

as innocent in itself or intrinsically; but also, secondly, whether the measure and manner in which it can practically be used, if used at all, comport with Christian privilege and Christian obligation.

"Now, the point is to get persons who recognize the authority of Christianity and the restraints of religion to do justice to these two questions. Others, who are merely careless and frivolous, must be dealt with in another way. But in order to deal effectually with them, they must be deprived of the practical countenance and support which they receive at present from a good many who are not regarded as careless and frivolous.

"For this precise end, then, we doubt whether much good will be done by pressing men with casuistical arguments about the lawfulness or unlawfulness of particular diversions. Arguments of that kind have their place; they must sometimes be applied, and that decidedly. But it is notorious that they commonly lead into matter exceedingly liable to hair-splitting. What is wanted is the operation of principles that are clear, cogent, and solemnizing. Whatever difference of judgment may occasionally obtain among conscientious people with respect to particular amusements, there are some things which ought to be universally recognized. If truly recognized, they would go a long way to remedy the tendencies which we deplore. There ought to be no question among Christians as to this, that the daily life, however it may be arranged, ought to express the order, the self-restraint, the self-sacrifice of the Christian character. It ought to evince a constant willingness and watchfulness to impose a measure on things, which, if not evil, are yet subordinate, and which, therefore, must not be allowed to prejudice higher interests. Christian life may well admit a cheerfulness of the simplest and most playful character, quite removed from everything stiff and stilted; but it ought to admit nothing that does not comport with the sense of an unseen Saviour's presence. The loins must be girt, and the lamp burning. The life ought to admit nothing that dissipates the mind, and unfits it for turning to service or to worship. It ought to admit nothing that precludes the due collection and composure of the heart, in beginning and ending the day with God. Each Christian has his liberty; to his own Master he stands or falls. But he has no liberty to order any day so that it shall not express his proper character. If he is a Christian, his daily work is to realize and feel his high calling, and to consider with himself, as each day ends, how far that calling has been in view; how far its influence has, by God's grace, been felt, and how far its end attained. And he has no liberty to forget that this is hard for a fallen man, and is only attained in a path of watchfulness and self-restraint. We think it would be well that the minds of Christians were turned to this point of the *regulation of the life*; not so much as to the particular forms the life should assume, but as to the principles that must be carried through if it is to be obediently regulated according to God's will. Men must take this burden on themselves. They must find out for themselves what order of life agrees with honest devotedness to Christ, and must adopt and pursue it at their own responsibility. In addition to the influence of the pulpit, which might do much, the exercise of thought on this subject by private Christians, and the use of private influence along the line indicated, might prove of great use. There are cases in which it is a mistake to accept an issue upon the question, 'Can you show me that there is positive sin in this or that amusement?' The question is, 'If you regulate your own life, and your family's, with an eye to what the Christian calling implies, will that comport or agree practically with, say for instance, such and such a round of gaieties?'"