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All communications for the Editorial, News of Churches, and Correspondence Columns should be addressed to the Managing Editor, Box 2648, P.O. Toronto.

Pastors and church officers are particularly requested to forward items for "News of the Churches" column.

AMUSEMENTS.

WE print in another column an article by an esteemed contributor on the vexed question of amusements. There is so much in it that we can heartily endorse that we are regretful to dissent from any of its propositions and conclusions. We agree that it is not well to be continually saying only "Don't! Don't!" We disbelieve in social negatives as well as in theological, but we think that it is right to say "don't" at times, and if need be to say it emphatically and repeatedly. We agree that it is well to provide other amusements in the place of forbidden ones, but we must doubt if it is the pastor's work in any aspect of his duties; and we dissent entirely from the idea, sanctioned though it be by the precept and example of so great a man as Dr. Vincent, that young people should be forbidden certain things, not only without giving them reasons for such interdiction, but without telling them that there are reasons. We can scarcely conceive of a course that would in the end more certainly defeat the intention, for average humanity when freed from restraint is sure to swing to the opposite of that where it was forcibly held without knowing that there was a good cause. Possibly Dr. Vincent did not mean to assert that opinion so strongly as it appears in the isolated quotation; from a subsequent article of his on the same subject, we should say not.

However, to return to the question of amusements, what is our position and what can be done in the matter? Are the worldly amusements indulged in by Christian professors open to serious objection; if so, what can be done to supplant them? For the present we will confine our remarks to one only of these amusements—dancing; the more so because this, more than any other, perhaps, is allowed and indulged in by some Christian professors. Is it wrong to dance? To reply to this we must ask another question. What is dancing? Literally and simply, a graceful, regular motion, generally to music. That any one would object or find fault if that was all, we do not for a moment suppose. But is that all? Let the reader turn to "A Sensible Lady's Reasons for not Dancing," published in our issue of January 8th. There we have set forth in the calmest, fairest way what dancing really is. Just to note one or two points as they are put: It leads to crowded rooms and late hours—the writer might have added, to heat from the exertion, frequently followed by chill from the night air, which in unnumbered instances has led to consumption and an early grave; again, it leads into very close contact with promiscuous company; it requires and permits freedom with the opposite sex of which any lady may be ashamed, and which is wrong.

Not further to follow the "Sensible Lady," let us look for a moment at this last point only. Is it not a fact that freedoms are allowed in dancing which if attempted at any other time would be indignantly resented? Would any father allow a stranger whom neither himself nor daughter had ever seen before, to enter his house, take a seat by that daughter and indulge in the familiarities which the ball-room licenses? Would he not be speedily shewn the door? "Oh," but it will be said, "we only dance at home or at a friend's house; we should never think of going to a promiscuous ball." Perhaps, not now, but will you never? The descent is easy, the fascination is great. We wonder how many of those who are dancing constantly at private parties decline a more public opportunity when it offers. We would ask, will anyone assert that this is not at any rate the tendency? if so, is there not danger. Let us hear Dr. Vincent, in the article before referred to. He says:

Now many things are dangerous in their tendencies which are not absolutely wrong. I can see, for example, no wrong in allowing my boy to drink sweet cider fresh from the mill; yet if I were to drop a little harmless colouring matter into the cider, put it into a decanter, serve it in dainty wine-glasses at the dinner table, there would be in it such an appearance of evil, I would thereby set such an example and produce such general impressions, as to make me minister to a love for fashionable wine-drinking in my boy. Therefore, while to serve sweet cider in this way would have nothing "wicked" in it, I should be running great risk in thus forming the taste of my child.

He then proceeds to consider the tendency of various worldly amusements, and thus speaks of dancing:

As for the dance, the majority of Christian ministers and physicians agree that the tendencies of the dance are bad. One of the most terrible and scathing criticisms upon the dance of modern society which has appeared, was written by a man of the world from a point entirely outside of the Church. If it were possible to draw the line between the dance and the family, at the neighbour's, in the great parlours of a great mansion, in the elegant hall, or at the public watering-places, it might be an open question. But in view of all the possible tendencies, in view of the general convictions of evangelical Christians, in view of the unquestioned fact that the fervent, spiritually-minded leaders of the Church, evangelists and pastors, are opposed to the indulgence, I think it wise for me as an individual Christian, desiring to do the best work for my children, to enter kindly, but firmly, by principle and example, my protest against these worldly amusements.

There is one thought which should ever influence Christian young men and maidens—the possible danger to others. Doubtless thousands emerge from the ball-room unsullied, uncontaminated by its surroundings. All do not; they learn lessons, acquire tastes and form connections which is a shadow of darkness upon their lives. Who dare, with this fact before them, set the example of going "into temptation?"

We have but half accomplished the task to which we set ourselves, but this article is already too long, and we must conclude with another extract from Dr. Vincent which we especially commend to Christian fathers and mothers:

Let us not dogmatize, but let us leave behind us plain precept, consistent example, and fervent remonstrance, over which our children must climb with difficulty before yielding themselves to the indulgence, dissipation, love of self-indulgence and of excitement which abound to-day, and which are the foes to peace, culture and a well-poised character.

