

## DANCING CONSIDERED IN ITS BEARING ON CHRISTIANS:

HOW FAR IS IT CONSISTENT WITH CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES AND OBLIGATIONS TO ENGAGE IN AND PATRONIZE DANCING?

By some, dancing is regarded as a part of education, and they plead for it as an exercise contributing to health, essential to give children a graceful and easy carriage, and an agreeable amusement for a social party. If *these ends* could not be secured apart from dancing, there would be some weight in the considerations adduced; but facts prove that health, gracefulness, and social amusement may be realised without resorting to a practice, however popular and bewitching, which is attended with both physical and moral evils. It is not the mere *act* of dancing to which we object, but to the circumstances connected with it, its associations and results. Or, to use the words of Mrs. Bakewell, in her "Mother's Practical Guide," "It is the feelings which it excites, the circumstances by which it is surrounded, and the associations to which it leads, that stamp it with odium. Children accustomed to the display of the ball-room, or even of the social dance, become discontented with the quiet, unobtrusive pleasures of home, and have a constant hankering after visits and visitors. But it is not while children are entirely under your control, that the worst effects are to be feared. If you train them up to love the world, with its forms and fashions, and to seek their happiness in worldly amusements; rely upon it, that when they are at an age to choose their own acquaintance and their own recreations, the gay party will have more charms than the fire-side circle, and the fashionable entertainments of the world will be far more attractive than either the house of God, or the retirement of the closet."

To these, *other* objections may be raised, especially in relation to *religious* families. Whatever may be said in its favour, I am bold to say *much more* can be said against it. I am in no sense unfriendly to mirth and cheerfulness, and the various socialities of life, provided they accord with the high principles of christian faith and hope. But I must protest against an alleged accomplishment which generally gives a distaste for better things; which calls into operation feelings of vanity and pride; which leads many to court admiration, notwithstanding the dangerous issues too often apparent; which consumes uselessly so much precious time; which is often detrimental to health and comfort; which interferes with the sacredness of domestic worship, and in most cases leads to its abandonment; which usually terminates at a very late hour, and deranges ordinary order and duty; which wounds many consciences; grieves God's Spirit; discourages ministers and other Christian labourers; disturbs the peace and welfare of churches; and interferes with the growth and prosperity of vital piety.

To those whose God is the world, and who are not influenced by a regard to the will and honour of Christ, such a recreation may appear appropriate; but we view it as utterly inconsistent with the proprieties and the seriousness of the Christian life. To us it appears irreconcilable with the gravity and purity of the *ministerial* character, and as inconsistent for *church-members*, whether office-bearers or not: especially is this the case in what is called "*promiscuous dancing*."

It has been asked by an Inquirer, "If it is right for young Christians to dance, is it wrong for young ministers to do it? If a minister approves of his young communicants spending their time thus, why should he not have