

*Five Reasons Why
Methodists Don't
Dance*

BY

REV. FRANKLIN F. LEWIS

A. M. (Harvard) S. T. B. (Boston)

With An Introduction By

REV. JOHN ROACH STRATON, D. D.

Pastor Calvary Baptist Church

New York City

Thirty-five Cents

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THE GLAD TIDINGS PUBLISHING CO.

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Foreword

This sermon was preached at a regular morning service of the Cargill Memorial Methodist Episcopal Church. The occasion which led to its delivery is amply explained in the first few paragraphs. The problem it confronts, however, is not at all local. Similar conditions are to be found in practically every section of the country.

With the exception of a few quotations and foot notes, the message is here as it "came from the heart and lips of a preacher on his feet." The stenographer's report has been revised, and some of the authorities quoted more at length than was possible at the time, but the subject matter and the form of expression are left largely as they were delivered.

That it should be in book form is a second thought. A stenographer was asked to take the address to assure an accurate report by the Public Press. It was only after "the community was stirred as it had not been for a generation by a single sermon," that a demand for its publication was heeded.

As could be expected many letters were printed in the daily papers, condemning the preacher for his utterances. On the other hand, many were printed commending him for the positions taken. Among other things sent to the author directly was a "black hand letter" threatening his life.

Another factor entering into its publication is the generous offer of one of our local laymen to distribute gratuitously five hundred copies. This man "righteous before God," and therefore "full of good works" heads our Centenary list with the largest contribution.

With the hope that the message may be helpful to ministers as they confront the rising tides of worldliness, and to parents and young people who may de-

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sire some recent statement of the "Reasons Why Methodists Don't Dance," it is sent forth.

FRANKLIN F. LEWIS.

Janesville, Wisconsin.

Very heartily do I endorse and commend this little book. I am for any man who hits the modern dance with any sort of weapon. While cast in popular form, this discussion cannot but be convincing to any fair-minded and any receptive heart.

Every great civilization of the past has decayed first and fastest at the point of a wrong relationship between the sexes. The danger signals for our age are now out, and these corrupt dances are the most menacing, because the most plausible and insidious, of the harmful forces of the times.

We no longer have the simple and stately dances of a former day, and we do not enter here into a discussion as to whether they had a place or whether they were right; but beyond any question the dances of this day are an expression of degeneration in human society. These dances take their very names and movements from the lower animals, and the amazing thing about it is, that there seems to be so little conscience on this question among Christian people.

Well does that thoughtful and highly talented Englishman, Harold Begbie, in his book, "The Crisis of Morals," exclaim: "Think what it means that these filthy and lascivious dances are tolerated in private houses and that they are laughed at and caricatured in the newspapers as though they were merely an absurdity of fashion."

When one thinks quietly and dispassionately about the matter it is difficult to see what the difference is between a man hugging a woman sitting on a sofa or hugging her whirling on the dance floor. And if there is any choice of evils between the two things, does not the greater danger lie in the dance, because there are whole of the two bodies—male and female

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—are in closer contact, and the sexual impulses are more deeply stirred and stimulated by sensuous music and rhythmical motion?

A fossilized octogenarian, or a self-complacent mollycoddle with ice water in his veins may be able in the dance to hold in his arms a throbbing, beautiful young woman with almost half her body exposed, and the other half clothed largely with good intentions—such a man, I say, under these circumstances may maintain a philosophical calm, but any young fellow with red blood in his veins and the elemental forces of nature operating in him, cannot so easily do so.

The modern dance is of the devil. It is altogether bad, and I bid this little book, which attacks it, God-speed!

(Signed)

JOHN ROACH STRATON.

Pastor Calvary Baptist Church,
New York City.

Five Reasons Why Methodists Don't Dance

I have announced, my friends, to speak this morning, on the subject: "Five Reasons Why Methodists Don't Dance."

Those of you who are not Methodists, who may be members of other Churches, or members of no Church for that matter, who have come to hear what I have to say, do me an honor in coming to hear me speak on this subject; and if I shall say some things that may be unpleasant for you to hear, I hope you will consider that they are unpleasant for me to say. I shrink from saying some things that I shall have to say, but in order to deal adequately with the question in hand, we must talk to the subject and not about something else. We must go to the vital things concerned. Like a surgeon who may be cutting a cancer out of the vitals of his patient, it is unpleasant for him as well as the person who is being treated for the deadly malady.

I wish further to say that this subject is no hobby of mine. I have been preaching now in the regular ministry for twelve years and this is the first time I have ever spent an entire morning or evening service speaking upon the subject. I have referred to it at various times in sermons as the question may have arisen in connection with some related theme, but I have never delivered an address or sermon on this particular subject since I have been in the regular ministry.

I did speak directly upon it while I was preaching as a Student Pastor at Broad Ripple, Indiana, where there was a pleasure resort park out side the city of Indianapolis, and where dancing was running full blast not only every night in the week during the Summer months, but was in full swing all day on Sunday and all night Sunday night, and where I felt

I was in a situation that demanded I say something about the dance, and thus raise a note of warning against its allurements in that particular place. I usually went to this suburb on Saturday evening direct from the University where I was a student, and was entertained by some of the good people of the Church. One Saturday night I stayed at a physician's home and retiring early slept undisturbed until morning. At the breakfast table the next morning this doctor asked me how I had rested during the night. After assuring him that I had slept well, I asked him how he had fared. Whereupon he informed me that shortly after he retired he was called to attend a young woman nineteen years old who had come out from the city to one of the dance halls and resorts at the park, who after dancing half the night had become drunken and enraged by drink, and he had spent the entire night there working with her to save her life.

Here I was, arising refreshed to preach the Gospel to cloistered folks when at our very doors doctors were spending the entire night over young women debauched by the pleasure Casinos. This will at least explain why I spoke upon Dancing at that particular place. Then as now, I have always sought to speak upon things of vital interest to the people, and not side step any subject because it might chance to be unpopular. And while I have not spoken upon the subject since, it is by no means that I have changed my mind, or that the dance has in any essential feature been reformed. It is simply because I have never been where it was running at loose ends as it was there, and is in Janesville today. The reason I arise to speak upon the subject in your city today is the very fact that it has a new lease upon life, and is appealing for the patronage of our young people inside and outside the Church, as it has not done in many, many years. It has gotten under such headway that it is almost impossible for parents who know what the dance is to hold their boys and

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girls from its lure. Aphrodite, the goddess of passion and lust, has been resurrected, and many Christians are worshiping at her shrine. The young man who doesn't dance is looked upon by many as being either string haltered or ruptured. And when it comes to a battle between public sentiment on the one hand and ideals on the other, sentiment usually wins out.

I find likewise it has invaded sacred precincts as has not been the case in many years. Colleges and schools which have stood out against it have caved in, and today think they know more than their founders about morals as well as electricity. It is to be hoped they do, as morals and religion should be progressive as well as Science, but it will be well to remember that the primary things in morals have been worked out centuries ago, like the discovery of the Mariner's Compass, and can never be discovered again or improved upon. Their application to life may be new and more generally known and observed, but the Ten Commandments will never be superseded. The fact is, human society shows lapses as well as strides forward. That the ban has been lifted on certain social sins may but indicate a moral lapse rather than moral progress.

To prove to you that this lapse has taken place, or at least these time honored positions are being abandoned, let me refer you to a recent circular sent out by Grinnell College. This as you know is one of the most noted and splendidly equipped colleges in the west, founded by sturdy Congregationalists.

Here is what this circular says:

"SOME TRADITIONS"

"Grinnell College has traditional school customs which are interesting and lend an air of individuality to the school. Two of the most noteworthy are those regarding dancing and smoking. The wooing of Lady Nicotine is and always has been taboo within the sacred precincts of the campus proper. The dancing tradition, or custom, however has been modi-

fied in later years. Originally dancing was 'bad form' at any time or place during the college residence. But nowadays there are three or four times a year when the entire college, faculty and all, get together and have grand, comprehensive, satisfying hops."

The question at once arises in one's mind, why don't they let in "Lady Nicotine" as well as Lady Aphrodite. During the recent war the Red Cross administered an anesthetic to Miss Nicotine and seemingly extracted her dangerous fangs. Army chaplains and Y. M. C. A. leaders who still held "Lady Aphrodite" corrupt and taboo passed "Lady Nicotine" through the lines. "Bad form," you say. Yes, it would be "bad form" to have college girls twisting their lips about cigars or rolling cigarettes in their dainty fingers, but when the moss backed, sedate, dignified College Faculty gets together in "Grand, comprehensive, satisfying hops," "bad form" hustles out the back door and "Lady Aphrodite," nimble and nude, walks in at the front door.

The Church likewise has shown a tendency to cave in,* and if not sanctioning the dance, is making no concerted battle against it. The time honored position of of the church with reference to the dance is well known. Practically every Church, Protestant and Catholic has opposed it. But we are "pussyfooting"

*"In the face of these terrible conditions, that ought to be known to all intelligent leaders of the moral life of the community, we have the fact that many Churches are now holding dances in their buildings. I have here, for example, pamphlets announcing dances in a famous Baptist Church on Manhattan Island, and Churches of other denominations are holding dances constantly in their own buildings and even in down town hotels.—A short time ago the wife of one of our preachers danced all night long. This dance must have been with other men, because surely an 'advanced' and 'liberal' parson would not yet go the limit of himself attending a ball and dancing."

"The Menace of Immortality in Church and State," pages 32-33.

By Rev. John R. Straton.

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around, trying to hold our own, and all the while the lecherous hand of the dancing master is reaching into our Sunday Schools and young peoples' societies and lugging off the very hope of the future Church. The dance has broken loose like a craze in our cities and is sweeping the country as it has not done since the days following the civil war. The Church is being caught in its licentious embrace. And this is another reason I am speaking upon it today.

When you work your head off in a five weeks' revival effort, preaching, singing, visiting, trying by every means to get people to forsake their sins and unite with the Church of Jesus Christ, and then go from that revival meeting to the halls of the city and there find women who are members of the church whirling around in the arms of men not their husbands, and find men who should be interested in the salvation of the world hugging other men's wives in public, isn't it time that somebody wake up? Then when you have women who have charge of the little girls of your Church, rallying them on week days in an attempt to teach them religion and Christ's programme for their lives and the world, tell you that mothers have said, "My girls can come to the Children's meetings if you will put the meeting at a time when it will not interfere with their dancing lessons," isn't it getting time, again I say, for somebody not only to wake up but to get up?

One other thing I will mention as a back ground for my remarks. I have been preaching in your city now going on five years, and during that time I have attended many meetings apart from regular Church services. I have been in patriotic meetings; I have attended concerts; I have attended union meetings of the Churches; in fact I have been at almost every sort of gathering of a cultural, educational, or religious nature where the public are invited or privileged to attend, and I can say this: I have seen on the dance floor in your city between the hours of twelve and one o'clock more young men and young women

between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five than I have ever seen at any one meeting I have attended. Now doesn't this mean something? Shouldn't it mean something to you as giving you a line on the tendency of the times? Whatever you may believe about what I may have to say, this at least ought to provoke you to thoughtful consideration. Degenerate and jaded Nero may fiddle while Rome burns, but for you to fiddle while your own house is on fire is not only folly, it's crime.

I should say further, to disabuse anybody's mind of the feeling that I am prejudiced, that I have been raised in a "straight jacket," that I have been brought up in the Sunday School and the Church, and do not know anything else, and don't know what the dance is; I will say in reference to this, that I know what the dance is. I have been close enough to see it carried on in my own father's house with my own uncle furnishing the music with his violin; and through the years, since I have been in the ministry, and before, while I was in college, I have seen the dance and know what it is. I have seen it in Europe from Naples to Liverpool; in Belgium, France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany and Scotland. I have seen it in America from Boston to San Francisco, out doors and in doors, and I have seen it at its best and have seen it at its worst. I have witnessed it in what you would call "good form", and what you would call "bad form," and I believe I can say that so far as my being prejudiced against the subject is concerned, I may claim to be at least as free from prejudice as anybody who may oppose it. After I have said that, you will still insist I am prejudiced. Well, for that matter, no one could open his mouth to speak on any subject from breakfast food to Peace Treaties but that somebody will arise to say he is prejudiced. The fact is when a person has no argument to produce himself he always hides behind the threadbare theory of prejudice. I therefore, beg of you to be as open minded and free from prejudice in favor of the

IT VITIATES RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

subject as you ask me to be open minded and free from prejudice against it. One thing at least I am sure you will grant me, a sincerity of purpose and courage which compel me to denounce a custom so generally indulged as the modern dance and denounce it in language I shall needs use, however much I may personally dislike it.

