

such gifts to God's praise, when by our very eating and our drinking it is possible to praise Him?

Q. Shall we read novels?

ANS. Novels are like plays, most dangerous and full of poison for the soul, some of them; while others contain most glorious teaching; often in its most glorious garb. But there are romances, refined in style, low and vicious in their tone, which are read unblushingly by many a girl whose mother would have burnt them after the first page. The lives of godless men and women, unless written as a purposed warning and example, cannot do much good. The secret perusal of unsound literature does, perhaps, as much harm as the open acting of the licentious drama. What are the fashionable, immoral novels read for? Is it to learn the doings of fashionable people? If your progress in such knowledge is more to you than your profit as a Christian, where is the reality of your religion? Or, are they read for yet more debasing pleasures? To the pure all things are pure, you say. All things are pure, as all things are lawful, but all things are not expedient; and it is a shame even to mention those things that are done of some in secret. All things may be pure to you as it arises unsought for; it is not that which entereth in that defileth. But there is a well of impurity within each human breast which is better without stirring. If men and women read novels of the class we are speaking of, it is not for us to say they are no Christians; all we can say is, that *we ourselves cannot understand* how they can read such things, and be careful of their soul's health, and growth in grace.