

though it was, did not bring it within the reach of those to whom it was at first addressed. Some recent circumstances have led me to think that a reprint of it, imperfect as it is, may, through the Divine blessing, be useful; and so I now give it to the public in the form of a Tract, respectfully commending it to the consideration of Christians and Christian Parents in general, and of the members of our Presbyterian Churches in particular.

And here I will make free to state that I have long been convinced that the sentiments and conduct of many of our people, regarding the class of amusements on which the Sermon animadverts, come far short of the scriptural standard. Too few seem to think that their following after them, or occasional attendance on them, is utterly inconsistent with the proprieties and the seriousness of the Christian life. And, to whatever extent they may be reprov'd in public or in private by the ministry, it is believed, that in few cases, the discipline of the Church is directed against them. Yet, who that rightly estimates the injury done to the Church by such amusements, will not allow that the Church-members who indulge in them, should be affectionately and faithfully dealt with by their Church rulers, in order to their being brought to renounce them.

In the Second Book of Discipline of the Church of Scotland, which was adopted by the General Assembly in the year 1581, Dancing is enumerated amongst other offences, that in the case of ministers are severally punishable by deposition. In a subsequent Act of Assembly,* it comes under the head of *Unlawful Gaming*. And, if dancing be indeed irreconcilable with the gravity and purity of the ministerial character, who will say that our Elders and Church members may yet innocently indulge in it? But it has been expressly forbidden to members of the Church, by repeated Acts of the General Assembly: and so late as the year 1701—a period of much reforming zeal in the Church of Scotland—we find the Assembly reviving former Acts against “promiscuous dancing,” and enjoining the Act which they then passed on the subject, to be read in all the Churches, and such measures to be adopted by Synods and Presbyteries as might restrain the practice. Like many other good enactments, these, in our own youthful days, and for a long period previously, had become to a great extent a dead letter.

* Passed in the year 1596.