Now I have promised you, "Five Reasons Why Methodists Don't Dance." I, therefore, proceed to state them, and to give to you the position of the most victorious branch of the Church of Christ since Apostolic days. Since the Methodist Church has not been an ambulance corps, but an army of crusaders to conquer the world, the flesh and the devil, it has fought the dance to the last ditch. The first indictment we bring against the dance is:

I. IT VITIATES THE RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL LIFE.

If this is true, this ought to be all that is necessary to say to religious people. People who take Christ as their Lord and Savior and unite with His Church to bring the world to God should be anxious to shun every form of sin, both of the flesh and spirit, that invades the sacred precincts of the soul and vitiates their spiritual life. The dance has been condemned by the most spiritually minded men and women of the Church from the earliest times as being not only harmful but fatal to the Christian life. Tertullian, one of the early Church Fathers, said: "If Christians were found in the assemblies of the dancers, it proved them to be no longer true Christians." This was uttered at a time in the Empire when Rome was rotten to the very heart, and yet was so insensible of her condition, she was boasting herself as Mistress of the World. The Church saved itself from the fate of the Roman Empire because it refused while in Rome to do as Rome did. If the Church ever falls it will be when

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she boasts herself as the Mistress of Spiritual Leadership of the World, while at her heart she is worldly and insensible of her real apostacy and doesn't know that God Almighty has written "Ichabod" over her portals, and spewed her out of His mouth.

Some times people try to prove that dancing is alright by the Bible. "They danced in the Bible times. David danced," they say. Well, the Bible is like a fiddle, you can play any kind of a tune on it you wish, if you have the ingenuity. Nearly every form of vice and social evil have been defended from the Scriptures. You can pull things out of their relation here and there and prove most anything by the Bible. This is especially true of the Old Testament. Slavery was intrenched for centuries in Christian lands because they proved it from the Bible. Mormonism and Mohammedanism proved their systems of polygamy from the Bible, and prove them today. Yes, Noah got drunk, and David committed adultery, but this doesn't prove that they are right.

However, it might be well to say that there is no place in the Bible where it can be proved that the form of dancing mentioned was a sex dance. The best authorities tell us that the dancing customs of the Bible were purely oriental in their form and were carried on by young women dancing alone, or by the sexes dancing separately. The modern dance is as different from the dance of the ancient people of Israel as are our costumes. But even if it should be proved that they danced the "Bunny Hug" and the "Turkey Trot" in the time of Moses or Isaiah, this would prove nothing for Christians in the twentieth century, when we are supposed to be living under the leadership of the Spirit and taking only such diversions as can be used in the name of the Lord Jesus.

That the dance vitiates the spiritual nature of men and women alike is a fact well known by every sin-

cere religious worker. The Church has recognized this fundamental fact, as we have already said, and we shall return to some positions taken by the Church later, but here we wish to point out that what great spiritual leaders have said is after all more fundamental than mere positions taken by ecclesiastical bodies. It has been the great Statesman who has reached the point of highest vision in the welfare of organized society and not Parliaments or Congresses. No great literary society assembled ever wrote an *Odyssey* or a *King Lear*. To know the best there is in Music or Science one must turn to men like Wagner, and Handel, and Newton, and Edison. Art reaches its zenith in men like Phidias and Raphael and Michelangelo, rather than in Royal Academies and Art Institutes. The same thing is true about religion.

When we turn to the greatest things achieved in religion and to the highest points reached in the realm of the Spiritual nature of Man we find that great souls have spoken as they have been moved by the Holy Spirit of God. Men like Isaiah and Moses, like John the Baptist and St. Paul have discovered for the human race the inner workings of the human soul, and mapped out for all time the path mankind must follow if it reach "the City which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." The world today follows more their vision than that of Sanhedrin or Ecumenical Councils. And these prophets of God have had a succession in the great spiritual leaders of our own age. What these say about great moral questions or social sins should be given some weight in our thinking.

When we ask these men their opinion of the subject in question we find them invariably pronouncing against the dance. Dwight L. Moody says: "I would as leave go out into the street and eat mud as to dance." Charles H. Spurgeon says: "When I hear of the modern dance I have an uncomfortable feeling

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about the throat, as I recall that a dance cost the head of the preacher, John the Baptist." Bishop Coxe, of the Episcopal Church, New York, says: "The gross debasing waltz would not be tolerated for 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 the contempt of womanhood and womanly modesty which it begets. Alas! that women professing to follow Christ and godliness should not rally for the honor of their sex and drive these shameless dances from society!

"The lasciviousness of dances too commonly tolerated in our times, is so disgraceful to the age, and so irreconcilable with the Gospel of Christ, that I feel it my duty to the souls of my flock to warn those who run to the same excess of riot in these things, that they come not to the holy table. Classes preparing for confirmation are informed that I will not lay hands, knowingly, on any one who is not prepared to renounce such things. Let all choose deliberately whom they will serve."

Dr. Talmage says: "The dance is the first step to eternal ruin for a great multitude of both sexes. You know, my friends, what postures and attitudes and figures are suggested of the devil. They who glide into the dissolute dance, glide over an inclined plane, and the dance is swifter and swifter, wilder and wilder, until with the speed of lightning they whirl off the edges of a decent life into a fiery future. You have no right, my brother, my sister, to take an attitude to the sound of music which would be unbecoming in the absence of music. No Chickering Grand of city parlor, or fiddle of mountain picnic, can consecrate that which God hath cursed."

Sam Jones says: "It is these worldly amusements that are sweeping over our homes and Churches, and paralyzing us, and making us today little better than graveyards. I never saw a spiritual man in my life

that would not stand up and say, 'Do you think there is any harm in the dance?' Why don't you ask me if I think there is any harm in the prayer meeting, or if I think there is any harm in family prayer. You know there isn't. And whenever you hear a fellow asking if there is any harm in the dance you can reply, 'You lying old rascal, you know there is!'

"That young lady says, 'I would join the church but I love to dance.' Well, young lady, go on. We will say that you go to two hundred balls. That's a big allowance, isn't it? And that you dance hundreds of sets. Bye and bye you die without God and without hope, and down into the flames of despair you go forever; and as you walk the sulphurous streets of damnation you can tell them, 'I am in hell forever, it is true, but I danced four hundred times, I did.' Now won't that be a consolation?"

We could go on and on repeating words from this great religious leader and from that; giving the testimony of the men and women of our own and other times, against the dance, but this is unnecessary. This one thing I would emphasize further in this connection; young people themselves when asked to become Christians give the dance as the chief thing standing in their way, and they do this when no one is saying anything about the dance. There is innate honesty, a downright genuine religious conviction, in the heart of the average young man and woman who do not belong to the church which holds the dance as being incompatible with the ideals of the Christian life and the Church of Jesus Christ, and they will say to you when asked to become Christians, "We would be glad to unite with the church, but we love the dance and we don't believe we can be Christians and dance." When these young people tell us that they cannot become Christians because they cannot give up the dance, they are placing the standards of the Church infinitely higher than many people who belong to the

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Church; and we respect them more for not belonging to the Church if they are sure they cannot live up to its ideals, than we do those who join the Church and drag its ideals down to their own level.

Some one will say, "You are responsible, or the Church is responsible for creating such a dilemma in the mind of the young people. The reason these young people take such a position is by virtue of the fact that the Church has condemned dancing and created a situation which embarrasses it in its appeal to those who would belong to its fold, and even want to belong, but will not, so long as the Church condemns something they can see no harm in." But this is not the case. We contend that there is in the heart of the average young person a sense of the incompatibility of worldliness and worship; they know, apart from the position of the Church, that no one can carry water on both shoulders; they agree with Christ that no one can serve God and mammon. They choose the world because it seems to offer to them the larger outlook upon a life of pleasure and turn their back upon the Church. They themselves give as their chief reason for not belonging to the Church, the dance, and any evangelist traveling the country from shore to shore will tell you this is true. Ask Dwight L. Moody, J. Wilbur Chapman, Billy Sunday, or any of these men whose names are household words around the world.

Here is what William E. Biederwolf, one of the well known evangelists of our day has to say in this connection: "The most difficult young man, and especially young woman in the world to win for Christ, is the one who is devoted to the dance. In my work as an evangelist I have had scores upon scores say to me, 'If I must quit dancing I will not become a Christian', and this is usually said when not a word has been said about the dance. It must be the prompting of a guilty conscience. If the

fascination of the dance is so terrible as to cause you to choose it in preference to Christ and the Church, that alone ought to stamp it as a great enemy to moral and spiritual beauty." He also adds this:

"For every professing Christian who has anything to say in defence of the dance there can be found an unconverted person who makes no pretense at being religious who will say that if he becomes a Christian he would expect to give up that form of indulgence. I wonder why this is?—I wonder if it is possible that people who make no pretense at being religious can see ruin and moral putrefaction where God's own professed children can see nothing but innocent and harmless pleasure? Or I wonder if the people of the world are more honest than some of us who will not admit the truth because, forsooth, it would rob us of an excitement that appeals to our sensual natures."

Our subject is: "Five Reasons Why Methodists Don't Dance", but only one of the religious leaders I have quoted belongs to the Methodist Church. Any one, therefore, who says the Church generally does not oppose the dance, does not know what he is talking about—as Sam Jones says in plain language, "He's a liar"; because the Church as an organization has opposed it. The Methodist Church, to be sure, has led in the Crusade, but they have not been alone, thank God. Some in our own ranks have contended that it was a mistake we ever named the dance in a specific article and made it a point of expulsion from our fold. They say, and the press of the country at every General Conference makes capital of it, "that no one has ever been expelled, or at least is not expelled today for violating this article of our Discipline; and since we do not enforce it, we should eliminate it." To this we reply, Why not say this about many provisions of our Discipline? It am not saying we should not be more punctual in enforcing our Church law. But I am

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saying this: if we begin to eliminate solely on the ground of lax enforcement, why not eliminate some of the following:

In our General Rules which every Methodist preacher is required to read in a public service at least once a year we find things like these: "The profaning the Day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work therein or by buying or selling."

"Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; particularly speaking evil of Magistrates or of Ministers."

"The putting on of gold or costly apparel."

"Laying up treasure upon earth."

And here is what the General Rules say about one who does these things. "If there be any among us who observes them not, who habitually breaks any of them. . .we will admonish him of the error of his ways . . .but then if he repents not, he hath no more place among us."

Does anybody know any Methodist who is guilty of breaking one of these rules? If so let him report to the proper authorities and receive a reward!

But the contenders for the elimination of article "280", will say, "These things are in the General Rules. We are contending against things in our penal code where specific things are mentioned with a penalty of expulsion attached." Alright let us turn to this Chapter where Article "280" is found. Is it the only thing there ever violated and not enforced? What about Articles "281-287" inclusive? We repeat but one. Article "281" says:

"If a member of the Church habitually neglect the means of grace, such as the public worship of God, the Lord's Supper, family and private prayer, searching the scriptures, class meetings, and prayer meetings, the preacher in charge shall visit him and explain to him the consequences if he continue his neglect. If he do not amend, he shall be brought to

trial, and if found guilty of wilful neglect, he shall be expelled."

Have any of you who have followed the debates of the General Conference for the last twenty five years ever heard any debates proposing the elimination of Article "281"? If you started out today to shoot Methodists who violated the Discipline, and were ordered to shoot only those who fell guilty of articles "280" and Article "281", you would shoot ten Methodists who are guilty of violating article "281", to one guilty of violating article "280." Methodists generally don't dance. A few of them do. A few of them get drunk, and a few of them don't pay their honest debts. But Methodists generally are not guilty of these things. Methodists *are* guilty of neglecting "The Means of Grace."

