THE PERSONAL WORD

Dear Readers:

Bulwarks: It is our hope that by the time this TORCH is in hand that BULWARKS OF THE FAITH-PART TWO will have been mailed to all who are waiting for it. The interval in delivery between the two volumes has been explained, and it is only a matter of a few days now-so please let this answer numerous inquiries.

Torch: The November and December issues of TORCH will be sixteen pages each in order to bring them out before the end of the year, thus completing Volume I with twelve issues. Renewal subscriptions for the second year will be due after the No. 12 issue has been received. We trust all will send ONE DOLLAR for another twelve numbers of TORCH, Volume II.

Recommendation: W. B. Barton Jr., reared in the Tenth & Francis church, Oklahoma City; graduated from Freed-Hardeman and Abilene colleges; afterward attending universities in the east-has returned to his Oklahoma home, desirous of devoting himself wholly to the preaching of the plain gospel of Christ. His father has been an elder in the church many years, himself a capable teacher of the Word. W. B. Jr. has seen the religion of the New Testament in contrast with modern philosphy and speculation, and his faith in the gospel is firm and settled. He is willing to answer calls to go where he is needed, or to locate with a congregation desiring his services locally. I recommend this young man (with a good wife and two children) to churches in these parts. Address him: W. B. Barton Jr., 503 East Main, Ada, Oklahoma.

Faithfully and fervently yours,

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Address all communications to the publisher, Box 1804, Oklahoma City, Okla. Subscriptions: $1.00 per year.
THE GREATEST QUESTION

THE question of all questions is "What think ye of Christ?" What one thinks of Christ determines his thoughts and actions on every question. The correctness of faith depends on the correct answer to the superlative question-"What think ye of Christ?" The question of how and when one is saved by faith through Christ is answered when the first question is resolved. The value of faith in salvation is determined by the use that is made of faith. How faith is to be used must be decided by what the gospel of Christ says, for apart from the testimony of the divine records no one can settle any question as to salvation through Christ.

Before all men today there are two plans of salvation offered. One is of human origin, and contradicts the teaching of Christ and his apostles.
The other is Jesus Christ’s own plan, and it was revealed through the apostles.

Since the time of Martin Luther the doctrine of justification by faith alone has been taught as a leading theological tenet. It is taught in opposition to the teaching of Christ through his apostles. We should and we do emphasize justification by faith, as the apostles of the Lord taught it, but we refuse to add the word “alone,” and because we refuse to do that we are charged with teaching **justification by works** and **water salvation**. Paul and all of the apostles taught justification by faith, but never did they say **faith alone**. Why? “There’s a reason,” as certain advertising reads, and quite a sufficient reason. First, they would have contradicted the commission of Mark 16:15-16 which gave them authority to preach. Second, they knew that faith is a continuing state of mind. Faith was to be ever present, hence a life of faith. Hence, Paul said “Christ liveth in me.” Do you ask, how? “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.” (Gal. 2:20) Thus Paul teaches that faith is ever present, all through life, and is directed all of the way by “the faith” of Christ.
All students of language know that we may employ transposition of clauses in a sentence without changing its meaning, but rather making its meaning clearer. Transposing Rom. 1:16 it reads: “To every one that believeth it (the gospel) is the power of God unto salvation.” So here is the order: (1) There is a believer; (2) the believer is in possession of “the power” that is “unto” salvation; (3) when that “power” is used, the believer becomes saved. Power is necessary to the accomplishment of anything, physical or spiritual. The power must be used before there can be results. The power unto salvation is the gospel. That power and the use of it stands between the believer and salvation. Is the believer saved before and without the use of the power which is “unto”-in order to-his salvation? Who can imagine results without the use of the power necessary to the results? Thus it is that this passage, and every other passage quoted as a faith alone text, condemns the doctrine of salvation at the moment one believes.

What one thinks of Christ is determined by what he thinks of the gospel of Christ.
THE TRUTH ABOUT DANCING

WILSON WALLACE

TODAY as never before young Christians and their parents need to know the truth about the modern dance. It has not been long ago when dancing was acknowledged as worldly and sinful by saint and sinner alike. Today the dance has crept into the public schools and finally into the church. Merely to state that dancing is wrong and sinful is not enough. Young people demand to know “why.”

In order that all may see the truth, the following article from the “Ansgar Lutheran” is reprinted, in the hope that all will read this selection in a sincere, truth-seeking attitude.
"TO DANCE OR NOT TO DANCE"

Skeptical of assertions that the modern dance has become respectable, we visited a dance emporium to see for ourselves.

