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We give a place to the following essay in compliance with the desire of the pious gentleman who wrote it: But its great length precludes the possibility of our publishing it in any other way than in detached pieces. We could wish he had been less prolix. As it is, we will continue it until it is gone through with.

MR. HAMILTON,

Sir—you was pleased some time ago to publish a piece in your paper in favor of dancing, in answer to some observations which you seen in manuscript, written against that practice; or which the writer of the answer saw—but you did not publish the piece itself. Perhaps you will now publish it, and so let both sides be heard.

Yours, &c. W. A.

As the practice of dancing has become so familiar, and professors of religion seem to be deeply involved in it; and it appearing to my view, to be an immoral practice, I have felt a desire that the subject should be examined, in order to try the nature of it.—If the practice be right in the sight of God, it ought to be encouraged by every Christian; but on the other hand, if it is wrong in itself, it ought to be suppressed or discountenanced. Now in order to try this, it may be needful to examine into the end for which we were made; and I suppose none will deny that the main design God had in our creation, was his own glory, and our happiness.—Well, if this is admitted; then I conceive that all our thoughts, words and actions should be such as tend to his glory, by adoring, honouring and praising him, both for what he is in himself and for what he has done for us, and in all our conduct to aim at it. Whether, therefore, we eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do it all to the glory of God, 1 Cor. 10:21.

Now when people of both sexes, meet together in the dancing room, if they would put the question to their own hearts, and to that all piercing eye of God in some such words as these: Lord! I am now in thy presence; and am I now aiming at thy glory, in thus dancing in this house of—can I say mourning, or must I say mirth and jollity? And rather, doth not my conscience accuse me, as now by this practice, I am satisfying the desires of flesh and of the carnal mind—and that if I knew this right should be the last, I should be in this probationary world, Oh! how would I shrink from this evil practice—and rather would not I be at the practice of prayer (a duty expressly enjoined by the word of God) that the Lord would bless me and prepare me for Heaven. Now I think upon an impartial inspection, into our conduct, if our conscience condemns us; it is our duty to desist immediately, for if our heart condemns us, "God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things," John 3:20.

Objection—David danced, who was one of the best men that lived, and also his son Solomon says, there is "a time to dance," and is not these instances, warrant for us?

Reply—I do not think so, for set the case it was so, that David's dance, was in all respects, similar to those dances now practiced, it would not be a good reason or ground, for us to do so; for we should not make David, nor any mere man, a complete rule, or pattern to walk by, seeing that would lead us to defend murder, adultery, and rash judgement; see 2d Sam. 12: Chap. for David was guilty of all these things.

But I think David's dance was very different from these modern dances—his being an act of religious worship, expressing thanks and praise to God for great favours received, and evidently aiming at his glory, as you may see in 2d Sam. Chap. 6. and it was told David, saying, the Lord hath blessed the house of Obed Edom, and all that pertaineth to him, because of the Ark of God—So David went and brought up the Ark of God, from the house of Obed Edom, into the city of David, with gladness; and it was so, that when they that bore the Ark of the Lord, had gone six paces; he sacrificed oxen and fallings. And David danced before the Lord, with all his might;—and David was girded with a linnen Ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the Ark of the Lord, with shouting and with the sound of

the trumpet. (But it appears to me from the sequel of the account, that Michal, Saul's daughter, did not relish this spiritual kind of dancing; perhaps she would have been fonder of these modern, carnal dances—"and it came to pass, as the Ark of the covenant of the Lord came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul, looking out at a window, saw King David dancing and playing; and she despised him in her heart.") And also you may see in 1st Chron. 15th and 16th Chap. where it appears, they were enjoined to sanctify themselves for so solemn a transaction, as moving the Ark of the Lord, which Moses had made, while in the wilderness, which sanctifying was properly done by prayer and fasting. Now do the carnal dancers sanctify themselves by praying and fasting, previous to meeting together, in the jovial dancing room? No, the inconsistency would be too glaring; so it is evident that the dancing of David was of a different nature, and practiced with different views from which the carnal, flesh pleasing dances are; For at that time David introduced the beautiful Psalm which follows, to praise the Lord for the great things he had done for Israel. And similar to David's dance, was that of Meriam, the Prophetess, together with the holy women of Israel; for they went out with Timbrels and danced, as you may see Exodus 15, 20; but in order to discern the nature and views of Meriam's dance read the 14th and 15th chapters, where we have an account of the Lord displaying his mighty power, in dividing the red sea, for the Israelites to pass over, as on dry land; and then causing the waters to return again, which drowned all the Egyptians, who in a hostile manner pursued them. Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, &c. So that we see their singing and dancing was with a view to praise the Lord for the great and marvelous—yea, miraculous deliverance they had just experienced.—And then while dancing, they were singing praise to the Lord, "for he hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." Now does these carnal dancers sing praise to the Lord while they are thus spending their precious time.

