

**Articles and Sermons :: Herods Ballroom - Bonar****Herods Ballroom - Bonar - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2008/8/7 23:42**

With what burning words does Richard Baxter appeal to the 'voluptuous youths that run after games and dancings and revelings!' May his solemn words pierce the reader's conscience, if he is a lover of pleasure: 'Do you not know, that you have higher delights to mind? And are these toys befitting a noble soul—which has holy and heavenly matters to delight in? Do you not feel what a plague the very pleasure is to your affections; how it bewitches you and befools you, and makes you out of love with holiness? Do you know the worth of those precious hours which you play away? Have you no more to do with them? Look inwards to your soul and forward to eternity—and bethink better. Is it sports that you need? Do you not more need Christ and grace and pardon, and preparation for death and judgment, and assurance of salvation? Why, then, are not these your business? You are but preparing for your future sorrow, either by repentance or destruction.'

Strange that some Christian men, nay, ministers, should not only allow, but teach their children to dance! Thus they educate them for the ball-room, and the ball-room ushers them into the theater; for these two are but adjoining chambers of the same hall of pleasure—with a thin partition between.

Nor would it serve any good end, to say that the world has no attractions. I admit the opposite. I know that it has many. They are astonishingly varied in their nature, and so suited to the varied tastes of fallen man. They adapt themselves to each rank, each age, each class, each temper. It has visions, all its own, for the natural eye; sounds, all its own, for the natural ear; dreams, all its own, for the natural imagination; objects, all its own, for the natural heart. Its fascinations are cunningly contrived. Its enchantments are strangely powerful. Its spells are all but resistless.

For the young especially, it spreads its snares, seeking to lead them away from God. It multiplies its deceptions, that it may multiply its victims; and its success is astonishing in blinding and bewitching even those who seemed to be setting their affections on things above.

Some, it may be, will say, 'You make us to be the world, and yourselves to be the Church—what right have you to do so?' To this we make answer: We do not do so, as is thus said. It is not of persons—but of characters that we speak. We name no one; we leave each one to name himself. We tell men what God has said of the world—and having so done, we say, 'Judge yourselves; inquire how far your features resemble the world. God has said, "Love not the world;" if, therefore, you do not love the world, you have no cause to take offence at what has been said; but if you do love the world, then you must take the question to God and quarrel with His word, if there must be a quarrel in the matter. If you love the world, you cannot belong to God; for it is written, "If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Others may say, 'We do not love the world, though we love some of the things that are in it; we do not count ourselves to belong to the world, merely because we love its amusements.' Now what are those amusements which a man may enjoy—and yet not love the world? They are such as the theater, the opera, the pantomime, the ball-room, the play, the novel. But are not these things just the essentials of the world? To love these—is to love the world. To love these is to love those very things which make the world what it is. Take away these, and what remains of the world—but its open vilenesses, which pure lips would not name? What would you say to a friend who would tell you, 'I don't admire that town; I only admire its streets, and houses, and towers, and spires, and walls'? But are not these the chief things that make up the town? Take away these, and there is no town at all; for you would not think of giving the name of town to the cellars and alleys, and lanes and low haunts of crime?

So you would designate the world not by its worst features, but by its best; not by its vices and villainies, but just by its characteristic amusements; those amusements in which all take part, and from which, therefore, more than from anything else, it takes its special name—'the world.' Others will say, 'But what harm is there in dancing, or other such gaieties?' None, of course, if you mean by this merely the act of leaping up and down. There is no more harm in it than in walking or in skipping. It is not to the mere act of leaping that I object, but to its circumstances and accompaniments. These are the things that make it evil; for 'they are not of the Father but of the world.'

And here I may notice, that by analyzing sin in this way—you may easily persuade yourself that there is no such thing as sin at all. You may say, 'Stealing is nothing; it is merely changing the position of a little gold or silver—placing in my

pocket what was once in another's.' Or you may say, 'Lying is nothing; it is merely using a few words of the commonest meaning, inserting or leaving out a not in making a statement; that is all.' Thus, by analyzing the grossest sins, you may show that there is no sin in them, any more than in plucking a leaf or in rolling a stone. It is in this way that Romish casuists try to palliate all manner of evil. They analyze it, and straightway its essence evaporates. They will prove that murder is no sin, simply by separating it into its elements—*as they do, who defend the amusements of the ball-room.*

Even were there no harm in it, the question would remain, Is it really pure? Is it profitable? Is it befitting a saint? Does it suit the profession of one who calls himself a Christian—the bearer of a cross—the follower of a crucified Lord? Could you dance in a church? Could you dance in the death-chamber? Could you dance under the shadow of the cross or within sight of Calvary?

The day is coming, which shall strip off all guises from the objects of man's idolatry, and show them in all their unsatisfying emptiness. The deathbed has much to tell us of the world's vanity; and the grave still more. Will men listen? Will the lovers of pleasure give heed? Christ—or the world? Which is it to be? Which is it now? Not both. That cannot be. One or other; but not both. Take your choice, O man! But remember that the fashion of this world is passing away; and that a few years will end it all.

Remember, again, that Christ and His joys are forever; that the rivers of pleasure at His right hand never run dry; and that if you will take Him and all that He has, you may have eternal fullness. For no man buys Christ. No man buys the kingdom. We get Christ simply by taking Him from the Father's hand—as the Father's gift to sinners; and we get the kingdom by receiving the divine testimony to the one way of entering it—by Him who is 'the Way and the Truth and the Life.'

([http://www.gracegems.org/Bonar/herods\\_ballroom.htm](http://www.gracegems.org/Bonar/herods_ballroom.htm)) Herods Ballroom H.Bonar