

Give Him a Lift.

Give him a lift! Don't kneel in prayer,
Nor moralize with his despair;
The man is down, and his great need
Is ready help—not prayer and creed.

This time when wounds are washed and
healed
That the inward motive be revealed;
But now, whatever the spirit be,
Mere words are shallow mockery.

One grain of aid just now is more
To him than tomes of saintly lore.
Pray, if you must, within your heart,
But give him a lift, give him a start.

The world is full of good advice,
Of prayer, and praise, and preaching
nice;
But generous souls who aid mankind
Are like to diamonds—hard to find.

Give like a Christian—speak in deeds;
A noble life's the best of creeds;
And he shall wear a royal crown
Who gives a lift when men are down.

—Selected.

The Young Christian and the Popular Dance.

In taking up this subject from the Christian point of view, it is but fair and right that all reasonable concessions should be made, and made at the outset. Whatever positive objection may be urged against the ordinary dance, I, for one, am ready to make to the friends of this amusement the following

CONCESSIONS:

The dance is not forbidden in the Bible.

It is not necessarily a sin, *per se*. "It is better to dance than to slander our neighbors."

"It is better to dance than to be self-righteous."

Amusements as such are necessary and good. Every human being is entitled to amusement within proper limits.

The dance may sometimes tend to cultivate grace of movement.

If conducted for strictly religious purposes, as in the case of David and other cases in the Bible, and when the sex element is eliminated, it will not be harmful. It may, under certain circumstances, be health-giving.

There may be a certain "rhythm and poetry of motion" in the dance which is pleasing to speculative and ethereal minds, and which has no moral or psychological perils.

If the hearts of young Christians are in the dance more than in the cause of Christ, and if parents in the home take no stand against it, then all other prohibitions are futile.

Furthermore, I concede that on this general subject there may be good and true Christians whose judgement I respect, though widely differing from my own. The fair thing in every such case is a thorough and candid discussion from both points of view. The importance of the question in its relation to Christian life demands it.

In full view, then, of these concessions, I feel compelled to hold that dancing, as it commonly prevails in society, is a menace to the Christian life and church, which needs the immediate, careful and conscientious consideration of all Christian people.

1. And first of all I protest that the only reason for discussing, and the only reason for objecting to the dance, on the part of Christians parents and teachers, springs from their honest solicitude for the welfare of young Christians and the efficiency and spiritual power of the Christian church in the world. On this ground every disciple of Christ is bound to give the subject a reasonable and serious consideration. Why should any man or woman or intelligent church oppose the dance, if it can be shown that it promotes both spiritual and physical good? No sane person does so oppose it. It is the sheerest prejudice and bigotry for any class of people to affirm that Christians are objecting to the dance without experimental reasons, or on merely a priori grounds. Why have the old dancing habits of the Christian church been given up in so many places?

Why have Christians pastors and parents and organizations in modern times spoken often and so strongly against the common dance? Simply because they have found it was hurtful to the end for which the church exists. All the objections to the dance that I know of are drawn directly from experience. The objections may be wrong, but it is right and reasonable that they should be faithfully and conscientiously discussed by all God's people. I protest, once for all, that the Christian church is not at war with good manners, grace of motion or any safe and innocent amusement.

2. I hold that it is perfectly reasonable to expect a fair and candid consideration of this, as of other questions, by young Christians themselves, unless parents and teachers fall into the habit of talking to them like cranks; which we do not propose to do. My own experience with intelligent young people is, that they are reasonable and conscientious on this

and kindred subjects, as older Christians, when they stop and think. What I plead for here is simply this: "Think on these things." Young people do not object to any calm and sensible queries as to what may injure their physical life and comfort, or their success in business, or their efficiency and power in intellectual pursuits. Why then should there be any sensitiveness about the minutiae of character and spiritual culture, which touches more closely the real man and woman? Why use care and caution as to that which may affect the exterior and subordinate interests, and take at haphazard that which may "weaken or ruin the important qualities of the soul?"

3. We confidently believe that if a reasonably just case is fairly made out against the dance, as tending to injure in any degree the purity and power of the Christian life, young Christians will readily refrain. To assume anything else is to assume that they are not Christians.

