

should there be all the absurd paraphernalia of scarfs, hat-bands, pall-bearers, any number of cabs, etc., etc.? One does it and, therefore, another must. Anything else would be thought strange and, therefore, if necessary, the last dollar must go. There surely ought to be enough of Christian principle and consideration to have all this changed. But one won't begin, and neither will another, and so the evil continues and has always a tendency to become worse. A good many years ago there was a meeting held in a Canadian town, of the leading people in all the different Christian Churches in the locality, to consider this matter and to apply a remedy. All present—ministers, elders, deacons, etc.—pledged themselves that whenever death entered their households, they should have everything connected with the funeral on the plainest and least expensive scale. Mutual congratulations were the order of the day. Everyone felt that so far as that neighbourhood was concerned, the change to the better was as good as accomplished. It was not, however. The very first time one of these pledged ones was tried in the way indicated, the promise was forgotten, and the funeral was as expensive as ever. The whole movement accordingly came to nothing. Why so? All were, we believe, perfectly honest in their expressed wish for a change. All would have been glad to see it universally made. *But none had the courage to lead the way.* Is it the same still? We fear so, and with this additional feature in many cases, that every extravagance is excused under the plea of decency and propriety, till with perhaps the majority the conviction has been arrived at, that there is no extravagance at all. People surely can shew their sorrow and can honour their dead after a better and more rational fashion. If they were but to think of the widows and orphans more, and of the lugubrious displays of the undertaker less, it would be better for all round. In the crusade against Sabbath funerals, then, let funeral extravagance and inappropriate expensive observances not be forgotten. One's grief ought not to be gauged by the depth of the hat-bands, the breadth, length and number, of the scarfs, the decorations of the coffin, or the expensiveness of the monument. At such times individuals are not inclined to haggle over details. This renders it all the more necessary that public opinion should so make simplicity and plainness the rule, that anything else will never be tried.

MR. SPURGEON ON THE DRAMA.

Addressing a meeting at the Metropolitan Tabernacle upon the subject of "Timely Cautions," Mr. Spurgeon said: "I see it publicly stated by men who call themselves Christians that it would be advisable for Christians to frequent the theatre that the character of the drama might be raised. The suggestion is about as sensible as if we were bidden to pour a bottle of lavender water into a great sewer to improve its aroma. If the Church is to imitate the world to raise its tone, things have strangely altered since the day when our Lord said: 'Come ye out from among them and touch not the unclean thing.' Is heaven to descend to the infernal lake to raise its tone? Such has been the moral condition of the theatre for many a year that it has become too bad for mending, and even if it were mended it would corrupt again. Pass by it with averted gaze; the house of the strange woman is there. It has not been my lot ever to enter a theatre during the performance of a play, but I have seen enough when I have come home from distant journeys at nights whilst riding past the play-houses to make me pray that our sons and daughters may never go within the door. It must be a strange school for virtue which attracts the harlot and the debauchee. It is no place for a Christian, for it is best appreciated by the irreligious and worldly. If our church members fall into the habit of frequenting the theatre, we shall soon have them going much further in that direction of vice, and they will lose all relish for the ways of God. Theatre-going, if it become general among professing Christians, will soon prove the death of piety. One finds the taste for such things increasing on all hands, inasmuch that we cannot enter places of entertainment once dedicated to science and art with-

out finding ourselves before long in the presence of something like a theatrical performance. I do not doubt that things which may be in themselves harmless enough have tended to create and foster the taste which leads ultimately to the theatre and its surroundings. Who can suppose amusements surrounded by the seductions of vice to be fit recreations for a pure mind? Who could draw near to God after sitting to admire the performances of a wanton woman? and I am told that some who have dazzled London society are such. When manners are growing every day more lax and licentious, shall the Nonconformists of England cease from their godly protest and lower the standard of their lives? If they do so their spiritual power is departed, and their reason for existence is gone. If there ever could be a time when Christians might relax their rigidity it surely is not now, when the very air is tainted with pollution and our streets ring with new-boys' cries, vending filthy papers and abominable prints. It is sad to hear our people talk about acts of sin nowadays; how young men and women, without blushing, talk of deeds which deprave and destroy as though they were trifles or themes for jest. It is a thousand pities that the ends of justice should require the publishing of unsavoury details. I suppose there are grave objections to certain cases being heard more privately, otherwise it would assuredly be better for public morals. As for those who not only commit lewdness but take pleasure in those who do it—oh, my soul, come not thou into their secret. My heart often cries, 'Oh, that I had the wings of a dove that I might fly away and be at rest.'"
—*The Freeman.*

DANCING.

