

ternal are united, as was the case with Doddridge, and Baxter, and Matthew Henry.

But, whoever has in hand the child's training, the main point is, get the start of Satan.

HOME AMUSEMENTS.

MR. EDITOR,—I am glad to see that this subject is being discussed in your columns. It is to my mind of great importance.

There are many of the members of our Church who, as far as their own consciences are concerned, have no difficulty whatever in taking part either in a quiet dance or a game of cards, but, if I might so speak, the ecclesiastical Mrs. Grundy has such terror to them that they deprive themselves of two of the most harmless and, to them, enjoyable recreations. Now, why should this be? The Bible nowhere forbids either of them. Their opponents, therefore, have no divine authority for their denunciation. Those who do not approve of these things should remember that the whole question is merely a matter of opinion and they should consequently be chary as to how they express themselves on the subject. "Let not him who eateth not judge him who eateth." Like all other amusements known that are worthy of the name, these have been by many indulged in to excess.

No one, no Christian at least, can countenance these large balls which are kept up till during the "small hours," and where all sorts of characters in full dress are to be met, nor yet card parties of the same description. But this is the abuse of these enjoyments. Let us use the world without over-using it. Why should Christian people be totally debarred from enjoying a game of cards or a dance because worldly men and women carry these to an excess. People, whether Christian or not, must have amusement or recreation, and why should the best of the race be deprived of two of the very best means of attaining these? In discussing this subject with a friend the other day, he asked me if I could imagine Jesus Christ dancing. Well, I don't know that I could, but after all I do not see anything so incongruous in the idea. Our Lord attended the marriage feast and no doubt would have countenanced dancing if such had been the fashion, as he indeed approved of another fashion then in vogue which is not in these latter days considered altogether *comme il faut*.

There are many things we cannot very readily imagine Jesus taking part in, which are not now looked upon as altogether wrong; for instance, some of the discussions in our Presbyteries. Trusting that a more liberal spirit may speedily overspread the churches on this head, I remain,

A YOUNG MAN.

MR. EDITOR,—While I have never since I came under the influence of religion seen my way clear to follow the course indicated by "A Church Member," in your issue of the 16th, I can sympathize with him in what I believe to be his honest perplexity in reference to what he says he has hitherto practised without compunction, and without suffering any spiritual injury. "Church Member," however, ought to bear in mind that he has not merely to consider the influence which certain indulgences may have upon his own soul, though even in reference to that, it is sometimes very easy to be mistaken, he has to weigh well what effect his conduct and example may have upon others who although "weak" in his estimation, are yet among those for whom Christ died. I don't suppose that "A Church Member" thinks himself bound in conscience to dance, or play cards, even in the quietest way, and within his own home or in those of his friends. He could refrain and yet not think that he was committing sin. He is not, I should hope, persuaded that he is called upon in this way to bear witness for Christ. But he cannot but know that both the amusements he speaks of have been so greatly and so generally abused, that the abuse, has come to be practically the use, so that through their means thousands have had their characters seriously injured and in many cases irreparably ruined. Does the case of eating meat offered to idols not come in to guide him in his course, and to lead him to the conclusion that the safest and best thing for him in the circumstances is to abstain from what he could indulge in without his conscience finding fault, but not without confirming many in their course of iniquity and positive sin? Very many who altogether abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors as a beverage, see nothing absolutely sinful in the moder-

ate use of these intoxicants. But they see thousands led every year to destruction, by what may have begun in moderation, but gradually, yet surely, ended in moral and social shipwreck. And they see these encouraging themselves in their foolish, suicidal course by quoting the example of this minister and that elder, who they say, do exactly like themselves—take what is good for them of the creatures provided by Providence for their use and enjoy these comforts as they can. And seeing this, they abstain from such intoxicants altogether, that their example may not be perverted, or their good evil spoken of. And as the world stands to-day, does a "Church Member" not think that there may be a call to him, and to all who make the profession which he makes, to abstain from that which he thinks he can follow with a safe conscience, but which thousands are finding in their sad experience to be the way which leads down to death? "A Church Member" has children; what about the influence of his example upon them? Will his boy always be satisfied to play echre with his father—with pins or praise for stakes? Will his girls always be pleased with the quiet family dance? In short is the risk not too great, even for the future of his own family? And what about the future of many others?

"A Church Member," I have no doubt, is a conscientious man. Does he not think, in sober seriousness, that the law of the Apostle Paul, applies in his case, "If meat make my brother to offend, I shall eat no flesh while the world standeth; lest I make my brother to offend?" A Christian has sometimes not to use all his liberty; and when the risk is so great as confessedly in dancing and card-playing it is, is it not best and most prudent to err on the safe side? A good many things not sinful in themselves, become so from their special surroundings and consequences; may dancing and card-playing not be among these?

ANOTHER CHURCH MEMBER.