Experience has demonstrated, as I shall show further on, that devotion to the popular dance, even in its best and most conservative form, is not only not fitted to promote the highest elements of character, but on the other hand that it makes people less open and sensitive to religious truth. The Rev. Dr. H. M. Tenney, who was for several years the wise, cautious, and efficient pastor of a city church where dancing prevailed, says: "I have found that those under the spell of these amusements (dancing, card playing, etc.) are the hardest to reach with the truth. They are the last to be reached and the first to backslide. If others have a different experience, I have yet to hear of it." If it be said that it is not in the use but only in the abuse of the dance that the evil lies, and that any and every good thing when abused becomes an evil, then we are compelled to take an issue on that point. Out of all the multitudinous forms of amusement there is hardly one in fifty that is, from its nature, at all liable to serious moral abuse. The promiscuous dance, from its very nature, like card playing and wine drinking, is extremely liable to such abuse.

Not that it is often engaged in such evil motives; not that it cannot be practiced without evil thoughts; but no one will deny that there is in the dance where both sexes are mingled an undue excitement, a peculiar and absorbing fascination, an extreme tendency to excess and dissipation, which is found in connection with almost no other amusement, and which high spiritual life seldom withstands. Dr. James H. Jackson, of Danville, N. Y., while believing in the physical benefit of the dance if it can be kept within certain limits, makes the following statement: "As dancing is generally conducted by those who take part in it, I have no hesitation in saying that the evil far overbalances the good that comes from it; so that it is indefensible, and should not be sustained by Christians." After speaking of the physiological dangers of the dance, he refers to its dissipating effects upon the mind; and specifies dissipation, mental perversity, loose thoughts, weakened conscience, unfitness for public duty, destroyed sense of allegiance to God, "and thus the person is prepared to be influenced wrongly in a social way."

4. This brings us to the real core of the Christian objection to the dance—it is naturally dangerous to social purity. Its chief fascination lies in the relation of the sexes. Take the element of sex out of the problem and the dance need not be feared. But as it is generally conducted it brings the sexes into improper relations to each other, and thus sets the passions on fire. It is useless to mince matters on this point. The danger of the promiscuous dance lies in the too familiar handling of each other's persons when sexes are together. When we add to this the dissipating and fascinating attendant circumstances and especially the modes of female dress usually adopted for the dance, affording exposure of the arms and neck and bosom, it is impossible to doubt the existence of moral peril. The form of dress is doubtless innocently adopted, but it is nevertheless a vulgar and subtle though unintentional temptation to young men of both pure and impure mind. Christian young men who have previously been habitual dancers have repeatedly made this confession. Said one, when asked wherein lay his fascination: "To speak frankly, it lies in personal contact." Said a Philadelphia army officer when first witnessing a round dance: "If I should see a man offering to dance with my wife in that way I would horsewhip him." We do not mean to say that it is right and reasonable that they should be faithfully and conscientiously discussed by all God's people. I protest, once for all, that the Christian church is not at war with good manners, grace of motion or any safe and innocent amusement.

2. I hold that it is perfectly reasonable to expect a fair and candid consideration of this, as of other questions, by young Christians themselves, unless parents and teachers fall into the habit of talking to them like cranks; which we do not propose to do. My own experience with intelligent young people is, that they are reasonable and conscientious on this

such a large and liberal-minded man as Horace Bushnell should say of these forms of the dance: "They are the contrived possibilities of license which belongs to high life only when it runs low." No wonder Gail Hamilton says with her usual force: "The very pose of the parties suggests impurity." The chief of police has said that "Three-fourths of the abandoned girls of New York were ruined by dancing." Even the *Police Gazette* once said: "Strange that young ladies will allow gentlemen to assume positions and take liberties in the public dance that they would not allow in their parlors."

It has been said by still another: "The dancing hall is the nursery of the divorce court and the training ship of prostitution."

