

religious families can have anything to do. Whatever charm it may seem to offer to the imagination or taste, its direct tendency is to corrupt the heart. There is a proscribed list to be strictly registered, both for Christ's sake, the church's sake, and our own sakes. A well-informed and pious mind, however, needs no casuistry : a single glance at a subject, in connexion with the word of God, will discover in a moment its religious bearings ; experience will testify as to the usual religious effect of any given recreation upon the feelings ; and both conjoined will discover the truth of what the apostle taught,—“ Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”

But we must not tarry on a theme which requires a so much able pen than ours. We would merely suggest that the buoyant cheerfulness of our winter evenings should be invariably tinged with the sweet spirit of the Gospel ; and thus should we avoid that painful sense of vacuity, and that more painful feeling of condemnation for time mispent or lost, which on party occasions has so often been felt. To our interesting friends we would likewise say, Be not too anxious about refreshments. Let the passage respecting Martha and Mary instruct us ; be not too oppressively kind in pressing various dishes, or wine or fruits ; for how many have suffered in their health through the excessive, though well-meant, hospitality of their entertainers ! Let both body and soul be unclogged and free. And why should not every social occasion be closed with the singing a hymn and prayer. If there lurks a secret aversion to this sacred exercise in the bosom of any one, it is a sure test that all has not been right, and by some unhallowed thoughts or employments the peaceful serenity of the soul has been disturbed. In spite of the vulgar abuse which has been levelled from certain worldly quarters, against what were termed “ psalm-singing parties,” the employment rises far above such low ridicule. It appears to have extorted, in a moment of light and conviction, the approbation even of Burns, if we may judge by his “ *Carter's Saturday Night*,” although he was no spiritual man himself : as assuredly the poetry of Charles Wesley, or Dr. Watts, carrying the mind heavenward, like trembling fire, when sung in the swelling harmonies of the profound psalmodists, is calculated to raise a group higher in the scale of intellect, and goodness, and joy, than the dialect of the symposium, or the varied tones of the many-voiced world, especially when all is closed by the untainted heart pouring forth its fulness in solemn prayer to God the giver of all good. Let us remember the sacredness of time. It bears us rapidly into another state, and if we will fill our allotted sphere of duty, a happier lot awaits us. The Christian has nothing but joyful anticipations ; but his joy depends upon his Christianity. No man on earth was more incessantly devoted to the duties and calls of religion than Mr. Wesley ; but no man was ever more cheerful : as Mr. Watson beautifully says, “ *vanity and disappointment passed over his serene mind, like clouds over a bright summer field ;*” and this description retained all its truth when