

acts should be determined. There may be only a few in the meeting who take the narrow view, but as one or two may prolong a discussion or prevent action by a meeting, the failure of a few to take a broad outlook may seriously affect the welfare of the Society.

Instances, from the past, of this focusing of the attention upon details, are the insistence upon the use of certain pronouns and the numbering of the days of the week and the months of the year as the sum and substance of plainness of speech, and the making of a certain cut of coat and style of bonnet the standards of plainness in dress. "Plainness," as applied to speech and apparel, has been so long used in this narrow and superficial sense that it may well be questioned whether it would not be advantageous to substitute for it in our queries the fresher and unperverted word, "simplicity."

A present example of the same distortion of vision may be found in the discussion of amusements in a meeting whose discipline condemns "theatres, horse races, dancing, musical entertainments and other corrupting amusements." Friends have a testimony to bear against *corrupting* amusements, but not against particular forms of amusement, since any may be either innocent or hurtful according to the manner of its pursuit. Our children should be taught and our young people should be urged, to discriminate between harmless dancing and hurtful dancing, between theatrical performances that are elevating and those that are degrading, between an innocent game of cards and gambling, and to observe moderation in amusement whether it take the form of a game of authors or a game of enchre, a morning walk or an evening dance.

The one who undertakes to make his own experience and conscience the criteria for the conduct of others may say that he never derived any advan-

tage from dancing, that he always suffers degradation when he goes to the theatre, that card playing corrupts his morals, and that listening to music checks his spiritual development; but so long as there are good and pure and spiritually minded people who find recreation and no harm in these and other forms of amusement, he has no right to condemn *in toto* the pleasures he cannot himself pursue with profit.

When the Society of Friends ceases to teach that every person must be faithful to his own conscience rather than to that of another, be he priest or prophet, and that the "voice within" is within us all and may be heard as clearly by one as by another—when we cease to teach the immanence of God and the sufficiency of the Inner Light, we shall have no excuse for our existence. But so long as we do teach these things we must show that we believe them by giving full credit to the sincerity of those whose taste in the matter of amusements happens to differ from ours.

Prof. Schmit, of Cornell, startled some of his hearers this summer by declaring in a lecture that his faith in the eternal goodness at the heart of the Universe was so great that he was perfectly happy in saying, in regard to a future life, "I do not know and I do not care; whatever comes will be good." However startling the declaration may be, when one has calmly thought the matter over, he cannot but admit that the professor has reached the highest ground. For, cling as we may to the belief in immortality, our belief can be founded upon nothing more substantial than a hope that life does not end here. The evidences that spiritualism appears to furnish are not strong enough to satisfy the scientist, and even those who do not insist upon a scientific basis for belief often find them far from satisfying. Certain it is that spiritualism has not given enough to