We as Methodists have nailed this dancing business, and when we put a specific rule in our Discipline against it, that wasn't the beginning of the fight against the dance. We have always opposed it. In 1872 our General Conference named "Dancing and Attending Dancing Schools" out loud, and from that day to this the Dancing Masters and dance devotees have been offended. Why was a specific rule put in our Book of Discipline when it was? A careful reading of the temper of the times will give us an answer. Worldliness, particularly dancing, broke out as a scourge over the country following the relaxed tension at the close of the Civil War, like it is breaking out today following the nervous tension that has been held in bounds during our recent war. One of the patrons of a fashionable ball I recently attended, while making the rounds of the dances in this City, said to me: "This is the first Annual Ball we have held for three years, as we thought it out of keeping with the times to hold such functions during the war."

But when the war is over not only the "Annuals" let loose, but every brood and breed swarm like a

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Plague of Flies or Frogs in Egypt, until the whole country is smothered by the creeping, hopping, wriggling thing. This was the situation the Church found itself in at the close of our Civil War. It will be well to read the preliminary remarks of "The Committee on the State of the Church" which made the report at the Conference when the much mooted article was placed in our Discipline. Hear what they said:

"Your Committee have considered a large number of memorials and petitions from members of the Church in different sections of the land, deploring the sinful amusements too often indulged in by members of the Church; also many resolutions and pastoral addresses emanating from Annual Conferences and other official bodies belonging to our own and *sister denominations*. Influenced by these as well as by our own personal observations, your committee are of the opinion that there is just cause for alarm, and a necessity for General Conference action, in order to arrest, if possible, practices which portend so much evil to the Church and to the world. The General rules of our Church prohibit such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus. —*This rule is sufficiently comprehensive, but not explicit enough to meet the needs of the times.*" They therefore took action against the dance and other forms of worldliness which at that time were running riot. And we pray God their action may serve us in this day when the sweeping floods of worldliness are beating against the very gates of the Temple of our God. It will serve us unless at some General Conference Lady Aphrodite woos and wins a majority of our delegates.* However, even then we will not be lifting the ban on dancing.

*At the recent General Conference two reports were submitted by the Committee on The State of The Church bearing upon Paragraph "280." The Majority report asked that no change be made in the Discipline, or the position of the Church. A minority report was submitted, asking that Paragraph "69" be substituted for Paragraph "280", and that

The contention against article "280" is that it should be taken out of our penal code, as we have already stated. Even if this goes, and the press of the country carries in bold headlines, as they no doubt will, "The Methodists Lift the Ban on Dancing", it will not be true. We will still have in Chapter Three, under "Special Advices", where the problems of Slavery, Marriage, Divorce and Temperance are stated, the significant "Section Five, Article Sixty Nine" on "Amusements" which condemns the dance in no uncertain sound.

To be fair to those who have contended for the removal of Article "280", we may state another reason put forth by them. They say "Dancing and Attending Dancing Schools are lined up with several other forms of amusements, such as the Theater, Horse racing, Circuses, and the Playing of Games of Chance." They say the rule is not at all inclusive, as it leaves out other forms of amusements which are as inimical to the spiritual life as those named. Again they maintain, some of these things may not be like the dance wrong in their nature, but simply wrong in their tendency. There is a difference here we will admit, as we can see how card playing may be eliminated entirely from the gambling hell. We can see how the theater might be reformed and made a handmaid of the Church as it was in its early beginning. All the evils attending horse races in former years might be eliminated, until horse racing might become a thousand times more uplifting than automobile races like are carried on at the great modern speedways. We can see how the circus could be made whole-

this paragraph on "Amusements" be read before the public congregation once each year, as The General Rules are required to be read. A motion to adopt the minority report was lost, and the majority report was adopted. There was the least debate and sentiment calling for a change at Des Moines, that has been witnessed at a General Conference in twenty-five years.

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some, with every objectionable feature of the ring removed.

But there are some things you can't reform, because of their very nature. Drinking could not be reformed, and never can be. You can't reform gambling. You can't renovate prostitution. It refuses to be renovated. If you reform gambling it ceases to be gambling. If you renovate the red light district you destroy it entirely. No system of reclamation will ever make a vice district anything but a pest house and incubator of moral rotteness. You may make it physically innocuous, or think you have, but you have simply perfumed a corpse and lifted a quarantine where a whole neighborhood is already inoculated by the germs of a black plague. So it is with the dance. It is inherently and inately wrong, and a purveyor of spiritual blight and death.

And no one of those of our own ranks who is contending for a change in our Discipline is contending for the dance. At least if we may accept their own statements as fact, they are not. We do not agree with them, as to the need of any change. But we are fair enough minded to state their position. To be sure, there no doubt are some wordlings who are back of this move. But surely this charge cannot be brought against many of our leaders who think this specific rule should be taken out of its present setting.

Suppose, however, for the sake of the argument we remove article "280" and every other mention of the dance from the Discipline. Will that change the nature of the dance? Will that make our wings sprout, and flood our Churches with saints? How does history respond to these questions? How have the so-called liberal Churches prospered? We have contended that the Church generally has opposed the dance, but there are Churches which have had no specific rule against the dance. And there are a few communions who have thrown the cloak of approval about it. How about them? Well, we are not here

to draw invidious comparisons, but you can hunt up the records of these Churches and look them over for yourself, and be better convinced. The facts are, the Methodist Church, which has been a liberal in theology, and in the early days considered a heretic, but a conservative in its theories of social morality, and considered narrow in its social ethics, has outstripped them all both in its home fields and in the Continents of all the earth and the islands of the seas.

Now, when it comes to the work of our young people, we find that the days when we were hueing close to the line in asking them to separate themselves from the world, were the days when our Epworth League was numbered by millions and not simply by the hundred thousand.*

When I joined the Epworth League I was eighteen years old and I signed a pledge reading thus: "I will abstain from all those forms of worldly amusements forbidden by the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church." This pledge has been "dehorned" of late to read, "I will take no diversions I cannot use in the name of the Lord Jesus," or something to that effect. I don't see where the Epworth League has gained anything by filing the barbs off the pledge and perfuming it with trailing arbutus. But while this little change has been made, the Epworth League has remained true to its ideals. I still believe, however, that it would have been better off had it left the pledge as it was when millions

*Word comes to me from Rev. J. T. Jones, Superintendent of the Rock Island District that at Brimfield, Illinois, a point on his District, they formerly had an average of fifty to sixty young people at the Epworth League meetings, but a Community House was built in the neighborhood and dances put in the programme—they are now holding "Moonlight Dances" in an open pavilion where on dark nights a single low power light is suspended above the center of the platform—and the attendance at the Epworth League is ten old people. "The Community dance has literally killed our young people's service," he says.

were attracted to its programme of "Look Up, Lift Up."

No, we have never gained anything even from the standpoint of mere numbers, to say nothing of spiritual life and the salvation of souls when we have soft pedaled around the worldly set who would like to save their souls if it could be done without any sacrifice or inconvenience. The Churches which have catered to the world spirit, either as individual Churches or as denominations, are bankrupt, if not bankrupt numerically, they are spiritually. The Epworth Herald has stated this fact for all time in words which will never lose their meaning. It said:

"One of the chief arguments against the Methodist Episcopal Prohibition of worldly amusements is, that it keeps thousands of young people out of our Church. These young Christians, we are told, go into other Churches, which are more liberal in their views on the amusement question. We had an interesting conversation the other day with the pastor of a Congregational Church. He told us of a very precious revival that had visited his Church during the past winter. Among those who decided to live the Christian life were a number of young women. At the close of the special meeting the question of uniting with the Church came up. It was expected that these young people would at once come into the fellowship of the Church. But to the surprise of the pastor they demurred.

"In explanation of their decision they declared that they had decided to remain outside the Church because of the amusement question. 'We like to play cards and dance,' they said, 'and we are not ready to give them up. We know of course that there are no specific rules in the Congregational Church against these things. But we know they are not right. No member of the Church should indulge in them. If we join the Church our conscience will compel us to give them up. That we are not ready to do, so we will stay outside.'

“We will agree that some people are kept out of the Methodist Church because of the Methodist Episcopal Law on the amusement question. But if these persons will tell the exact truth it would be found that most of them remain outside of the Church because of their love of worldly amusements, and not because of any law against them. They see that a worldly life and Church membership are incompatible.”

Shall we try to make wholesome that which the world itself admits is unwholesome? Shall we assume to say to the world the dance is no barrier to religious culture and growth in grace, when the world laughs down its sleeve at our proffered offer to baptise and consecrate an unholy thing? The world has enough sense to know, if we haven't, that the dance is inimical to the spiritual life and best interests of men's souls, and that the Church member who tries to dance and carry holy water on his head is a fool. Furthermore you can follow the career of Church members who dance, you can take the members of this Church, or members of any other Church and follow their religious life and their spiritual endeavor and you will find that the men or the women who patronize the dance hall and are habitual devotees of the dance, parlor or public, when it comes to the religious work of the Church, they, one and all, are not worth a tinker's dam.

I have followed them and studied them, and I know what I am talking about. You can ask any pastor in this town and he will tell you the same. Religious workers in organizations like the Young Men's Christian Association, and the Young Women's Christian Association will tell you so. Here are two great organizations that have taken in every recreational and cultural game or project they can lay their hands on, but there are two things they have discriminated against, and what are they? They are the dance and the card table, these two things. The

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Y. M. C. A. men of this town, working with boys and young men, tell me that the most difficult thing they have to tackle is to hold the young men true to the ideals of the Association with the dance dissipating their efforts. Why, they even say they can't run the gymnasium on nights when two or three big dances are in the social programme of the city. The things the Y. M. C. A. has to put on, the gymnasium and athletic programmes, swimming and what not, are insipid affairs in comparison with the dance. A vitiated recreational life makes a Y. M. C. A. gymnasium as uninviting as a Mausoleum. This is a serious charge to bring against the dance hall, yet it is of small moment in comparison to the power of the dance to vitiate the religious and spiritual life. This is our first count against the dance. The second indictment we bring against the dance is:

II. IT IS A HEALTH DESTROYER.

In the second count we oppose the dance because it is a destroyer of health. Now, that ought to be a good reason, a man's health. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his health? What shall it profit you, young man, young woman, if you gain the whole world, and all its pleasures, and lose your health? Tell me that a girl can begin the rounds of the dance when every other form of amusement, or legitimate recreational or educational entertainment have closed their doors—that just at that time she can begin to dance, and dance until one or two o'clock in the morning, and then spend an hour in getting home, granting she goes directly home, and then get up the next morning and get to the shop or office by seven or by eight o'clock, and **not** injure her health? Oh, my friends, ask any physician if you don't know. No, don't ask him, for I don't want you to expose your ignorance in that fashion. You know yourself, without asking anybody.

I have talked to some of the young women, some

of the young men who work in your factories and in your offices, and they tell me this—they say that positively the next morning after a dance where the young people of this office or that factory have been participants, these young women are gapping over their books, dropping asleep at their work, literally sick and having to go home in the middle of the afternoon. Because of the very nature of woman, under the strain of late hours and the excitement of the dance, she is unable to continue her work and must go home sick.

We all know what these things mean. Health is worth something, young man. Health is worth something, young woman. I say to you we have a serious charge against the dance when we declare it to be inimical to the public health. It dissipates and undermines the vital strength of its participants. It develops into a craze, and those who go to a dance one night want to go the next night, and so we have it, a dance every night in the week. And some times as has been the case recently in Janesville, we have five and six dances running at high speed in one night. We have already called attention to the large number of young men and women we have ourselves seen in one place upon the dance floor between twelve and one o'clock. When you count up the number that are dancing at six or eight different places in a city the size of our town, you have some idea of the extent of this dissipation.

It seems to me that the Samson Tractor Company, rather than hire a man or men to chaperone dances and carry them on for their own young people, had better hire men to go around and wake them up in the mornings, and get them out to the factory in time for work,—those who have been dancing all night in dance halls supported and carried on under outside chaperonage or auspices. God knows we have enough dances going on without hiring men to promote them under the guise of social welfare. The thing I deplore about the whole matter is this—

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When an enterprise is sanctioned and promoted by a large concern like the Samson Tractor Company, and all the young men and women are counted in and invited to it by paid chaperons it carries a certain weight and influence it otherwise would not have. The same thing is true with reference to High Schools and Colleges promoting dances for their students.

