

SERMON.

——— “A time to dance.”—*Eccles.* iii. 4.

Satan could quote Scripture when it suited him, and ungodly men, without any desire of doing homage to the Divine Oracles, will do the same, when they can bring a detached text to countenance their errors or evil practices. Hence the careless worldling has been found to justify his unconcern about his spiritual and eternal interests by the words of Solomon, “Be not righteous over-much.” The avaricious man has found a pretext for hoarding up his wealth, and shutting his hand against the claims of benevolence, in the declaration of Paul, “If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.” And the votaries of pleasure, who would be the last to allow the Word of God to interfere with their pursuits and enjoyments, are yet sometimes found vindicating their midnight revels by these words of our text, “There is a time to dance.” Now it might be said to such persons, “It is true that there is; as the inspired Oracles declare, a time to dance; but does it follow that the dancing which you plead for and practise—your balls and routs—constitute the dancing which Solomon speaks of? Do his words even imply that dancing is a duty?” He tells us also that there is “a time to pluck up that which is planted”—“a time to kill”—“a time to break down.” But who would find in these statements a warrant for destroying his neighbour's orchard, or house, and taking his life? But waiving for the time any thing like a critical examination of the text, let us attend for a little to the nature of the amusement of dancing, as it is called, according as we see it practised around us.

Dancing then, as we all know, is the skipping and leaping in measured time, and that to the strains of music. It is no solitary