While we have no direct data whereby to determine how, when, or where dancing had its beginning, yet very early records, both sacred and profane, shew, not only that it widely prevailed among rude as well as civilized nations at a far by-past period, but that the dance formed an all but indispensable element alike in their religious ceremonies and warlike celebrations. In short, all their dances were either of a sacred or soldierly character, and thus in both they danced before their altars, and around the statues of their gods. In addition to this the Greeks were wont to deify human passions, and institute and perform dances in keeping with the characters assigned to such deities. Among the more sedate Romans, however, it was reckoned disgraceful for a free citizen to dance except in connection with their religious services, hence the well-known declaration of Cicero that "no one dances unless he is either drunk or mad," and hence, also, in their festal entertainments, in early as in later times, the dancing was performed only by hired and professional dancers. All this is in full keeping with the surprise, as story tells, of the foreigner, who when he first saw, in our higher circles, so many voluntarily subjecting themselves to the frequent fatigues of the fashionable dance, wondered why they did not get their servants to do it for them. The Jews, too, in common with other nations, had from an early period their sacred dances, which were performed as expressive of their gratitude and gladness, in connection with some special manifestation of the divine favour, or in commemoration of past mercies. The Jewish dances, however, whether sacred or social, were ever performed by the sexes separately, and while in each both sexes seem to have taken part, yet they remained in distinct and separate companies, and there is no evidence in sacred history to shew that dances were promiscuously engaged in by both sexes together, except, it may be, when in the worship of the golden calf, all classes intermingled in the foolish and frantic revelry.

From a careful consideration of all that scripture says in regard to dancing, it is evident that dancing was a religious act, performed exclusively on joyous occasions, usually out of doors, in the day time, and only by one of the sexes, seeing that there is no instance in which both sexes are united in the exercise; and further, that those who perverted dancing from a sacred use, to a mere merry-making amusement, were regarded as infamous, and to be classed with the "vain

fellows" so void of shame, alluded to by Michal, or with those families of whom Job speaks, whose dancing only increased their impiety and involved destruction, or with the shameless daughter of Herodias whose dancing terminated in the rash vow of Herod and the cruel murder of John the Baptist.

In view of all, a Presbytery in the neighbouring Union published the following declaration, which may not be unworthy the attentive consideration of the churches and families of our own Dominion:

"The practice of dancing in either private or public assemblies, this Presbytery regards as eminently worldly and sinful. It has been condemned by the highest judicatory of our Church and by most, if not all, other bodies of Christians. It is engaged in but by few professors of religion comparatively, and by those not noted for high spirituality or devotedness of life. It is regarded by worldly people as an amusement peculiarly their own, and when participated in by church members, furnishes the former with occasions for triumph and boasting, and brings reproach upon the cause of Christ. It fosters the keeping of late and unseasonable hours at night, consumes much precious time in preparing for, engaging in, and recovering from the season of mirth with which it is connected. It wastes the physical energies through exhaustion or exposure, in some instances producing death. It diverts the mind from serious and sacred things, and places beauty, dress and display before sobriety, worth and wisdom. It sinks the moral beneath the physical, or makes animal pleasure a higher good than spiritual joy. It is inimical to revivals of religion and harmonizes not with a spirit of devotion. If the propriety of it were only questionable or doubtful, even then to engage in it is to stifle, and to sin against, conscience. But it is at variance with the principle which Paul propounded, and is opposed, we believe, to that blessed Book which teaches us 'that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.'"
DELTA.

NOT WILLING THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH.

This truth, declared by the inspired penman, man seems slow to fully appreciate. There is a sort of feeling that God has been good, and exercised some love in providing salvation for sinners, and that therefore He must be willing that sinners should be saved. But now that the provision has been made, God simply observes the issues with little more than indifference. He is pledged to give eternal life to whomsoever will believe, and He will do it. He has promised to turn none away who come to Him, and so He will not. Men may admit all this, and yet fail to realize that there is something in the heart of our Heavenly Father more than the unwavering adherence to His promises and declarations. This is indeed much; but besides this He is, we are clearly taught, interested in the matter of man's accepting the provision. He desires man's salvation—"not willing that any should perish." We would come probably more fully to realize and appreciate this fact, if we would dwell in thought more upon some of the acts of God which manifest it. These shew how very great His interest must be. The not leaving the sinner to perish in his sins, but making a provision for his escaping their consequences; the price that was paid for the redemption of man, the coming of our Saviour into this world, His life of humility and suffering, and His terrible death, all the details of which are so wonderful; the coming of the Holy Spirit to take of the things of Christ and shew them unto us; the giving to us the Word of Truth, in which the way to life is so clearly set before us, and in which so many appeals and arguments are found, urging the sinner to walk in it; the human ministers, and all the various means which He has ordained, and to which He gives such efficiency, to bring these truths to the knowledge of those for whom salvation is provided, and to impress them upon them—all these surely shew unmistakably that He who has done, and is doing this, must be deeply interested in those for whom it is done.

When we see a father lavishly spending his hard-earned money, carefully securing the very best in-