Now, I do not endorse all this strong language, but I quote these sentences because candid and thoughtful people know that there is at least a terrible basis of truth for such views. Allow me to make at this point two other quotations from earnest and well-balanced men. A young city pastor writes me: "When I came to make up my mind for myself as to my own personal practice and my advice to others, I decided that the way in which I had been brought up (and in which I continued while dependent upon my parents, out of regard for their wishes and feelings, if for no other reason) was on the whole the best way. I decided this before I became a minister, and the more I have traveled and the more I have seen of life in country and in city, the stronger has become my conviction that total abstinence from dancing, theater-going and card-playing, is the wisest, safest and happiest course." Prof. Amos R. Wells says: "Dancing—like all Gaul—is divided into three parts. One-third is aesthetic, one-third is physical exercise, one-third is sensual. As to the first, the enjoyment of fine music, of beautiful dresses, forms and motions, may all be had under better auspices than in the dance. A woodland ramble, a tennis tournament, an archery club, bicycle or horse-back riding, the concert room, they furnish in God's own way tenfold more beauty to the eye and ear than is furnished in the finest ball ever given. As for the second part, the physical exercise is ill-timed, ill-placed, ill-environment. Hot air, gas-light, excitement, midnight crowds, loaded supper tables, noise, these make a poor outfit for a gymnasium. Every honest investigator of the dance as now practiced in America, will agree that the third part into which this Heathen Gaul is divided is the stronghold of the province. The sensuality of the dance makes bold-eyed women of soft-eyed maidens; it makes swagging rakes of pure lads; it changes love to a flirtation and a game of flippant shrewdness; it makes applicable to many America Tolstois the terrific strictures on ignoble Russia. It never recreates a Christian; it disorients a Christian and creates a sensualist." It can not be denied that the dance, even in its best form, almost universally leads to excess; that it declines to keep the limits of recreation and runs to dissipation; that it often tends to create jealousy between husband and wife; that like the theater it is practically impossible to reform or reclaim it from abuse; "that the square dance cannot be kept square, but is sure to be rounded off with the waltz;" that "as practiced by the world it has about the same relation to immorality that wine-sipping has to drunkenness;" that "abstinence therefore is much more easily practiced than temperance;" and that they who speculate on its being divorced from danger and made a perfectly safe and spiritually healthful exercise, probably do not understand human nature and are only wasting their time.

5. Now as to the effect of this habit of dancing on the life of the Christian church, when practiced by church members, there is a remarkable unanimity of testimony which earnest-minded young Christians surely cannot afford to overlook. It is a very rare thing to find a devoted and efficient Christian worker who is a dancer. I can learn of no man or woman with a decidedly evangelistic spirit who approves of the dance. It is equally difficult to find any church members who are regularly and helpfully at the prayer meeting who are at all given to the dance. I have not been able to discover any church which is known far and wide as a power for the kingdom of Christ, whose members to any large extent patronize the dance. My own uniform experience during more than twenty years of work has been that the fathers and mothers who were most earnestly devoted to the moral well being of their children, and to the progress of the kingdom of God have shunned and dreaded the influence of the dance. I know of noble Christian parents who removed their family from a certain city, simply to escape the influence. I have corresponded with nearly a hundred prominent pastors and laymen in different

parts of the country on this subject, and a very large proportion of the replies are squarely against the practice of dancing by church members, while only five, in a very guarded and qualified way, approve. A few think there are other things just as injurious, which is undoubtedly true. We all know the position taken by such men as Moxley and B. Fay Mills on this question.

O, ye highly honored and richly endowed young disciples, called with a high calling to bear the great name and walk in the luminous steps of the Son of God! Do not dishonour the calling. Do not be afraid to exchange the pleasures of the flesh for the joys of the Spirit. If the dance or any other amusement is a hindrance to your Christ like efficiency, cast it from you for his dear sake. Look at the world through his eyes. Believe its needs, its sufferings, its blindness, its tears, and its guilt; hear its inarticulate cry for spiritual help, and put yourself eagerly under his supreme banner to answer that cry.

In conclusion, I simply make these quotations which I respectfully wish thoughtful mothers to ponder, throwing in this parenthesis, that while youth is in the home and dependent upon the parents, the parent's judgment should in all cases settle such a question as this, and no attempt should be made on the part of the young people to override that judgment. The late Hon. Howard Crosby, so forward in matters of reform in New York, makes this statement:

"The foundation for the vast amount of domestic misery and domestic crime which startles us often in its public outcroppings, was laid when parents allowed the sacredness of their daughter's person and purity of their maiden instincts to be rudely shocked in the waltz. This vice, by the force of fashion and 'good society,' has captivated the young and deluded the old in the church of Christ, and no minister of Christ must utter an uncertain sound here."

Bishop Cox, of western New York, says:

"The gross, debasing waltz would not be tolerated another year if Christian mothers in our communion would only set their faces against it and remove their daughters from its contaminations and their sons from that contempt of womanhood and womanly modesty which it begets."

—The Advance.

HOUSEWORK.—Mrs. Stowe, who is well-known as a practical and successful house-keeper, wrote many years ago:

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"But she can sweep, and cook, dust and do the duties of a well-ordered house, with its modern conveniences, and grow healthier thereby every year. The times when all women did housework a part of every day, were the times when the great majority of women were healthy."

"At present, the heritage of vigorous muscles, firm nerves, strong backs, and cheerful physical life has gone from most women."

We should pray with as much earnestness as those who expect every thing from God. We should act with as much energy as those who expect every thing from themselves.—*Colton*.

No one can ask honestly or hope-fully to be delivered from temptation unless he has himself honestly and firmly determined to do the best he can to keep out of it.—*Ruskin*.

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