

The relation of the Christian life to places of public amusement is one where it is difficult to lay down any law beyond this, that there being some places where we ought never to be seen—where, for instance, the entertainment is notoriously of the world, worldly, or where, as in certain theatres, appeals are made to man's lower nature, "Avoid places where the character of the entertainment provided is to strengthen the kingdom of darkness at the expense of that of light." For, notwithstanding the recent so-called "devil scare" in New York city, even at the risk of being charged with superstition—we adhere to the truth our fathers and their fathers before them held, viz., belief in a personal devil operating in a true spiritual realm or kingdom, with whom we may not, must not, and dare not compromise. . . .

Our time is so brief we must hurry on to the consideration of the next point, viz., the exact place such amusements and recreations should hold in the Christian life.

(1) I would say they must always be subordinate to the duties and sober claims of life, since, as the poet makes his angel visitant to say, "unto men duty comes first and pleasure then." Duty, "stern daughter of the voice of God," subordinate to duty, including to God, and to his neighbour, and to himself. In this pleasure-loving age, with characteristic selfishness, men are forgetting this proper sequence of duty and pleasure, and they are reversing the order, especially where duty towards God is concerned.

"The heart must learn its duty well,
To man on earth, and God in heaven."

(2) I would say they must always be subservient to,