These industrial and educational concerns are deluded by the theory that their patrons will attend these functions anyhow, and they had better carry them on under their own control than leave them to unauthorized and irresponsible promoters. Employers of labor must know that the dance is no health resort. Every high school principal and superintendent will admit, if he is honest, that the dance does not promote mental development, and that the time spent could better be spent in study. They know all too well that the call of special social functions, legitimate and otherwise, dissipates the studious hours and promotes slipshod scholarship. But they are swept off their feet by the dancing deluge, and first allow it, then chaperone it.

But we say to these industrial concerns and educational establishments, we refuse to be deluded by your social promoters and your specious theories. The nakedness of the dance is not covered by your golden mantle or your cap and gown. Even if people who ought to know do say that the dance is a recreation, wholesome and harmless, we know better. Think a little yourself and you will see there is some weight to our contention. Why does the dance postpone its beginning until every other form of recreation and health culture is fast asleep? Why does it insist in keeping at it until morning? Can you name one form of recreation or entertainment that has turned the night into day, except the dance? Why don't those who are prating about reforming the dance, suggest that it begin at a decent hour with

other decent things and close at ten or eleven o'clock with other social functions? Ah, the dance loves darkness rather than light because its deeds are evil.

Sure you can carry anything to excess. But the dance is an excess to begin with. It begins in excess and ends in dissipation. The devotees of the dance will reply, "You might say that about foot ball." Yet did you ever know a foot ball game to begin at nine or ten o'clock at night and be carried on until two o'clock in the morning? You never heard of a base ball game running until twelve o'clock at night. You can't name one form of recreation, in doors or out doors, that selects that hour of the night when nature is crying out for rest and repair. The dance is peculiar in the fact that it chooses the late hours of the night when old or young cannot afford it. It claims its participants in a way that common sense condemns. To argue for the dance on the ground of its being a healthful recreation is positively silly to any person who stops to think. Of course the society set who have servants and who do not have to get up the next morning and report for duty, may lie in bed and snooze until noon, as some or most of them do. What's time or night to them? Just so they get up in time to start the whirl of the next night that is all that is necessary. But you cannot do it—I cannot do it—the common run of folks cannot do it. We have nobody to make a living for us while we dance and dissipate and snooze. We have to get out and get to work. Work is the business of this world, and not pleasure, and especially dissipating pleasure.

I lay down the proposition that the very nature of the dance as it is carried on eliminates it from the realm of recreation. It cannot therefore be classed as a recreation. The dance is an amusement wherein recreation is not the controlling, nor even the secondary factor. The dance when analyzed is carried on simply and solely for pleasure; and the pleasure

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is of that sort, as we shall show presently, which has no element of wholesome recreation. It is carried on for most part indoors, in stuffy rooms and halls, where no physician would send people for recreation or physical exercise. With two heated bodies pressed up against each other, belching their hot breath into each other's faces, the dance blasphemously claims a good bill of health. Between the sets, the dancers will be found crowded about open windows where their overheated bodies are exposed to the winter draughts. We have not mentioned the extravagance in dress of the female dancers, though we might bring a serious charge in here, because décollette has invaded practically every place where women go.* I have seen women dressed as immodestly at Church functions as I have ever seen on the dance floor. I have seen them singing in our choirs when I felt moved with pity to take up a collection to buy them some clothes. But there is a point to be noted here, wherein the dance exposes

*The following is the Press report of the annual "Varsity Prom" of the Wisconsin State University, held recently

"The twenty-fifth annual junior prom of the University of Wisconsin took place in the State Capitol Friday night.

"The prom has been called 'THE QUARTER MILLION DOLLAR DANCE', here. It is estimated that the total cost would easily reach that figure. Gowns, evening clothes for the men, taxis, flowers and house parties held during the week figure up to a high amount.

"Souvenirs were given in the shape of cigarette cases for the men and vanity cases for the women. The dancing ended at 3 o'clock as all women were required by University rules to be at home before 4 O'CLOCK on the morning after the prom.

"There were many velvet gowns of all hues as many of the girls had purchased velvet gowns for the prom when it was scheduled for February. Although flowers were decreed bad form, florists did a large business in corsages. There were large ostrich plume and feathered fans of all descriptions and shade."

We wonder how many members of Churches were represented in this prodigal display of wealth and vanity, while half of the world goes to bed hungry and gets up to don rags.

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sparsely dressed women and girls to colds and influenza and consumption. Tired and perspiring the dancers immerse from the dance halls in the dead hours of the night into the cold and sleet and snow. One hour's exercise in a well ventilated gymnasium demands a cold shower and well clad body to immerse safely into the cold of a winter's night.

The dance in order to make the first claim of being a healthful exercise should not slap in the face every common sense precaution used by those who have studied the laws of good health and recreation. If its defenders and devotees were really sincere in their claims, they would eliminate some of these things which make the dance a purveyor of physical exhaustion and disease. I would suggest as a starter that the dancing masters introduce between acts a few minutes in simple calisthenics to give the girls a chance to breathe, and the men's arms a chance to rest, and withal a chance for everybody to be relieved from that meandering, zigzag, sinuous, serpentine ramble. Another thing that might be introduced to good effect would be to equip the dance halls as we have the gymnasiums with shower baths and swimming pools. This no doubt would be throwing cold water on the proposition, and it might "catch its death of dampness," as the old colored woman said, but it might get by muster as a health resort recreation. To be honest with you, the only place I have ever seen it carried on where I really thought it did have healthful properties or recreational value was in the Indiana State Insane Asylum. I understand they have introduced it with good effect in similar institutions throughout the country.

We conclude this part of our message by quoting a recent book by Bishop Mathews Simpson Hughes on "Dancing And The Public Schools." He says:

"Now, the dance might conceivably be so conducted that it would be a health-giving pastime. If our dances were held in the open air, at rational

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hours of the day, for a reasonable length of time, and if those participating were suitably attired to permit the freest play of the lungs, then we would have a wholesome diversion. With reference to health, it might then pass without challenge. But it is perfectly safe to say that no one remembers to have seen the reports of such dances in the columns of our newspapers.

“On the contrary it may be safely asserted that we have no social usage more inimical to good health directly and indirectly. Dancing for several hours at a time under any circumstances is excess, and simply a form of dissipation. The dance begins at an hour when other social functions are concluding, and the monstrous absurdity of turning night into day, which has been grafted upon our modern social life, is probably due to that cause as much as any other. The dance is usually held indoors with vitiated atmosphere, and frequently accompanied with indulgence in food and drinks which could not secure a recommendation from a reputable physician. The physical effects are apparent the next day when one sex drags itself to work, and the other lies abed to recover. In its physical disadvantages dancing as practiced today compares unfavorably with every outdoor pastime. It is nonsense to try to describe this thing as a physical exercise or a wholesome recreation. Right thinking people are likely to believe that our public schools can be put to better uses in the interests of youth than by preparing and encouraging them to participate in such functions.”

The dance is not a recreation; it is not a healthful exercise; it is a purveyor of physical exhaustion and dissipation; it is in short a health destroyer. This is our second count against the dance. Our third indictment of the dance is:

III. IT IS A VULGAR AND INDECENT PERFORMANCE.

Now what we are talking about today is the dance of today. And we are not talking about an extreme here and there. We are discussing the modern dance which is the one advertised in the placards in your store windows, and the kind that are being conducted in the dancing schools, the sort running at high speed in your clubs and social functions, and the same breed carried on our high schools and parlors. To be sure many of the extreme forms I shall mention which are common in the public dance halls may not always be seen in the parlor dance, but the essential features of the modern dance are to be found everywhere. You must judge a thing, not by what it may be in a few censored places, but by its general trend and character. What is the dance in ninety nine out of every hundred cases? It is what we affirm it to be,—an indecent and vulgar performance.

When we went out after the saloon we were met by the sophistry that drinking in itself was not wrong, but only wrong when carried to excess. We had held up to our gaze the habits of our grandfathers and grandmothers who always had wine in the cellar and upon their tables. But we refused to be led astray by what a few people could do with drink a hundred years ago or today. We judged drinking by its major premise. We likewise judge the modern dance. It is not what our grandfathers did with "Old Dan Tucker," or "Captain Jinks," or what our grandmothers did with "The Virginia Reel." It's what they did with the sex dance that concerns us, and it's what we ought to do with the same sort of dance that concerns them if they are still living. Somebody asks, "What about the square dance? Do you condemn it?" Well, I have more sense than to get up here and condemn something that has been dead for fifty years. I venture to say that there isn't a person here in this large audience under forty years of age who ever saw a

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square dance, even if you are a devotee of the dance hall. I never saw one. I wouldn't know what "The Virginia Reel" or the so-called "Stately Cotillion" were if I should see both of them come "reeling" down the street. You wouldn't either. Those old dances are like the side saddles women formerly used, you young women wouldn't know whether it was part of a flying machine or a submarine, if somebody would present you one.

The dance of modern society we are talking about is the public or parlor embrace where men hug other men's wives to music; where young men fondle and embrace the other fellow's sweetheart on an even swop that the other fellow is fondling and hugging his. The dance we are talking about is the one where young women allow, without question or scruple, men they have just met to put their arms about them and assume attitudes on the dance floor they would allow under no circumstances at home or elsewhere. The dance we are talking about is that social function where women's person is desecrated, cheapened, and made public property; it is the place, and only place, when men and women may embrace each other promiscuously with impunity.

Now what is it that gives to the dance such license? How can you with any juggling of words prove that what is vulgar and indecent in a public park, or in the corridors of a hotel, or upon the street car or train, in a woman's parlor or kitchen or upon her front porch or in her back yard, is not indecent and vulgar when carried on to motions set to music in a public place? Is there any other place in social life where such a transformation takes place? You know there is not. For you to find another man taking attitudes with your wife in your own home that you allow to be taken upon the dance floor would give you grounds for belief in her infidelity. If you should kick him out of your house into the street, the public would applaud you. Yet men go to the dance and turn their wives over to whomsoever the occasion may de-

mand without, seemingly, the least hesitancy. Women likewise turn their husbands over to the smooth enchantress, perfumed and painted and nudely dressed, to embrace her and catch her insinuating eye as they glide over the waxed maple.

If all this is true about married men and women, it is all the more true with reference to the unmarried. The most sacred treasure any young woman can have is to hold her person inviolate. When once a young woman gives her person over to the promiscuous embrace of the dance she has broken down many powers by which she has been endowed by nature for the protection of her virtue. We hold that there is but one person who has the right to encircle her body with his arm and that is the young man she expects to marry. She need not be prudish or finical in this, and she may be deceived by the man she trusts to be her lover, but let her throw her modesty to the winds, and allow every fellow she may go with, to take just such liberties with her person as are taken upon the dance floor, and the freedom she allows will become common knowledge of the young men of the neighborhood.

What well bred and well trained young woman would allow any young man who may come along to take these liberties with her, in any place under God's high heaven, except upon the dance floor? But let us ask again, what, in the name of all that is good, makes the difference between the dance floor and the public park or the secluded nook or corner? What is decent in one place ought to be in another. If it is vulgar and unbecoming for a young lady to assume attitudes in private she may assume in public with propriety, I declare to you there is something wrong with our ethics and social customs. Is it because the public gaze puts a check upon such attitudes by saying you may go this far, but no farther? God pity us all; and those who defend the dance may God have mercy upon them, for their juggling with holy things by calling black white and white black.

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The facts are, the dance goes just as far as it possibly can. It goes to the very brink of the precipice in spite of the public gaze. It does things to the call of music, upon a parlor floor, it would be arrested for doing in a public park in the moonlight or in some shady corner. Its indecent and vulgar attitudes assumed upon the floor of a public hall would hail it into police court if attempted in broad daylight upon our boulevards or in our back alleys. These attitudes I mention here are those every dancer is asked to assume, and does assume in practice.