MR. EDITOR,—In THE PRESBYTERIAN of the 16th inst., "Home Amusements" appears over the signature of "A Church Member." He appeals to yourself, your correspondents, or ministers for help to be put right as to his practice of playing cards. He says: "I don't play them in the way that many do, to save their character, and, as they say, their conscience, but the old, solid, so-called wicked cards. I play them with my children and wife and I have never found my prayers hindered or my conscience troubling me as I kneel with my family in evening worship after doing so." (Bravo for "A Church Member.")

If his conscience is not troubled why does he ask help? He seems to be looking for a soothing plaster to his conscience from some sympathetic friend in favour of playing "the old solid cards," which are justly characterized as the "Devil's books," which have been the direct cause of destroying the happiness of tens of thousands, both in this life and that beyond the grave.

With vivid impressions made on their minds, how does he know whether his "children and wife" were most exercised and interested in his prayer or in the games they had lost or won?

"A Church Member" seems to have overlooked the fact, that his "children and wife" have as himself a conscience, and that they are personally responsible; should it turn out that he has been the cause of leading them into ruinous habits, he may find his conscience encumbered with a tenfold load of guilt.

To be safe, and with a clear "conscience" let "A Church Member" burn the cards, and add a little more to the means heretofore used in buying them, and invest it in suitable books, so that their spare time may be profitably employed for an intelligent, happy life here, as also for that in the world above.

AN ELDER.

"CONSTITUTION AND PROCEDURE OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA."

MR. EDITOR.—In looking over the recently issued book with the above title, I have observed under "Chapter XV.—The Congregation," that the rules therein laid down differ in several points from what is the constitution and practice of many congregations now in the united Church. For instance, article 200 reads: "Members in full communion are entitled to vote at all congregational meetings, etc.," whereas the

model constitution of the late "Presbyterian Church in Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland," article XII. reads: "The annual meeting of the congregation shall consist of *all male persons* above twenty-one years of age who shall be supporters of the ordinances of religion therein."

Again, with reference to who shall preside at congregational meetings for secular purposes, the new book, article 211, reads as follows: "At meetings for temporal purposes the minister, if present, is *entitled* to take the chair, etc.," whereas the model constitution of the Church of Scotland in Canada, referred to above, article XII., reads: "The meeting (that is the annual meeting of the congregation) shall appoint a chairman and secretary from among their own number, and the proceedings etc." The constitution and practice of many congregations, and I believe of all the congregations formerly connected with or following the doctrines and forms of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, are also opposed to the rule on this head laid down in the new Book of Procedure. Here, it seems to me, Mr. Editor, is what may be the cause of difficulties in congregations. It is not likely there will be any trouble between congregations and their old ministers, as the old practices, whatever they may have been, will be continued, but ministers formerly connected with one branch of the Church are now being settled over congregations formerly in connection with another branch, in which the management of secular affairs may have been conducted in a different way to what their new minister has been accustomed to, or to the rules laid down in the new book, and the minister may wish a change.

I should like to know, Mr. Editor, in the event of such a difference as I have stated arising between a minister and his congregation, whether the new book can be appealed to as the law of the Church, to which the congregational practice or constitution must give place.

Also, if the new book is authoritative and must be followed, whether it ought not first to have been submitted to congregations before being promulgated as law.

It seems to me hardly likely that congregations which have followed a different practice for perhaps twenty years will accept the new rule without thinking they ought to have had some say in the matter.

A reply from you, or some of your readers, who have studied such matters, will much oblige an

Jan. 2, 1880.

INQUIRER.

MISSION FUNDS.

MR. EDITOR,—Will you kindly state in your issue of this week whether it is within the *jurisdiction* of a congregation in the Presbyterian body, finding at the close of the year, that their revenue has not been equal to the expenditure, to appropriate the moneys which have been collected during the year, for *missionary and charitable* purposes, to assist in reducing the said deficit?

A. B.

Jan. 12, 1880.

[Certainly not, unless the consent of each contributor to said missionary and charitable funds were first secured. For the office-bearers of any Presbyterian church to confiscate such funds, in the way indicated, would be as contrary to the laws of the Church as to those of ordinary honesty. —ED. PRESBYTERIAN.]

HOME MISSION FUND.

We are glad to learn from Dr. Reid that the receipts for the Home Mission Fund up to the 27th inst., have been in marked and encouraging contrast with those of last year up to the same date:

1880, Home Mission Fund, from all sources	\$20,980 91
1879, " " " " " "	7,629 88
Increase.....	\$13,351 03

THE eleventh annual Convention of the Brant County Sabbath School Association is to be held in the city of Brantford, on Tuesday and Wednesday, the 24th and 25th of February, in the First Presbyterian Church.

WE are glad to understand that Principal Grant, of Queen's College, preaches missionary sermons in St. James' square Presbyterian Church, of this city, on Sabbath first, at the usual hours of worship. The Annual Missionary Meeting of the congregation will be held on the following evening, when Dr. Grant and others are expected to deliver addresses.