And similar to David's, was that dancing, of the holy women of Israel, when Saul was king, and when David slew the Philistine, Goliath, for we read in 1st Samuel 18th chap, that the women came out with singing and dancing with Tabrets,

\* Michal not knowing the real cause why David danced, in the manner he then did, judged of his conduct from what she knew of to be the practice in Israel at that time. She well knew that dancing was practiced by "vain fellows" only, in common and ordinary cases; and she judged that, to act like one of those, was a shameful and indecent thing in the king. It would have been so had it been on an ordinary occasion; whether it was justifiable as a religious ceremony, or whether it was will-worship, I shall not pretend to decide: but certain it is, that David intended to "praise God in the dance." Will any of the dancers, at this time, pretend to say that they intend to "praise God in the dance?" Instead of this, if any one of the company should attempt to praise God during any part of the frolic, would he not spoil the sport; and after being ridiculed, derided and laughed at as a cracked brained fanatic, would most probably be turned out, so that the mirth might proceed? Those, however, who quote this case as an authority for dancing should bring themselves within the design of it.—They should dance only with a view to "praise God in the dance," and then the only question at issue would be, whether this mode of worship be warranted under the present dispensation of the covenant of grace? The question now for Christians to ask their consciences (for I speak as unto Christians) is, do they act consistently with their character and profession, when they dance as the "vain fellows" do? A Christian in all his actions ought either directly or indirectly, to aim at the glory of God. Will any Christian dare to say that he goes to one of our common dances to glorify God? Would he even dare to ask the blessing of God upon what he does? If any one would attempt to do so, at the opening of the ball, would it not be deemed by the most thoughtful present, a horrible profanation?

with joy, and with instruments of music.—And with various instruments of music did the people worship the Lord in those times. So that I conceive the dances above recited, was of an holy nature, and that they were aiming at the honour and glory of God.

And as to what Solomon says, that there is a time to dance; I do agree that there is a time to dance, a time to love and a time to hate, and indeed there has been a long time since Adam's first existence, even some thousand years; and thus there has been time for every purpose, of both God and man; for Cain to kill Abel, for David to kill Uriah, for Herod to kill John the Baptist, yea and for the people to kill or crucify the Lord Jesus. So we see there has been time enough for all these things, and shall we attempt to defend the practice of hating and killing one another, because Solomon says there is a time for all these purposes.

And further, we cannot suppose that Solomon contradicted himself by approving of such dances as the custom now is; for we read in his book called the Preacher, chap. 7. it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting; and that the heart of the wise are in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth, such as these dances are. And James coincides with him, for he enjoins people, in his fourth chapter, to be afflicted, and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness; and is any merry let him sing Psalms.