But this is not all. We have said that a thing must be judged by what it constantly tends to become. The common attitude of the dance is not only vulgar, but it constantly tends to run into loathsome and positively disgusting forms. Look at some of the common dances of our day. I didn't invent them for this discourse. Some of them are hoary with age. Some of them have run the gauntlet of public approval, and are loaded down with credentials. Others are still trying to get a clean bill of health from the dancing masters and in the meantime are tramping the dancing masters' feet off the floor. Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee—thou vulgar, lewd, lecherous, licentious voluptuary. Out of thine own mouth will I condemn thee. Here are some of the most popular dances that have been, and are, going the rounds of our time.

“The Bunny Hug”, “The Turkey Trot”, “The Grizzly Bear”, “The Texas Tommy”, “The Argentine Tango”, “The Half Nelson”, “The Body Hold”, “The Shimmy Lock”, “The Brazilian Maxixe”, and “The Charlie Chaplin Wiggle.” Then there is “The Consumptive's Polka,” a dance invented for the Charity Ball wherein the poor consumptive is supposed to be imitated by the wail of the music. God help us, what may we expect next?*

*Since this sermon was delivered the following new dance has come to my attention. While at the General Conference

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Could any place but a brothel invent such an abominable list of indecent and vulgar contortions? Their animal movements beggar description. They are known as the animal dances because they call into play certain bodily movements peculiar to the animals after which they are named. They were introduced into this country some ten or fifteen years ago and are reputed to have come from the low dives of South America. They were the craze of New York and other large cities, and they went to such disgusting limits that many cities forbade them. The police of New York City closed many of the Cafes and Cabaret halls in order to save the girls of the great Metropolis from such degrading and loathsome things. The University of Wisconsin said: "If any student is caught guilty of dancing these rotten animal contortions, he will be expelled the same as if he got drunk." "The Argentine -Tango" and other South American dances "swept like a social pestilence over Europe and the United States" a few years ago. "Tango" is a Latin word, or of Latin derivation and means "I touch". It is descriptive of bodily contact and the movement carries with it all of the loathsome insinuations of an abandoned life.

The New York Sun, enraged at the trend of the dance, recently printed an editorial on "The Revolt of Decency", and among other things said: "Great as is the popularity of these graceless contortions,

in Des Moines I overtook a man carrying a sign announcing a dance. He was also calling the invitation as he walked down the street. I said, "Who goes to your dance?" He said, "Everybody, you are welcome." I said, "What's the craze out here, now? Do they dance the shimmy lock?" "It's too hot for the shimmy lock", he said, "They have shed their shimmys, and the rage in our town is, "The Mucilage Glide". "What sort of dance is that", said I. "O, it's the most fascinating dance ever", said he, "take my word for it, it's a Peach". "Well", said I, "from its name, if it is a peach, it must be the Cling Variety". I didn't go to see the "Peach". Its name suggested all decent people need to know—"The Mucilage Glide".

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and numerous though their practitioners are, there remain a saving intelligence and morality in the community which recognize their significance and loath their indecency. Let the seemingly incredible protestations that innocence and virtue may indulge in these excesses without realization of their origin and meaning be accepted. Politeness and optimism dictate this insult to intelligence. Preserved throughout all the ages by the habitues of low resorts, by strumpets, and their patrons, these dances have never lost their original reason for existence, or been deprived by their appeal to the profligate and debased."

The Detroit Free Press, a paper not at all given to preaching society's qualms, recently, in commenting upon the tides of sensuality that had broken loose since the war, said:

"The mad passion for pleasure which has seized the whole world since the war ended, the extravagance, the plunge into sensuousness, the daring flights in costuming and in the dance, the devotion to froth and frivolity, the utter disregard for all the rules of prudence and thrift, the rebellion against temperance in any form that have caught millions are causing some who are sober minded and who have remained at their old moorings a great deal of anxiety. The moralists are aghast. The religionists behold with dismay what seems to be a submersion of the early post bellum trend toward things of the spirit which they had hoped to use as a lever for bringing about the regeneration of the world.

"With specialized application Frederick O'Brien, a traveler of experience who recently wrote a fascinating book on the Marquesan islands, indicates the general situation in some observations made in connection with a description of a native South Sea dance. Rag time Mr. O'Brien describes as a reaction from the nervous tension of American commercial life and he remarks in elaboration: 'It is a swinging back to the old days when man, though a brute, was free. There is release and exhilaration in the bar-

barous syncopated song, and in the animal like motions of the jazz dances with their passionate attitudes, their unrestricted rhythms, and their direct appeal to sex. The ragtime melodies coming straight from the jungles of Africa through the Negro, call to impulses in man that are stifled in big cities, in factory and slum, and the nervous wearing tension of business'.

"However, the writer of this brief analysis is not endorsing the reversion he discusses; he is merely setting out what he considers fact; for in another connection he asserts—out of his experience and observation—that the civilized man who undertakes to become a child of nature merely succeeds in becoming a brute.

"It is not to be denied that the situation throughout the civilized world is rather critical, not so much because of what has actually happened up to this time, as because of what may come to pass unless the public is able to place a check upon itself."

The abandon and reckless blasphemy of some of the dance promoters may be seen in the following advertisement that appeared this winter in a Wisconsin paper. It came to our attention through Rev. T. D. Williams, a former pastor of this Church:

"At the New Opera House, Friday, December 19: Class 8 to 9; dance 9 to 12. The world's end has been predicted for December 17. An error may have been made and be delayed until December 19. At any rate we will celebrate the big event appropriately. You are all invited to come to the opera house to die. Horns and other carnival novelties will be furnished so we can have as much fun dying as possible. It costs but fifty cents to come and die with us. And what a delightful death? with a girl in your arms! Don't miss it. This does not happen even once in a lifetime. Come and spend some of your money, it will not be worth anything after the end of the world. In case the world survives we have arranged a big

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holiday week dance for our friends on Monday, December 29. But be sure to come and die with us on December 19."

Things get under such headway ever and anon that some of the masters of the dance fly into the public gaze yelling for reforms.* They have these spasms periodically, and the last fit they threw was at their January meeting in New York. Their malodorous product needed ice in midwinter and they sent out the S. O. S. call throughout the country by the means of the public press.

"New York, January 15.—Old-fashioned, keep your distance dances are to displace the modern jazz steps, if the nation wide reform movement undertaken by the American National Association of Masters of Dancing proves successful. The dancing masters, it is announced here, count upon the support of mothers, fathers, daughters, sons, dance hall proprietors, dancing teachers and hostesses—and if necessary the police department—to exterminate the "half nelson", the "body hold", "shimmy lock" and other imported ball room grips which are practiced by some dancers. Cheap and vulgar music is also to come under the ban, and, according to a circular just issued by the Association, those in charge of community or public dances are urged to show their opposition to undesirable dances by distributing "You will please leave the hall" cards to those who persist in offending.

*Apropos of the Methodists! And now comes the startling resolution of the Dancing Masters' Association, adopted in New York recently, asking the Methodist Church to lift the ban on dancing and join hands with Terpsichorean artists to renovate the Modern Dance. In order to prove their sincerity of purpose and show that they are willing to come more than half way, the dancing masters invented a new dance, "THE WESLEYAN", and promised to make it the most wholesomely popular craze of the season! In the very city where we denounced "The Gliding Art," by holding up the Wesleyan ideal of clean living, we behold "The New Born" blasphemously christened in the name of the Founder of Methodism!

“The women, it is charged, are often as much to blame as their partners, and in some cases dance hall proprietors are advised to pick out ten or a dozen objectionable couples, and if a warning is disregarded, to oust them at once. Some of the rules and regulations which all are urged to obey follow:

“Dance music should be bright and cheerful, properly accented and the phrases well divided. Cheap, vulgar music of the extreme jazz type invites cheap, vulgar, meaningless dancing—The Association has adopted the following tempos, it being impossible the masters say, to regulate fast dancing—Steps and movements that cannot be controlled should not be taught by dancing teachers. ‘Shimmy dancing’, a shaking jerking of the upper part of the body while taking short steps or standing still, should not be tolerated. Dancing should be from the waist down, and not from the waist up.”

Just listen to some of those sanctimonious restrictions. “Keep your distance dances.” “If necessary the police department.” “Cheap and vulgar music to come under the ban.” “You will please leave the hall cards.” “Cheap vulgar meaningless dancing.” “Impossible to regulate fast dancing.” “Steps and movements that cannot be controlled.” You innocent Church members didn’t know that the camel was poking his nose into the tent so far, did you? You never dreamed that the dancing professors were really alarmed at the decadent morals of the dance you love so dearly, I know you didn’t. Ah, the dancing masters have rushed out with a bag of salt to dam the current and save the dykes! Yes, they are throwing themselves against the current, but they will not be apt to stop that which has become a flood: because they have started the stream and as long as they keep up the dance it is going to run out into such things. I will tell you in a few minutes why it runs out into such things.

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“Oh well, of course,” you will say, “That is what some dances are. Sure. There are good dances and there are bad dances, we will admit. There are some that are bad.” But my contention is, my friends, that the dance as it is carried on is in itself indecent and vulgar, and you tell me that it is a beautiful and cultural thing, one which gives poise and grace and beauty of form! Do you mean to insult the hundred thousand ministers’ wives in the United States, who practically, without exception, have never had the lecherous paramour’s arm about their waist? Do you mean to insult the hundreds of thousands of White Ribboners who have frowned upon the dance! Do you mean to insult America’s uncrowned queen, Frances Willard, whose statue, and whose alone of womankind, adorns Statuary Hall in Washington! Do you mean to tell me that women like Lady Henry Somerset and Frances Willard, who have frowned on the dance, don’t know what the dance is, or what they are talking about when they condemn it! Do you mean to tell me that the dancing masters are the authorized custodians of beauty of face and form! “The foolish prattle about the dance being an accomplishment productive of grace and elegance of manner merits the sternest rebuke because of its impertinence.”

“Is it indeed really so that to find persons of grace and elegance of manners we must turn to those who have been under the fastidious touch of the dancing master? Is it indeed the dancing master himself who is to be our model—a man who ordinarily can get no entrance into the society for which he is supposed to be polishing the children and youth of Christian homes? Good manners! Is this something lodged in the mechanism of the body rather than in the chambers of the soul,—a thing of airs and bows and affectation, and not, first of all and chiefly, a thing of cultured head and heart? It is difficult to do less than summarily dismiss such a plea as a mere excuse for training a child for the walks of fashion and world-

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liness. Distant be the day when the manners of the dancing master take the place of the manly walk of an ingenious youth of conscious rectitude or the natural grace of a pure girl taught by a pure mother and a native sense of delicacy how to behave. The youth of this generation, educated in our schools and led to the feet of Christ as the great teacher of manners through morals, will compare favorably with any that have gone before in elegant accomplishment, though they have never come under a dancing master for a day nor taken a step in the merry dance." (Haydn, "Amusements").

I have studied the dancers as they scuttled around over the floor with special reference to this claim of the dance being productive of handsomeness and elegance of form. The man has his right arm around the woman's waist, while she has her left arm around his neck or thrown over his right shoulder. He clasps her right hand with his left, and they protrude these arms at right angles to their bodies. Their faces are thus thrown together, and if the dancers are about the same height, and I observed that this was necessary to dance properly, their cheeks are pressed one against the other. They then meander over the dancing floor according to the taste of the dancers, now quickly, now slowly, as the music may demand; and this meandering, spiral movement is more of a backward trend for the women than for the men. In ninety nine cases out of every hundred their bodies are pressed tightly together, and in order for them to move about, as you will readily see, their limbs must alternate between each other.

I have not described, or attempted to describe the attitudes or movements of any of the dancers or any of the dances we have mentioned above. This would beggar description and be an insult to decency itself. I have simply given the common attitudes or positions of the dancers as you will see them on any dance floor from coast to coast, and in any kind of dance whether it be in the Guild hall of some Church or in

the parlor of some deacon. It's the attitude assumed by every woman, whether she be a young girl or a grandmother.

