productive of many of the social disorders and miseries which

prevail where secular education is rampant. Would the mischievous "larrikin" exist in Australia if he were taught to "hunger and thirst after righteousness?" Would the cruel "hoodlum" exist in San Francisco if he were taught to love, and, that "love worketh no ill to his neighbor?"

We utter with all the force of our nature that true religion, and we mean Christianity, is the one and only means for our salvation, that is our happiness in this world and hereafter. All other joys and pleasures derived from other sources are but fleeting and transitory, often leaving in their wake misery and suffering. We would have every teacher imbued with the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount, and that he should make it the most important part of his daily work to instil the precepts thereof in his pupils, not of compulsion, but by reason of conscience.

The *Church Messenger*, (Raleigh, N. C.) says:

Many wealthy parishioners are like the gold mines of California before the introduction of railroads. They are rich but inaccessible. What we need is a vigorous system of some sort which shall develop them and bring their hidden treasures into the market of good works done unto Him who is the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

THE CLERGYMAN IN SOCIETY.

As to drawing the proper line, difficult as it is to do it on paper, there is no difficulty in practice. Let but a clergyman be faithful in ministration, diligent in visitation, careful in adding to the treasures of his heart, and he will have a clear view of the bonds to which his time and the solemnity of his character confine him; he will be sober and vigilant, so as at every moment to be alive to the inconsistency of the man of the congregation with the man of company—of the man of visitation with the man of visits. Having his offices of ministry continually in prospect, he will continually be checked in the beginning of temptation by a sense of propriety, which, indeed, will become so habitual, as to forestall the temptations itself. He will feel most acutely that he could not take the Lord's Word into his mouth, and preach against the vanity of a world to which he himself was notoriously clinging with all his might; that he cannot convict of sin if he does not avoid sin, nor have the heart and knowledge to do so if he has never convicted himself; that he cannot show an erect head of conscious faithfulness in the pulpit when he has been bowing it all through the week to the requisitions of the service of the society of the world. Less need be said concerning the conduct of the clergyman in society, now that we have supposed him there professedly in that capacity; he will never forget what and where he is; as a guest at table, he will remember that he is a minister of God's holy Word and sacraments, an instructor of the living, a consoler of the dying; and thus he will never be lost sight of in the mere minister to man's amusement; even the stranger will discover his office, not by his black cloths, nor yet by unseasonable intrusion of subjects too solemn for the occasion; but by that indescribable propriety, that modest dignity, that gentleness and serenity which is derived from the habitual exercise of his profession; nor will his cheerfulness disguise his character, or offend when that has been discovered; for, arising as it does out of the joyfulness of communion with God, out of the assurance of the fulfilment of most glorious promises, it can never betray him into levity. Such a character does indeed sanctify society: all that he says tends to useful information, and he often finds occasion to let drop something which, falling as good seed,

may in time yield good fruit. Meanwhile, all are unwilling to wound his ears with an expression which he ought not to hear; every rash sentiment is withheld before it pass the lips, from the inward rebuke of respect; not that his presence imposes any cold uneasy restraint on any company which he is justified in entering, it only infuses a calm, which, being felt as reasonable, is also experienced as agreeable.—Evan's "Bishopric of Souls," ch. xi.

THE MODERN DANCE.

The Rev. Dr. Mangum, in a late number of the *Raleigh Advocate*, gives the following most reasonable objections to the above resort. We wish to help in their circulation:—

My objection to the dance of to-day is not the result of mere prejudice or of regard merely for the teaching of my Church—strong and plain as are these teachings. It is founded on good reasons that ought to strike those who are not in any Church. I object to the modern dance because:

1. It directly fosters deplorable extravagance and pitiful and ridiculous vanity in dress.

2. It successfully tempts to the adoption of costumes that are condemned by the established and recognized standards of modesty and propriety. This no one can deny.

3. It so enthalls its votaries, that they ignore or defy the laws of health, and in wild enthusiasm drink in the exciting pleasure through hours that should be given to rest—aye, often, till the light of a new day pales the lamps of the ball-room.

4. It involves so much of what may be called violence and extravagance in pleasure that, by the law of human nature, it disqualifies its votaries for the pleasant and proper appreciation of the less exciting, and more safe, and really far more valuable blessings that make the staple of a happy life. The ordinary experience in life cannot make the right music in a heart whose chords are tuned to the high spirit of the dance of to-day.

5. It prescribes and enforces such position and contact of the sexes as are not approved by the customs of good society in any other association in or out of the ball-room; such position and contact as, to say the least, are entirely irreconcilable with what the teachers of purity in Christian civilization have pronounced pure and safe, and prudent and comely.

6. It tends unquestionably to kindle and intensify such a spirit as is incompatible with religious enjoyment and identical with that worldly-mindedness that is a distinguishing mark between the state of uprightness and the state of godliness.

7. It has proved itself a natural ally of the vicious habit of drinking,—shall I say for both sexes?

8. It is a pleasure of whose patrons it may be said, as a rule, those who are fondest are fastest, and those who are fastest are fondest.

If any think that the subject does not justify such earnest opposition as I make, let them consider calmly such grounds of opposition as I have mentioned, and then remember what a veritable mania for dancing possesses people of various classes all over the country. At the numerous resorts of health as well as pleasure—seaside, springs, and mountain retreats; at picnics, weddings, birth-day festivals, and other social gatherings; at military, medical, and fraternity meetings; at complimentary assemblages in honor of visitors or high officials; at departures, welcomes, and inaugurations; at the high school for boys and the church seminary for girls: at all these it is often given great prominence, and holds what may be called the place of the ruling pleasure. How frequently does it exclude practically other styles of en-