

Considering the dance as a fashionable amusement, with its usual excitement, associations, and accompaniments, we have no hesitation in saying that real Christians can have nothing to do with it. You may desire some of our reasons for taking this radical position :

1. It has an unholy look. We are commanded to "abstain from all appearance of evil." On this passage Albert Barnes makes the following comment : "A great variety of subjects, such as those pertaining to dress, amusements, the opera, the ball-room, games of chance and hazard, and various practices in the transaction of business come under this general class which, though on the supposition that they cannot be proved to be in themselves positively wrong or forbidden, have much the appearance of evil, and will be so interpreted by others. In these instances it may be certain that there will be no sin committed by abstaining, there may be by indulgence." The most pious have uniformly regarded the dance in the light of a sinful performance, and they are grieved to have those who call themselves Christians spend their time and energies so foolishly. If the "dancing disciples" claim to have a deep experience and a strong faith, while they regard those who object to their course as obtuse and weak, the plainest principles of the gospel require them to give up a questionable practice rather than offend their weak brethren.

2. It is a worldly amusement. It is patronised by the children of the world because their heart-cravings for happiness find here a temporary satisfaction. They drown their sorrows in the whirling excitement of the hour. The pleasure derived is that of exuberant animalism. There is nothing in it that ought to feed a soul in communion with God. Christians claim to be new creatures, with new desires, motives, principles, and aspirations. The word to them is, "Be not conformed to this world." "Come out from among them and be separate." "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" The grace of God teaches us that, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world." Who will deny that the giddy dance tends to worldly mindedness? Who will affirm that it promotes spirituality—that it generates a spirit of prayer—that it is favourable to a growth in grace—that it ever kindled a flame of devotion or led a sinner to Jesus Christ? Religious conversation would be considered quite out of place amid the foolish gossip and fashionable glitter of the ball room. Vanity and sensuality are enthroned, and piety is effectually crowded out. The whole tide and tendency of this hilarious exercise are on the devil's side.

3. It is detrimental to health. While a given amount of physical exercise, under proper circumstances, is beneficial, very few will be