Now for anyone to stand up and demand elegance of manners for this sort of thing, and say it is productive of handsomeness and beauty of form, is really humorous. You know I have seen some amusing things on the dance floor. Here in Janesville recently I saw a great big woman, who would have weighed at least two hundred pounds, if she had been properly dressed, and here was a little muscular, athletic fellow pushing her around over the floor, and they came where I was and got close enough for me to see that she was "sweating like a nigger at election" and "panting like a lizard in dog days." I had to laugh and say to myself, "Go to it, old girl, God help you. If you can work off any of that fat, perhaps the dance will be a good thing for you after all." I saw also a great tall fellow, tall as I am or taller, he looked like a bean pole, sparce and boney and skinny. The boys would probably call him "spider" out in the language of "The Diamond." He was dancing with a little, short girl who would have to stand on her tiptoes to look into his vest pocket, and he was sort of cooing over her as they danced around. They were the only two I saw keeping the proper distance the dancing masters are talking about.

On last Wednesday night, I came down from one of the dance halls into the street at a quarter of one, and the dance was in full blast. Mind you I had preached at a revival meeting, gone home, lay down and slept two hours, arose and went to three dances that were still running at high speed after midnight, and as I came down into the street at one o'clock I met a policeman who was standing there—he did not know who I was—and I said to him, "I suppose you stay around here all night, this is your run is it?" "Yes" he said, "I have to make the rounds of these dance halls at one o'clock or after to see that all

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of the dancers are out and properly behaving themselves." I said, "Do you have any trouble?" "No," he said, "They have janitors in most of these buildings, and they close the buildings up anyway. I don't have a great deal of trouble." I said, "The dance seems to be quite a craze in Janesville, these days." "A craze," he said, "I should say a craze, there were six of them on tonight," and he said, "I don't know what it's coming to. Of course along towards the late hours of the night they get quite a heat on, and it's the people who stay late we have to watch or look after. I don't know but what it would be a good thing if they would invent some sort of a gate to put between the dancers to make them keep their proper distance." That's what the policeman said. Two young men came down out of the Armory where another dance was running and I said to them "What's running in the Armory tonight"? One of them answered me as he walked on, saying, "It's a (bawdy) house on wheels." He use another adjective for "bawdy," but the word he used is excluded from polite speech.

My friends, do you wonder that the Church of the living God has discarded this unholy thing? But this is not all. The most serious charge we have to make against the dance is not yet made. Our Fourth count, the fourth reason why Methodists don't dance is:

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Here is the citadel of this meandering, wiggling, unholy social allurements. Here is the shrine about which the devotees of Aphrodite worship. It is here we find the swine in the spring which widens out into a river of pollution. But this is no secret. We are not "telling news out of school." The indictment, in one form or another, that has been brought against the dance from the very earliest times is, that sex

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excitement is the very life of it, and you take sex excitement out of it and the dance will die like a dog shot through the heart.

Professor Amos R. Wells, a name that is a household word throughout the Christian world, says: "Dancing, like all Gaul, is divided into three parts. One third is esthetic, one third is physical exercise, and one third is sensual. Any 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." Every claim for the dance of a cultural, recreational, or pleasurable nature that are brought forth by its defenders are simply cork floats to suspend a drag net whose lead line fathoms and sweeps the slimy depths of man's unregenerate, sensual nature. And why not be honest, as the average man who makes no profession of religion is, and admit it. No, my friends, it is the crowd who want to be counted in with the sheep, and yet who in their nature are goats, that keep insisting that the dance is an innocent amusement, a wholesome recreation, a beautiful means of expressing the music that is in one's soul,—a means of worship as found in the Bible, and "a method of keeping the lambs from straying from the Fold." *

Here again we are not discussing a hypothetical something; we are not talking about a dance of

*Among the many letters printed in the Public Press, pro and con, provoked by this sermon was one, presumably by a member of the Church, which among other things said:

"The reverend gentleman who rails against the dance has never learned that dancing is one means of expressing the music that is in every one's soul. The person who can neither sing, play upon an instrument, nor dance is indeed to be pitied. I cannot imagine a more innocent good time for the young people of the Church, in the Sunday School room or in the basement under the supervision of a good teacher who would teach correct and graceful positions, while the old folks sat near by and looked on, and visited. Any mental or moral morons who crept into the fold could be removed and their cases dealt with separately."

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angels, we are talking about the modern dance. You can waste your time in talking about what the dance might be, I am speaking facts about what the dance is. You can mouse in the archives of ancient moralists and Biblical exegetes to prove what the dance was. I don't care what the devil was, if he was kicked out of heaven and now is the chieftain of all hell and abominations cursed of God, I take my bearings from what he now is. What is the dance today? Answer: It is an amusement wherein sex excitement is its very life blood.

Now we don't claim that every body who goes to the dance goes there primarily for such excitement. There are the very young of both sexes who go because their associates dance. The gregarious nature of men and women leads them to social gatherings. The dance is a social meeting place. But this was true of the saloon. The very fact that the saloon has gone, gives larger sway for the dance. Its unusual revival at this time grows out of the closed habitat of thousands of men, as much as any other thing. But the dance will be a poor substitute for the saloon. It will be out of the frying pan into the fire. Some of the bad features of the public dance halls in our larger cities will be eliminated by the elimination of drink. But the character or innate nature of the dance will not be changed by the death of king alcohol.

We surely would be more than foolish to simply fulminate against the dance because its fascination is founded upon the primary instinct of sex. "Male the female created He them," and the best we know in life comes from the proper love of man for woman and woman for man. The home and all that is dear to human society is built upon sex difference. "Marriage is honorable in all things and the bed undefiled" is the message that was heralded to a world of lust and abominable social practices in the early Christian century, "but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." We are contending for no Medieval

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asceticism or celibate priesthood. We do not believe in the segregation of the sexes, even for educational purposes. We hold that the normal life of men and women is where they are thrown together that their ideals and struggles may interplay upon each other.

Our contention is simply this, that unlike other social functions where the sexes meet and supplement the life of each other, the dance would not get very far were it not for the mingling of the sexes in bodily contact. You prohibit men dancing with women or women dancing with men and try it out and see how long the dance will run. Even let both sexes go to the dance halls together and mingle in social intercourse between the sets and go home together, but draw a line through the dancing floor and compel the men to dance with men on one side and the women to dance with women on the other side, and see how far you will get. Why not try it out? You know as well as I do that it wouldn't last through the first round. It would take more than a chalk line to separate the dancers very long. And the desire to break through the line would be mutual. The women would be just as anxious to sign an "arm"-stice as the men. The facts of the case are, women, especially married women who dance, are crazier about the dance than men. When it comes to dancing, the average female devotee is about like the young lady who had a rather backward sweetheart. She said to him: "You can't kiss me unless you tie me, and I won't tell you where that rope is hanging there on the back of your chair."

I have given some study to the type of girls and women who are fascinated by the dance, to whom the dance is "a dream," and a thing to be anticipated, and I have come to this conclusion which, while it may be an assumption, is I think a fair and safe one.

The woman who loves the dance is temperamentally of a vivacious and affectionate nature. This is nothing against her. In fact it is a trait of strong womanly character. But it forms the basis of exhilara-

tion and seeming emancipation of the woman's spirit, and at the same time is the very ground upon which her character is undermined. Her strength thus becomes, under the spell of the dance, the very vantage ground of her undoing. Many women dance their feet into the very mouth of hell before they are aware of it.

The average woman who dances denies having any conscious sex feeling. She is fascinated by the masculine embrace and enjoys a pleasurable sensation she does not stop to analyze. When confronted with the charge of sex excitement she resents it. When she is asked about the effect of the dance upon her dancing companion, she usually replies: "I know I have no improper thoughts myself, I conduct myself in such manner that he has no reasons to have improper thoughts towards me, if he does, that's his problem, not mine." I have had well educated, well trained young women who were members of the Church tell me virtually those very words. What would you think of the young woman who doesn't care "a fig" what she arouses in the thought of her dancing companion? Well that is not our question just now. However, this is the attitude assumed by the average woman who is a devotee of the art of Terpsichore.

I am not contending that women who deny any sex excitement in the embrace of the dance are wrong, or are not telling the truth. I accept their statements for what they are worth so far as the women are consciously concerned. Mr. T. A. Faulkner, ex-dancing master of Los Angeles, takes an opposite position to this and he ought to know some thing at least of what he is talking about. Before his conversion he was proprietor of the Los Angeles Dancing Academy, and president of the Dancing Master's Association of the Pacific Coast. He is oft quoted as an authority on the evils of dancing, coming as he did to his knowledge by actual experience. He says: "I have heard girls express utter innocence of having

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any improper emotion aroused by the waltz, but I do not believe this to be strictly true of any girl; if it is, I am sorry for that girl, for she has a sad lack in her nature. Male and female, God created them, and placed within them emotions intended to be shared only by man and wife; and if others indulge in these emotions and continually arouse them by assuming the dance position, which is only fit for man and wife, they commit a sin against God and nature. If these passions are aroused, one of two things are sure to happen;—sooner or later she will yield to temptation and fall; or in ruined health reap the sad harvest of unsatisfied passion.”

What we do claim, however, is that while young women may be freer from conscious sex excitement than their dancing companions, their temperament and nature have led them about as far as the men have been led. Woman naturally is more satisfied by the mere embrace, than man is. What to her may be exhilaration and satisfaction, may be to the young man she dances with but the beginning of an unholy desire to satisfy passion. Moreover there is a stimulation to the girl which is insidious and ominous, and one which Dr. Winfield Scott Hall, of Northwestern University, one of the greatest authorities on sex problems in the world, calls “the sub-conscious sexual stimulation.” In his book on “Reproduction and Sexual Hygiene” he goes into this question at length. We shall not have time here to elucidate his findings. Suffice it to say that he names two kinds of sex stimulation. One he calls “conscious” and the other he calls “sub-conscious,” or changing the terms he designates one as “Primary,” and the other as “Secondary.” He is not discussing the dance as such but closes the paragraph by saying: “This is in contradistinction to primary sex stimulation, and the chief objection to dancing is that it often passes the point of secondary sex results and causes harmful rather than healthful stimulation.”

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We have no disposition to go into any hair splitting discussion of the psychological labyrinths of temptation, social control, and sex stimulation. It is a recognized fact, however, that deeper than we have heretofore suspected lie the factors of man's making or undoing. The Biblical writer many centuries ago anticipated the discoveries of modern mental science and the reality of the subconscious mind when he said: "Lust conceived bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." An astute and imperial thinker later set it forth thus: "First the thought, then the act, then the habit, then the character, then destiny." The thought or impression may be made upon the mind, upon the subconscious mind, of the young girl or even young man, and they may not be aware of it, but it will not be long until the whirl of the dance will bring these stimulations to the surface, and experience shows that the act is not far distant. Be the stimulation to the feminine sex what it may, this danger cannot be denied, or sunk in the unfathomable nature of woman.

We shall have something to say in a moment about the man's side of the dance proposition, but it will be well to remember here that woman cannot wash her hands of all the unclean things that originate on the dance floor. If women are more moral than men, it remains to be proved who is the chief instigator of the sex dance. By actual count you will find more women in attendance at the dance than men. You never heard of old bachelors having a dance, and you never heard of old maids having a dance and yet I have seen but very few dance halls where there were not some girls dancing around by themselves. This I contend is not that girls like to dance by themselves, but is for the simple reason that there are not enough men to go the rounds. God pity you girls, I say God pity you with all due respect to my mother and sisters and to my wife, that there are so many of you crowding the dance halls that men cannot be found for partners. I have never seen

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on any dance floor two men dancing around together. Neither would I have seen two women if there had been enough men at that particular dance.

There are a few things women should know about men for their own happiness and welfare. But too many women and girls, we fear, think they are hedged in behind insuperable barriers that guard their chastity, but do not care one jot or tittle how much temptation and stimulation they may throw in the face of men. The New Jersey Department of Health says: "Many girls thoughtlessly stimulate the sex emotions of their men friends by careless words, familiar acts, and too thin or otherwise conspicuous clothing." The dance is a place where all of these things find full play, and withal there is added thereto the bodily contact with its insinuating attitudes. Either the average young woman is densely ignorant of her power to stimulate sex emotions in men by the exposure of her person to the embrace of the dance, or she is morally culpable. This may be said of the way women dress for the street, as well as for the ball room. It would seem that the modern reckless abandon of woman's attire was marvelously designed to appeal to the sex instinct in even the man-passer-by. Every young woman surely knows that her breasts are a part of her sex anatomy and she should know if she does not that their undue exposure to the gaze of men, and especially the bodily contact thereof as is experienced in dancing will excite the sex nature of man more than the exposure of any other part of her person. Woman, you cannot recklessly assume your own safety or the safety of your sisters apart from the safety of your brothers. Life is wrapped in an interrelated fold. "No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." There is no salvation for a separate sex.

