

been too strict; and seldom fails to harrow up the souls of those, with fear and remorse, who have practised the least self-denial, and lived most conformed to the world.

2. All amusements should be regarded as inexpedient and sinful, whose manifest effect is to damp the ardor, and impair the habitual vigor of piety, diverting the thoughts and turning the affections from the subject through the influence of other thoughts, interests, and associations. While the truth of this position will not be denied, the tendency of certain favorite amusements to damp devotion, and alienate the mind from religious associations, will be denied. There may not be wanting some who will insist that they can, and do maintain, in a ball-room, circus, or theatre, as devout and spiritual a frame as they do in their closets or their church. Nor have we any doubt of the entire truth of these declarations; their only defect, as facts in evidence being, that in all such cases, the tone of piety, (if it has an existence), is too low to admit of any perceptible decline; as in cases of suspended respiration, the body may pass through various temperatures of atmosphere, without any perceptible effect upon the pulsation. The ordinary avocations of life need not materially impede our growth in grace; but when uncalled by duty, and prompted only by the love of pleasure, we venture out, we never return without loss, except in those cases where piety is so low and languid that any perceptible loss is impossible.

3. Again, it is quite clear that such amusements as are the chosen and especial recreation of irreligious, vicious and eminently worldly men, are unsuitable for the Christian. The society in which he must place himself in the pursuit of such amusements, is one in which a Christian ought never to be found, until he strikes from his prayer "Lead us not into temptation," or obliterates from the Bible, as an interpretation, the declaration that "the companion of fools shall be destroyed." In secular pursuits men may be associated who are exceedingly diverse in the state of their affections; but in those amusements in the choice of which the heart dictates, how is it possible that the infidel, the libertine and the Christian shall find themselves drawn instinctively by their hearts to the same places, to participate in the same as their most favorite amusements.

4. Those things which conscience decides against immediately, and acquiesces in only as the result of the reasonings of inclination are also to be suspected and avoided. The right way in such matters is a high way, and offers itself at once to the observation of the traveller, without the need of excuses and reasonings to reconcile his conscience to walk in it. A man's judgment in matters of intellect or expediency may be improved by revision, and the last decision be the best; but he who tam-

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