But on the other hand, I suppose the dancing, similar to these modern dances, we may see an account of in the 6th chap. of Mark, when and where king Herod made a supper to his Lord's high Captains, and chief estates of Galilee, and when his unlawful wife's daughter danced, so as to please and elate him, he would murder John the Baptist, to please and avenge her and her mother. There we see some of the fruits of irreligious dancing. So it appears plain that there is no scriptural authority for the kind of dancing now practiced. And it may be a question, whether it is not in a measure, a transgression of the seventh commandment, at least in a remote sense, for when both sexes are blended together in the dancing floor, it is a question whether they are so cautious and guarded against a breach of their chastity, as Jos'ph was when tempted, Gen. 31, 12. And I have thought it inconsistent to see or hear of some respectable, and I would hope chaste ladies, get up and boldly face a man, in the position practiced in dancing, in the presence of the Great Being who made them, and a number of spectators, in the house of mirth and jollity. Such as was Herod's birth day dancing; and then in a few days after, approach the holy table, or communion of the Lord. There it appears to be such a contrariety between the two places and actions, that I do not think Herod, would have done both these things, for I suppose he would rather have killed both John and his Lord and master, than to approach to his holy table; even if the ordinance had then been instituted. And I think those who partake of that holy ordinance, and precious privileges, ought to renounce the dancing practice, lest they in some sense "crucify the Lord afresh," and wound their own conscience. The Christian, bent of heart, ought not to be, how far may I go, or venture on doubtful things, and yet escape Hell and get to Heaven, (like Naaman, the Syrian, when he got his body clean of the leprosy, saying to the prophet Elisha, in this the Lord pardon thy servant, when I bow down myself, in the house of Rimmon, 2d Kings 5, 18,) but their pursuits and desires should be like Davids. Lord shew me thy commandments, and give me an heart to do them.—Oh! that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee.—Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.—Make me to go in the paths of thy commandments, for therein do I delight.—Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken me in thy way.—I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.—I hate vain thoughts; but thy law do I love. Psalm 119.

Now I should think if these were the exercises of our minds, that the dancing room would not be pleasant to us; but a very disagreeable entertainment; and who

ther we would not abstain from it, as the scriptures enjoins Christians to abstain from all appearance of evil. I doubt not but there has been, and still is, a considerable combating, or conflict, in the minds of many young people about the practice of dancing, such as the richest, the most creditable, polite and fashionable young people, yea old people, nay full members of the church do attend the dances—and if I abstain from it, I will be looked upon, and treated with contempt; and as one that knows nothing in the world. I will not acquire those polite and fashionable salutations, and genteel addresses; which the world abounds with. And yet there is something within, as a check, which agitates my mind, so that I am halting between two opinions; indeed I know not what to do. To such I would say, "quench not the spirit, my spirit shall not always strive with man, and grieve not the holy spirit of God; turn ye at my reproof; behold I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you." Beware of refusing, disregarding and setting at naught his counsel and reproof, lest the following awful threatnings, be realized on you. "I will laugh at your calamity, I will mock where your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as disolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you." Then you may call and he will not answer, you may seek him early but you shall not find him.—and why all this? because you won't listen, now they would have none of my counsel, they despised my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.—but whoso harkeneth unto me, shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil, Prov. 1 chap.

And besides, shortly, the irresistible messenger, Death, will arrest you; and go you must. And if your affections are fastened on the dancing, and such practices; how awful will the cogitations of your mind be. But perhaps you will say, these observations and advices ought to influence and check old people, whose natural vigour, and strength of body, is declining so that they have lost their relish for such gaiety and levity; and so are expecting shortly to die. And besides they have had their time of pleasure, when they were young; and they ought to allow the present young people the same privileges they enjoyed themselves. I admit the remarks appears plausible to corrupt nature; but as the practice of these modern dances, are no where sanctioned in the holy scriptures, by either precept or example; as I think has been shewn above; it is destitute of any force. And that altho' old people have had their time of carnal pleasure, it is so much the worse for them, and for which they have cause to mourn, when they reflect on such past conduct. And therefore, ought to warn and caution young people from the like, lest woe and bitterness be the end thereof.

And besides, the young know not that they will be spared to grow old, for there is comparatively few that do. Therefore they ought to "remember their creator in the days of their youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them," Eccl. 12.

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you—and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty," 2 Cor. 6:17. The Apostle Paul appears to have cited this promise from the Prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, and seems to have esteemed them very highly, and therefore took occasion to exhort the Corinthian church, including himself, to cleanse themselves, from all fleshly and carnal evils; and to press on for more holiness. "Having therefore these promises dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting in holiness in the fear of God." But how can you expect to cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, while you are, as it were, plunging yourself into the filth, in those promiscuous dances of Male and Female together. But perhaps you will ask, what do we mean by those words, flesh and uncleanness.—Ans: perhaps the terms are derived from the various writings, that we read of in the Mosaic Dispensation. But I think the Apostle Paul gives us the plainest definition of them, in