The United States Public Health Service says with reference to the control of the sex impulse: "The problem of sex direction must be solved by men and women working together. This comradeship makes it clearer that it is a social crime and mockery to have

anything but a single standard of honor for men and women. * * * In present day surroundings temptations are constantly lurking for the unwary and most men face in their early manhood a mighty personal struggle." Why should woman, the handiwork of God, so design her attire and choose her amusements that she excites the loss of self control in her self and in her much weaker brother!

"In your pleasures choose carefully. It is possible for you to waltz for hours with one young gentleman after another, without a thought of impurity entering your mind, but it is not probable. And have you thought of the possibility that it may not be so with your partners?

"A few months ago, a mother who had gone with her nineteen year old son to an afternoon dancing lesson, said to me next day, 'some of the young ladies were positively immodest, in the manner in which they carried themselves in the dance; they literally threw themselves into the arms of their partners. I spoke to their teacher afterward and asked if she could not correct it.'

"'Yes,' I answered her, 'And there is the danger to your son and to the daughters there. Do you think it possible for them to dance in that manner for hours without impure thoughts themselves'?

"After such an evening—in private parlors, even— young men have confessed that they have left their companions at their homes and gone to places for the night where the passion that had been aroused in the dance could find gratification. Had you any part in this dear girls? You would not have had I am sure if you had known the danger.

"I feel sure you cannot indulge in the round dances and keep your own white-souled purity, or aid your companions in keeping theirs. Here there are great opportunities given for taking liberties that you would not allow elsewhere, and these, often repeated, will soon be thought little of, and the next step downward will be easier than the first. If so, can

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you afford to indulge in this questionable amusement any longer? You have but to say the word and it will soon be cried down as unfit for pure-minded young people to indulge in. Were it possible for you to keep pure yourself, you are leading another astray, and by so doing are weakening the barriers against the dire evil.

“Then avoid the round dance. The chief of police in New York has declared from his investigations that ninety per cent of the fallen women have taken their first step downward in the dance, and each succeeding step is hurried on by indulgence in this amusement.”

Here are words from Mrs. Emma Drake, M. D., in her little book entitled “The Daughter’s Danger,” a “Prize paper to girls of sixteen and upwards.” Mrs. Drake’s books, “What a Young Wife Ought to Know,” and “What a Woman of Forty Five Ought to Know” are circulated all over the world. It would be well for the mothers who are turning their noses up at the preacher who denounces the dance to look around and find some book by some reputable woman doctor, with the standing of Mrs. Drake, who gives her reasons for supporting the dance, before they send their daughters to learn the terpsichorean art!

Again we ask, if the dance is a health resort, if it is a wholesome and cultural recreation producing good manners and beauty of form, if it is an intellectual stimulus of the first order, why does it demand the interrelation of both sexes to float it? Every one of these things could be secured by the sexes dancing separately. No, my friends, when you have weighed every argument, you will come away with the conclusion which men and women have come to from generation to generation, that the dance thrives upon the sex impulse, and like all roads lead to Rome, all paths that lead hither and thither across the dancing floor have their beginning and ending in sex excitement. Innocent young women may be lured there, and parents may be deluded by the

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sophistry of its defenders, but when once they have become enamored of its real character the same things will hold them, if they remain its devotees, that hold the rank and file of the participants.

We have gone into this phase of the dance that women particularly may know its undercurrent, and that young men and women alike may know the reasons the dance really thrives. We can scarcely believe that these very things are hidden from even the unsophisticated and the uninitiated. We know they are not hidden from any man who is big enough to carry a gun in defense of his country. Sure, there are a few men who will fume and fuss and "cuss" the preacher who condemns this idol of their heart, just as there are women who will turn up their nose and accuse him of invading their personal privileges and talking about things in public that ought never to be mentioned (except on a dance floor). But collect a bunch of men from any walk of life and put the question square to them and they will tell you what I am telling you. They know that sex excitement is the life of the dance, and it doesn't take a Methodist preacher to tell them so.

Furthermore it's the promiscuous relation of the dancers that adds to its attraction and stimulation. Of course every girl who dances hasn't a fiance, and every young man who dances hasn't a marriage license in his pocket, but why don't those who are engaged and those who are married dance with their sweethearts and their wives or husbands throughout the evening! If you girls want to break the dancing habit of your fiances, just insist that they never dance with anybody else but with you. And you married women who are jealous of your husbands demand that they dance with no other woman but you from nine until one o'clock. This will cure them like a dose of "Rough On Rats." A married man would rather saw ice all day in January than dance with his own wife after the first round. And we may add, a married woman would rather wash dishes all day in

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July, than dance with her own husband more than a set or two.

Once in a while we run across a man, who like the women, denies that sex excitement has anything to do with his love of dancing. Now what do you men think of that? I have associated with all classes of men: I have worked with them in the shops and factories and bunked with them in the fore-castle of cattle boats across the Atlantic, and I think I know what I am talking about. I am now talking about real men, not dudes or sissies. I haven't in mind some pleasure cloyed, vitiated fop who doesn't know whether he is a man or a woman. Neither am I slandering my sex, nor presuming on a doctrine of total depravity. I am just speaking facts about red blooded men. When a man tells me he can put his right arm about a woman's waist, who is not his wife, and go whirling around over the dance floor with her hot cheek against his, and her bare arm thrown around his neck, with her right hand clasped in his, and her breasts locked up against his bosom as close as he can press them, with his limbs intertwining with the limbs of her sparsely dressed form, when he tells me he has no improper thoughts towards her, that his God-given procreative powers are not unduly excited, I say to him, I don't dispute you, I don't question your veracity or your morals, (neither do I look to see if he has wings,) I simply say, God pity you my friend, you are not a man. And of all the creatures on God's green earth that I pity most, it is the creature that wears coat and trousers and is classed among the male sex of his species, and yet who is not a man.

Now I could bring to you, but I don't want to discredit your intelligence or insult you, I could bring conversation after conversation of men with reference to girls they have danced with, corroborating these very things. I do say this, young women, if you knew how the young men talk about you after you have been swinging around in their arms on the

dancing floor you would blush and never go to a dance again. A dancing school is about as much value to society as an incipient bawdy house, and the dancing master who teaches young girls to allow men to take liberties with their person on the dancing floor that would make them blush in their own mother's parlor and before their own father and brothers is a deluded devotee of Terpsichore and a primary teacher in the art of seduction. We pass on to our fifth count. The fifth reason why Methodists don't dance is:

V. IT IMPERILS THE MORAL LIFE: IT UNDERMINES OUR SOCIAL MORALITY.

If what we have said is true, the last leap of the dance is over the abyss. Everybody that dances doesn't go to the devil. Neither did everybody that drank liquor get drunk, and become an outcast or a bum. And those who did become such never expected to reach that goal. We shudder to think that the "innocent" girls and boys of our High Schools shall turn out to be what many of them will inevitably become by simply taking the first harmless step under the chaperonage of paid moral and intellectual teachers, and take it in our School buildings erected and supported by the common taxes of the people. But we might as well face the facts. "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth unto destruction, and many there be that go in thereat." Away back there at the very threshold of life's determining factor was the very step taken that led to the dissolute life. Because boys and girls are young, is no reason to jump to the conclusion that they are safeguarded and indulging in things the outcome of which they are assured, by the initiated, will be all right. A young girl under sixteen years of age, in one of the capitals of a middlewestern state, was the occasion for the debauched morals and loathsomely diseased condition of not less than two

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dozen high school boys in a class of which she herself was a member. High School teachers in this very city have come home after acting as chaperons of class dances, saying they were utterly sick over the way the boys and girls literally "slopped over" each other.

To quote from Professor Faulkner's book again: "Where did the majority of drunkards take their first drink? Let me answer; the first drink of the drunkard was just a social glass; the first game of the gambler was just a social game; and three fourths of the outcasts had a man's arm around them for the first time when they were young girls at a social dance. There are in San Francisco 2,500 abandoned women. Prof. La Floris says: I can safely say that three fourths of these women were led to their down fall through the influence of dancing.'" After this man was converted to God he started out with the vehemence of a Life Saver pulling on his oars to reach the sinking forms of helpless women shipwrecked out at sea. He said: "It is the greatest sorrow of my life that I have been so long, and in such an influential way connected with an evil which I know to have been the ruin both of soul and body, of many a bright young life; and if in the hand of God I can be the means of leading one fifth as many to Christ as I have seen led to a life of vice and crime through the influence of the dancing academies with which I have been connected, I shall be more proud than I have ever been of any previous achievement."

May we hope that God granted to this man the desire of his heart. We quote his burning words that we ourselves may help wing them to some heart and make sure the one fifth saved souls he hoped to win. He was wise in hoping to win one fifth as many as he had seen lost. It is easier to burn down a whole block than it is to build one five room cottage. And to start out to overtake the fire you have kindled, after it has swept from the green grass of Springtime to

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the dry leaves of the Autumn forest and the tall grass of the open prairie is something that only the swift going of the Spirit of God can do.

It would seem that if all we have said in the foregoing were true, it would be unnecessary to say anything about how the dance imperils the moral life. But it takes a great deal to convince some people. It was only after ex-governor Patterson of Tennessee saw the fair flower of his own flesh and blood debauched and ruined by drink, that he awakened to see the evils of the saloon. This is his own public testimony. Thank God for the man who wakes up at any hour, if it's time to snatch somebody else's child from the fire. But thank God most for men and women who have never gone to sleep while fire brands were being stuck beneath their own and others' dwellings. Abraham Lincoln once said in referring to human slavery: "If I saw a snake crawling into my house I'd strike it with the first thing I could get my hand upon; but if I should see a man attempting to put a whole brood of vipers into the bed where my own or somebody else's children were going to sleep soon, I'd stop him if it cost me my life."

If the dance destroys health, it surely is unmoral if it is not immoral. If it is an indecent and vulgar thing; and if its life is sex excitement, it cannot be other than immoral. This is our contention. Here we judge the dance not simply by what it constantly tends to become. We judge it by its product. We contend that it undermines our social morality by violating generally in thought, and often specifically in deed, the Seventh commandment as stated and interpreted by Jesus. Hear ye, Him!

"It has been said, Thou shalt not commit adultery, but I say unto you, he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." "The Seventh Commandment, according to this, may be violated as a man walks down the street, or even as he sits in the sanctuary of the Most High," you will say. To be sure it may.

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But positions and habits and amusements that conspire to stimulate thought as the dance does, make it impossible for the pure to remain pure long. The old proverb: "You can't keep the birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building nests in your hair," is applicable here. Christians are taught to pray, "Lead us not into temptation," and no Christian can pray that prayer sincerely and then step into the very mouth of hell and expect God Almighty to keep his garments from the fire. For you to attempt to do it or for me to attempt to do it would be presumption and blasphemy. I confess to you what I believe would be the confession of any red blooded man who will be honest, that I would not attempt to assume the attitudes taken by men upon the dancing floor without first surrendering every modest claim to an unsullied character.

Here is something else for you to ponder. Married men and married women may go to any other decent and publically sanctioned place alone without causing trouble in the domestic relationship, but the dance. They can go to the theater, they can go to Church, or to concerts, or political meetings, or clubs or lodges. They can go where men and women meet together and where they meet separately. When the saloon was in vogue men could go to the saloon every night in the week, if they didn't come home drunk and beat their wives and children, and if they supported their families, hundreds of thousands of married women had no complaint for divorce and lived with their husbands peacefully. But you let a married man get to running to the dance regularly without his wife, or a married woman get to running to dances without her husband, and you will see how quick the devil is to pay. Even let a young man who is engaged to a girl get to running to dances without her, or she without him, and the same thing is true.

