

nothing inconsistent with Christianity in these things.

Again, the fact that these men speak of these amusements, not as they are but as they would like them to be, indicates that they engage in them without the consent of the Christian convictions which they have, or in opposition to the witness of their consciences. I have witnessed sometimes the nearest approach to the ideal dance, called a party select, in a private house. At one time I drew the distinction between the home dance and the ball-room dance, and saw no harm in the former, so that what I now say is not from blind prejudice. Having seen and judged impartially of this mild form of dancing, I firmly believe that such things are inconsistent with, and detrimental to, Christianity. A serpent is no less a serpent when coiled up on the rug at your fireside than when in the jungle or dark ravine. A dance is no less a dance, with its attendant evils, in your home than in the heated ball-room.

Many evils and dangers are common to the dance in each place, though in the home they are pleasantly disguised. Dancing at home, as well as anywhere else, increasingly forms the habit of dancing, and creates an appetite for it, so that soon in many cases a dance is hailed with delight wherever it is held, whatever its character. I have known cases in which the home-dance, designed to keep down desire for the amusement in other places, has created and fed it. In all places dancing is attended with physical, moral and spiritual danger. In some kinds of dancing the bodies of the dancers are brought into positions which are unseemly, and as hurtful to the physical health as they are debasing to the mind. It cannot be denied that there is often, if not always, an unhealthy excitement produced in the affections of the mind, and in the passions of the body.

In card-playing, men waste time, engage the mind with trifling things, and bring themselves into the caste of those who worship at many a demon shrine.

Theatre-going, besides involving a senseless waste of valuable time, and a spending of money for that which is not bread, and of labour for that which satisfieth not, demands a mixing with bad company, opens for the soul a gate that leads to the lowest hell in this life and that which is to come, and opens into the soul roads by which all kinds of evil influences are pleasurably received. Some say that it would do good if Christians attended the drama very frequently and in large numbers, for thus the tone of it could be elevated. Such nonsense! It makes one think of what Spurgeon said once about pouring a bottle of lavender-water into a great sewer to improve its aroma. The leprosy of sin and uncleanness has too completely filled the modern theatre to admit of the cleansing of its walls, or the purifying of its atmosphere. The leprous thing must be rooted out, cast down and destroyed. Ten thousand men going into a district where pestilence holds sway will not purify the air, but run into the danger of falling victims themselves. As a matter of fact, professing Christians who attend theatres neither improve themselves nor the theatre. In any compromise between Christians and the world, the world comes out winner in the end. In this matter, *opposition*, not *compromise*, must be our watchword.

As soon as a habit of frequenting the theatre is formed in anyone—I care not how good the motives may be—all relish for the ways, and house, and services of God is lost. Professing Christians cannot call these amusement theirs, without real personal danger.

Besides, they cannot do so without