

SOCIAL PARTIES; HOW THEY SHOULD BE UTILIZED.

How many precious hours are vainly wasted in giving "Parties," and attending them! The best hours of the twenty-four are often put to this most miserable use.—Time, health, money are thrown away to no good purpose. It is useless, however, to ignore our social instincts; our aim must be to regulate them, and to consecrate them to the service of God. We do not condemn social "parties" indiscriminately. The parties that we regard as highly objectionable are those that involve late hours, unreasonable expense, and irrational and unhealthy amusements. Meet by all means in each others' houses, but meet as Christians, and act in such a way that you need not be afraid or ashamed if the Lord Jesus were present in person.

No one has ever yet been benefited in mind or body by the popular style of "parties," whereas it is unquestionable that they have in many instances proved injurious.—How then could Christians reform this element in the social life? There are examples set before us in England and Scotland well deserving of note, and of imitation so far as different circumstances will allow. In London gentlemen of high position and great wealth give "parties" where the religious element has a marked place, where that is indeed the chief feature of the evening. These parties are given monthly or oftener as circumstances may dictate. Tea and coffee are served at 7 o'clock. A chapter of the scriptures is then read, and an opportunity is given to ask questions or offer practical remarks. The gentleman who presides takes care to keep up the interest of the meeting. Appropriate hymns are sung with all the skill that art can reach and all the fervor that is kindled by love to God and man. Clergymen are often present at such "parties," and they find there a new sphere of usefulness.—Sometimes thirty or forty persons take part in the religious conversation that is carried on. Prayers are offered up at appropriate intervals. At half-past nine supper is ready, and by half-past ten the "party" closes. This is very reasonable and Christian like.

What a contrast to your fashionable parties where the giddy dance goes on far beyond midnight!

We should like to see an experiment of this kind tried under favourable auspices in this country. We are persuaded that it would succeed. Its tendency would be to make our religion more practical and joyous, and to bring heavenly verities closer to our hearths and homes. It would serve too as a pleasing contrast, and a rational protest against the insane follies of fashionable life. It would be felt at once that any attempt at expense or display in connection with such parties would be an intolerable incongruity. By such means many might hear the Gospel faithfully declared who are beyond the reach of ordinary ministrations. The influence for good might permeate all classes of society, and great benefits might flow from an "institution" that has hitherto been too much in the service of evil.



A HINT TO SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHERS.

You, no doubt, feel your own unskillfulness in the art of teaching. You may be deficient in many points, and may find it difficult to interest your class. Still, be not discouraged. You can do a great and lasting work for the souls placed under your charge. You can at least teach the children to commit precious portions of Scripture to memory. These words of the Lord Jesus may be good seed sown in good soil, bringing forth abundant fruit in long subsequent years.

You can explain the Scripture to the children, showing the connection between the various passages, and especially the connection between the Old Testament and the New. You can familiarize their minds with the narratives of Scripture, especially with the life of our Lord Jesus. Nothing is more surprising than the ignorance of the Gospel narratives which you will find even among well-read Christians.

You can teach the Shorter Catechism to your class. Let it never be said that the children of our Presbyterian families are forgetting the good old way. The system of doctrine taught in the Shorter Catechism.