

others. Thus in our social gatherings there may be amusements for recreation most innocent in themselves, and *in those circumstances* a happy use of the world without abusing it, which, in certain states of general society, may be naturally, and would be certainly, construed into a Christian endorsement of what is undoubtedly evil. This may be evil, if you will, because of abuse; yet nevertheless the mischief is so common and so great, that every Christian should shrink from the responsibility of doing anything that may seem plausibly to endorse the practice. So in regard to the sanctity of the Lord's day. There are pleasant walks amid the beauty and glory of the Creator's works, and there may be domestic gatherings for joyous song to the Lord, not innocent merely, but a happy use of sacred time; and yet these things may be done in circumstances and in states of society where they would have the appearance of evil, where they would be popularly considered as a Christian sanction of practices which are undoubtedly a desecration of the day. Thus sound principles teach us to consider the effect of even lawful enjoyments upon others, and to avoid even the innocent where circumstances would warp them into a sanction of the evil. The Apostle lays down the principle in the declaration: "All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." And again: "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." At the same time there is a fair field for the bringing of the popular mind to more enlightened views. One may teach them to distinguish between the innocent recreation and amusement of the small social circle, and the same thing carried to excess in the large promiscuous assemblage, where, though the same in form, it becomes an essentially different thing in substance,—between the devout walk to meditate and pray in the garden or by the river bank on the Lord's day, and the idle sauntering in the roads or fields, or the namby-pamby sentimentalism which may be in the same manner indulged; and indeed between many other things which may have a similarity outside, like two books bound alike, but which within