

but questions of morals, and of Christian life, and practice, ought to live.

Purity of communion was once considered a vital question with the Congregational churches. The influence of our churches in defending this doctrine extended to other communions, which resulted in the line between them and the world being defined more closely; so that it began to appear invidious for Congregationalists to claim as a peculiarity, what others professed to hold in common with ourselves. All the churches *now* have gradually become less careful to distinguish between themselves and the world; many doctrines are modified to make them more palatable, and practices once considered exclusively worldly, are now brought into the church, and sought to be entertained by Christian men and women, and naturalized. This is *broad* churchism, so called, because it seeks to make the way to heaven broader than Christ did, who distinctly taught that it was a "narrow path." Those who keep up a defined line between the world and the church are now termed narrow. The gate our Lord described as leading to life, was *strait*, to correspond with the narrow path. This gate has been a good deal widened to bring in a good many of the *broad* ladies and gentlemen, who do not wish to break with the fashionable world. Many of them will put down handsomely in support of the church; but they claim the right to all the amusements of the world, such as dancing, card playing, theatre going, and other practices claimed by the world as their own. All know these things belong to the world; and the world can practice them without any compromise, and without incurring the least suspicion of being pious.

The world has no objection to meeting the church at a dance, theatre or pedro party, which latter some call gambling-schools for the young, where they learn to handle and love cards; and pass on from euchre, to pedro, and poker. The world says to the church "I am one with you *here*, any way. You meet me here on my own ground." So church members of the broad sort, are loved by the world, and chosen as companions. Our Lord said, "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."

"Oh!" says the Church, "that is altogether too narrow, we have outgrown all such doctrines, no fashionable family, who aspires to be thought anything of, would submit to such bondage. How are young persons to find amusements?" If the minister of a country church remonstrates, he is told what the city churches do. Dr. A—'s church in New York, Dr. B—'s church in Chicago, and one of the best deacons in Detroit, and religious people in Montreal and Toronto, give card parties at their houses, and they say, "We are bound to make it respectable."

Notwithstanding the world and the spiritually minded do not assimilate, and the respect for these practices is confined to the world, and those who join with the world. Ministers are often grieved with these things, but men of means will not be dictated to, and large salaries cannot be made up if the wealthy are offended; besides, if we drive them from our church, some other church will take them in, for some in nearly all the religious communities do these things. Such are the methods by which worldliness in the Church is tolerated to-day. They keep one another up, by pleading, not what is right and scriptural; but what others do; measuring themselves among themselves. Each shielding himself behind some other.

We have only one perfect standard, that is Christ. One departure must not be pointed at to justify another, nor must we be content to wear a blemish, because some good man has worn it. We have heard of a minister who went clear over to the world, and was continually justifying himself by pleading the weakness, foibles, and blemishes of good or great men. He inclined to sports such as shooting, boating, driving a fast horse, skating, curling, dancing, card-playing, smoking, tippling, going to the theatre, and doing worse. He could plead somebody for every worldly amusement. H. W. Beecher for this. Newman Hall for that, Professor Swing for something else. "Righteous Lot" got drunk and did worse. So he stood before the public, covered with the moral blemishes of professedly good men in this, and other generations, as the champion of worldliness in the Church.

We need no such champion. The current is too strong in that direction. Hear the voice of Christ.