Now why is this? You answer this if you will. You know why it is. If you want to stir up trouble

between a man and his wife, just let one of them get the dance habit alone. I know women in this town and in other towns who don't dance, and their husbands do, but they always go and look on. Mrs. "too fat" or Mrs. "too slim," Mr. "big feet" or Mr. "wooden leg" always insist on being at the dance to see the performance if it must go on.* We also have women who love the dance and their husbands do not. But if these husbands indulge this "innocent" desire of their wives, these wives are never allowed to attend dances regularly alone. But in as much as it sort of queers a man to go and sit on the side line and watch his wife dance with some other man, we don't see many men going to the dance as chaperones for their wives. Either she gives up the dance or gives up her husband. This is literally true of many women. As a rule, as we have already said, married women are more enamored of the dance than married men. A man loves the dance when he is single but when he gets married he doesn't care for it so much, or any more. Of course this is not true of every man, as his interest to him is kept up as we have already pointed out by his being able to dance with some other man's wife, but it often happens that the dancing habit of young women doesn't die so soon, even with the care of home and children. Men knowing what the dance is, some times have hard work convincing their wives of its evil provoking character. Some men I know have said to their wives who teased them to go, "If you expect me to be true to you, don't urge me to keep up the dance."

This is a side light on the dance, I defy any per-

*A woman who is a member of another Church of the city came to hear me preach this sermon. Her husband dances, she doesn't. But she says she always goes along. She asked her husband who loves the dance, after she had heard my indictment, if he experienced sex excitement while dancing. He positively assured her that he did not. She proclaimed his testimony as Law and Gospel to her neighbors and is perfectly willing to allow her husband to dance if she can always go along.



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son to disclaim. My friends, will you sanction a thing where a married woman has to chaperone her own husband? Will you defend a thing married men will not allow the mothers of their children to attend alone? What do you think of a social custom that has so much suspicion thrown about it even by its devotees? The dance has been the direct cause of as much domestic infelicity as anything you could name, except the saloon. "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 daughters' persons and purity of their maiden instincts to be rudely shocked by the waltz." (Howard Crosby)

We are not attempting to solve the age old sex problem by the wave of our hand or by any battle with words. Yet every age must culture its own conscience. The voice of the Church of God, sounding clear and strong, against this social vice, will avail nothing if it be but a position read about in the history of the Church. The cause that has no living voice is a dead cause, whatever that cause may be. The hope that Jane Addams holds out in her epoch making book dealing with this problem of sex is set forth in the title "A New Conscience and An Ancient Evil." But a new conscience never comes to society apart from some living conscience that speaks in living tones. It is strange to note with the development of our conscience along other lines we should allow our conscience to become flabby and voiceless with respect to the moral peril of the dance.

When we read pronouncements against the dance by practically every great branch of the Church of Christ and especially when we read the pronouncement of the Roman Catholic Church assembled in Plenary Council at Baltimore, saying: "We warn our people against those amusements which may easily become to them an occasion of sin, and especially against the fashionable dances, which as at

present carried on, are revolting to every feeling of delicacy and propriety, and are fraught with the greatest danger to morals," we are prone to look upon them as we some times look upon their metaphysical vagaries. But if there is one thing where the Church of the present should hear the voice of the past it is in its moral message. Things which were immoral yesterday are always immoral today. Things which were moral yesterday, may be immoral today. That is to say, the history of our social morality proves nothing, if it does not prove that we are constantly outlawing things, which yesterday were considered right, on the grounds of the advancement and enlightenment of public conscience. If things which were immoral and unethical yesterday become moral and ethical today, look out for the false prophets who call black white and white black. The age of Amos and Isaiah has repeated itself.

When we have novices in the form of community welfare workers prating around about the Puritan ideals of our fathers and mothers and asking the Church to adopt this licentious, public hugging match and reform it, we ask for their credentials. A young man formerly in religious work said recently to one of the young women of this Church, "The Church will probably have to adopt the dance as a means of self defense." Adopt that bastard, born out of holy wedlock! I'd as soon adopt the devil and be done with it. "Oh, you can reform it!" The only way you can reform it is like reforming a sheep killing dog, cut its tail off clear up to its ears." The dance, to say it at once and plainly, is an immoral amusement, I mean immoral in itself." (Wilkinson, "The Dance in Modern Society.")

Then they say, "It's all right if properly chaperoned." Listen! the most indecent dance I have heard of in this city, and one I didn't see or report, was one where prominent members of the Church were the authorized chaperones: and one of these chaperones stated in this pulpit, when no one was

talking about the dance, and no body was asking for any public confession, that the thing got so disgustingly vulgar and loathsome that he went personally to the master of ceremonies and had the performers stopped in the act. This same person related, as you will remember, how a dancing master of the city called the attention of a mother to the vulgar way her young daughter was dancing at his dancing school, by saying to her "what do you think of that?" And this mother was so dense, she said in reply, "O, I think that's cute." Yes, your dance is different from the other fellows, because it is properly chaperoned! You mean different in that it is better? You insult the dancing masters when you say your dance is different from theirs. They are the ones who are yelling at the top of their lungs for reform. But the "Mucilage Glide" and the swish of silk are so noisy in their noiselessness and so enchanting in their disenchantment that their voice is not heard.

Then you will insult the Moose, and the Elks and the Masons and Odd Fellows, and the Rail Road Brotherhoods, and Plumbers Union and the Electricians and the "Peter Rabbit Charity Balls" and the Eagles, and "The Before Lent" and "The After Lent" Church dances etc. etc. etc. If you will take a microscope or a blood tester and get a jury of high brows or low brows, who can find a single species of the dance microbe in the other man's dance that can't be found in yours, I will throw up my hands and never mention the dance again. Ah, all dance bacilli are born in sex excitement. The difference in dances is not a difference of blood pressure: for high blood pressure is always an attendant symptom. It is not a difference of temperature: heated blood is always a primary attendant. The difference between your dance and the other fellows dance is not to be found in a different species of microbe. It is a difference in the stages of development. Yours may be only incubating, while his is hatched out. Just give your High School, Parlor



dance time and it will hatch out in the public dance hall, or maybe in the brothel.

“I appeal to the facts of history and to present experience to bear me out in the testimony, that this amusement always and is now linked in a chain of downward and deteriorating causes, and never to upward and more virtuous associations. This of itself is sufficient to stamp its moral character with reprobation.—Disguise it as we may by the superficial refinements of civilized life, the same principle of animal passion lies at the bottom everywhere, and the same passions, whatever difference there may be in the external expression, are stirred up. The most fashionable dancing party, where everything that intelligence, wealth, luxury and taste can command gives splendor to the scene, has its counterpart. This is but the higher and more polished link in a chain that reaches down to the dark and dissolute scenes enacted in the lowest grades of balls. Indeed, these latter are, so to speak, but gross imitations of the habits of higher life, changed only to suit the circumstances and the society, and appearing more gross and destructive because the restraints and securities of educated society are unknown.—The fashionable dancer and the advocate or apologist for the amusement give at least indirect countenance to its lower and baser manifestations.” (Bishop Clark, “Dancing and The Church.”)

“The dance is the parent of the décolleté costume, and virtue dies as the dance thrives. It is not by chance that the dance and the brothel have become linked. They were born twins, and as such have thrived. The daughter of fashion as she goes forth to the charity ball, and the daughter of the factory as she goes forth to ape her richer sister and dresses for the public dance, may not realize the path to which they commit their gliding feet, but the end thereof is the arms of the paramour and the libertine, and shame unending. This shocks you. But the vice of which we must now write is more shocking

still. Nothing but plainness of rhetoric will tell the story, no matter what the cost to personal feeling or delicacy.—Then as a thing unholy and unclean, I will face it and cry, ‘Shame, thou procuress of adultery.’” Lemmon, “The Eternal Building.”

We understand that statistics prove nothing, and that they are poor dry bones to rattle in the face of a congregation, yet from another standpoint statistics prove everything, and after all are like the very skeletons that keep our flesh from becoming a mere mass of heterogeneous material. Furthermore, our subject and the factors we deal with are such that they refuse to be confined to mathematical calculation. We are dealing with spiritual forces. We are grappling with those undercurrents which are unseen, yet which are the trade currents of all our life and activities. We cannot just tell you how many young girls of our city have gone wrong through the dance. Moreover, our subject is such that we cannot conduct a public clinic but if you want an exhibition of specimens we can take you to the morgue where the product of the dance awaits identification.

We beg, however, to refer again to Mr. Faulkner’s book, “From the Ball Room to Hell”, and quote him saying, “The tendency of the dance in its influence to lead young women astray stands at the head of the list.” He continues: “I have for several months been working in a mission in Los Angeles, and where I have before seen such causes at work, I have now had ample opportunity of seeing the effect; and I have heard some of those unfortunate ones cry out in bitter anguish, ‘Would to God I had never entered a dancing school’. The following were two hundred cases of girls who are today inmates of the brothel, whom I talked with personally. They were frank to answer my question in regard to the direct cause of their downfall, and I gathered that these were ruined by,

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Dancing School and Ball Room.....	163
Drink given by parents.....	20
Wilful Choice.....	10
Poverty and abuse.....	7
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Total.....	200

We started out in the beginning to give you five reasons why Methodists don't dance. If these are not valid reasons we have given, and if they have not been sufficiently supported by the burning words of others to convince you, we submit, the whole problem of sex in its relation to our social morality, to you must be of small moment. I have taken no middle ground. If there is any middle ground to take in the dance question, it certainly is not to be found between the dancers who are hugged up so close together you couldn't get a spatula between them. If you can find any middle ground upon which to defend the dance, that is your privilege. But don't dodge the issue. When you defend the dance, talk about the dance, and not about some imaginary something that in practice does not exist. The dance I have condemned is the dance of Janesville and not a dance in the moon. It is the dance of modern society,—the sex excitement dance, that is robbing woman of her virtue, and men of their self-control; that is undermining the health of its participants; that is vitiating the moral and spiritual life of the community; that is preparing the way for the flood gates of immorality to open wide and sweep the country with a deluge of low ideals and low living.*

If you want to dance and will dance, I cannot keep you from dancing. I know full well that I am throwing myself against the current of the time when I stand up here and oppose the dance. But the virtue of woman and chastity of men is of more value than your estimation of me. I therefore appeal for

*See chapter Two, "The Menace of Immortality in Church and State."

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the virtue of woman, for manhood and for the home and school and Church, and in behalf of our fair land. I am no alarmist. I come to you as a teacher of religion. I see this thing creeping into the Church. I see people trying to put this brood of vipers into the very sanctuary of our God. I see religion which is always the bulwark of society threatened with this creeping moral paralysis. I see the dance, like I have seen the cigarette, stealing a march on us during the recent war, and since, and if I don't miss my guess, there will be more than one preacher crying out against this thing, or it will have us choked so black in the face before long, that it will be no use to cry; in fact we will have no voice to cry with.

This is and has been the position of our Church. Our birthright has been the emphasis of experimental religion, and the separation of ourselves from every form of worldliness that militates against the highest life of our spirits which have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. But we have never laid claim to being its originators or its sole messengers; we have simply claimed our right to be vessels chosen of the Most High to bear this Gospel of Scriptural Holiness to every nook and corner of our own land and to every continent of the earth, and to every Island of the Seas. The first rule laid down by the Founder of our Church was that Methodists should "do no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, ESPECIALLY THAT WHICH IS MOST GENERALLY PRACTICED." Here is a place for us to begin. May God help us to weigh these things in our mind and consider them in the light of our vows and our high calling. We pray God to help us,—we who are here this morning are members of the Church of the Living God. There are young men and young women here today who hear the call of Christ, but their associates in school and in business are going the other way. It is hard for them to break with their friends, unless they have good reasons. We have tried to give your

boys and girls the reasons why they should break with the world and cling to Christ and the Church.

With this I am done. I could say many other things, but if you are not persuaded, if you are still enamored, they would be simply adding to your discomfiture as have been the things I have already said. I hope I have said nothing I should not have said, and I surely hope I have said everything I should have said. Some of you will go away from here and condemn me. This, as I have already said, is of small moment. But I ask you to look well to your own heart and be assured that you have a moral and spiritual reason for the hope that is in you. In the white light of Christ's own presence may we see ourselves as He sees us. May this be our prayer for His own dear name sake, Amen.

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