NIHILISM.

THE recent attempt on the life of the Czar of Russia, unparalleled in recent times for its reckless audacity, following so closely upon a similar attempt when visiting Moscow, has awakened a deep interest in the organization that has managed to suspend the sword of Damocles over the head of the Autocrat of all the Russias, to bid defiance to his police, to honeycomb his army with treason, and to carry its taint to the very foot of the throne. Who are the Nihilists and for what are they struggling? That there has been misgovernment in Russia we know—misgovernment long and fearful, that has sent thousands upon thousands of the best and truest citizens to the terrors of Siberia and sacrificed hundreds of them upon the scaffold. Knowing this, the first impulse of the great mass of English-speaking people, which is always for the oppressed against the oppressor, has been to sympathize with the Nihilists, and while regretting the violence which they display, the wanton destruction of human life, in their reckless attempts to strike one man, to excuse these things somewhat on the ground of the provocation they have received, the sufferings endured by the people, and the supposed purity and singleness of their motives. Are they then worthy of this sympathy? Is Nihilism a thing to be treated tenderly, its violence to be excused by a Christian people? To this we unhesitatingly say, No! With the fullest conviction of the barbarity of rule in Russia, and with a burning abhorrence of such tyranny, we would yet say that there is a worse thing than that, its natural progeny if you will, but yet more hateful than the parent, it is Nihilism.

We are accustomed to turn with repugnance from the idea of Communism or Socialism in any of their manifestations, but here is a system that scouts Communism as being too conservative, as recognizing

rights in anything, in government, social life, or the family, and which glories in its name—*Nihil*—Nothing, everything to be destroyed, law, order, property—nothing to be saved or preserved.

To shew that we do not overstate the iniquity of this system, we quote from an article in the January number of "The Nineteenth Century," some of the utterances of the leaders of the Nihilist movement. First among them, Luther, in fact, of the whole system, is Michael Bakunin, who, speaking at Geneva in 1868, says:

"Brethren I come to announce unto you a new gospel, which must penetrate to the very end of the world. . . . The old world must be destroyed and replaced by a new one. Lie must be stamped out and give way to truth!"

He then goes on to avow the boldest and most daring Atheism, and calls up on his hearers to get rid of the idea of a God. After this he says:

"The second lie is *Right*. *Might* invented the fiction of Right in order to ensure and strengthen her reign. . . .

"And when you have freed your minds from . . . that childish respect for the fiction of *Right*, then all the remaining chains which bind you, and which are called science, civilization, property, marriage, morality and justice, will snap asunder like threads."

In other words the object of Nihilism is to get rid of all these things. Yet further:

"Let your own happiness be your only law. But in order to get this law-recognized . . . you must destroy everything which exists in the shape of State or Social organization. . . . Our first work must be the destruction and annihilation of everything as it now exists. You must accustom yourselves to destroy everything the good with the bad."

Another of their leaders says:

"We Nihilists say, no law! no religion!—*Nihil*. . . . Let us cast off this garment of law for it has not been made according to our measure and impedes our free movements. Hither with the axe and let us demolish everything."

From one of the proclamations of the Society we select a portion of three paragraphs:

"The only revolution which can remedy the ills of the people, is that which will tear up every notion of government by its very roots, and which will upset all ranks of the Russian Empire with all their traditions. . . . Our mission is only one of universal relentlessness, and terror-striking destruction. The object of our organization and of our conspiracy is to concentrate all the forces of this world into an invincible and all-destroying power."

One more extract, this time from their paper "The Will of the People":

"Do you accuse us of being murderers because we attempt to take the life of his most sacred Majesty? Why, we would most gladly accomplish his destruction, and he has only escaped until now in consequence of the many cowards in our ranks."

Yet further on:

"Unfortunately for our cause, the majority of Nihilists are too humanitarian, and hence are incapable of carrying out many necessary measures."

We have abstained from quoting some of the vilest and most blasphemous of these writings and speeches, but what has been quoted is sufficient to shew that these men are the foes, not only of despotism, but of all that is sacred to man; they are the common enemies of society, the wild beasts of the century. We can give them no sympathy or good wishes; on the contrary, while earnestly hoping that the Emperor of Russia, who began so well by the emancipation of the serfs, may crown his reign by giving to his people a constitution, and thus destroying the pretence for this organization of terror. For the Nihilists we can only trust that the iron hand of the law will reach them, and that the terrors they seek to inaugurate may recoil upon themselves.

HINDRANCES TO CHRISTIAN UNITY.

SIXTH PART.

IN 1873, at New York, met the Evangelical Alliance.

The late Dr. C. Hodge, of Princeton, read a paper on the "Unity of the Church." We quote a few sentences: "The Christian is a man united with Christ by the indwelling of His Holy Spirit. The Church is a body of such men, professedly such, and by credible profession such, who are organized for the worship of Christ and the diffusion of His Gospel. That is a Church. I do not see how you can alter that. It is the scriptural idea of a Church, and therefore wher-