The orchestra was tuning up, noisily and brazenly. At the rail the bobby-socks set stood waiting, the Susies in parabolic poses, the Joes beating out snatches of rhythm with impatient feet, while older habitues, conscious of their priority, drifted languidly about the floor.

Suddenly, music--hot and sweet. "Wanna dance?"

Youthful whirlaways glide onto the polished floor. It's mostly break, hop, and shuffle. Here and there a juvenescent couple, saucily delinquent, trucks a trifle, or shags a little, or cuts a rug, but not much.

"See, it's not like it was in the post-crash days of the depression. I tell you, dancing has become respectable!"

We wait; the night is young ... Later, much later, the tempo accelerates. The hall is now dimmed with obscuring lights. The musicians no longer lean back, but sit forward alert. The knock-knock of a wooden hammer, the prolonged rumble of African bongo drums, and-crash goes the orchestra. It's jungle time! Guiros scrape, and the maroca rattles syncopatically. A wild
horn wails like a jaguar in distress, saxophones quack sardonically like ducks, trombones bray like donkeys, a bass horn croaks in imitation of a bull frog.

In the dim light, to the jerky rhythm of the orchestra, sway the assorted customers. They slink in grotesque embraces, or writhe in rhythmic hugging, or fluctuate cheek-to-cheek to the husky voice of an under-the-skin croon song. Hips sway, squirm, dip. From dampened skin rises the acrid odor of powder and perfume. Now and here, indeed, viciousness parades as art, cheap emotions swell, and sordid tragedies are in the making.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Some modern dancing may be more careful, others less so—but respectable? Not so. For what does the modern dance signify?

All dancing interprets. The war dances of the ancients, as of primitive tribes today, imitate the movements of warriors in combat to arouse belligerence or to commemorate a victory. The religious dances of the ancients, as of pagan tribes today interpret the spirit of worship, reverence, and gratitude. However, the modern dance, originally imported from the slum brothels of South American capitals, simulates the act of adultery.

Consider the positions taken in the modern dance—the embrace, the seductive movements in which the male holds his partner firmly and the female relaxes into pliancy. Listen to the jargon
of the jazz orchestra, mimicking the mating call of insects and animals or, at best, expressing the hunger of the flesh.

Science permits of no other interpretation. Modern texts on psychology agree that the modern dance is an expression of the sex instinct. Medical science identifies dancing as a sex stimulant. Some scientists go so far as to define the modern dance as an erotic exercise, as part of the sexual commerce itself.

Who will dispute the conclusions of such responsible authorities as the *Medical Review of Reviews*: "There can scarcely be any doubt that dancing came about as an adjunct of sexual stimulation"?

Or of the authoritative declaration of Prof. W. C. Wilkerson of Chicago University, who analyzed the modern dance as “a system of means, contrived with more than human ingenuity, to excite the instinct of sex to action’’?

Of the knowledgeable advice of *The Ladies’ Home Journal*: "Many couples performing these dances should have a marriage license before stepping on the ballroom floor”!

**IN THE WRONG DIRECTION**

That the true character of the modern dance is not always recognized cannot be denied even in these days of the wide-spread knowledge of evil.
Particularly is this true of younger girls in whom the dance stimulus may manifest itself as general excitement. However, this in no way mitigates the indictment that in meaning and purpose the modern dance is lustful and therefore adulterous.

Again, when the adulterous character of the modern dance is denied, it is sometimes done, not from failure to recognize the carnal stimulus in dancing, but from failure to recognize, or to admit, that willful sex stimulation, except in the marital state, is sin.

The dance hall is the nursery of the divorce court. How can it be otherwise when husbands turn their wives over to the proprietary embraces of other men, and wives relinquish their husbands to the embraces of other women. What becomes of the marriage vow? Suspicion, jealousy, and infidelity are inevitably engendered on the dance floor.

ONE IN A THOUSAND

Despite the vicious character of the modern dance, it has its defense mechanisms. No evil is ever lacking in such. Foremost among the defenses is the plea of innocence. "I have no impure thoughts as I dance." The protestation of innocence is difficult to contradict, for thoughts cannot be X-rayed. There are those, indeed, who ridicule any plea of innocence. In judging by themselves, they contend that it is impossible for
a normal dancing man and woman to preserve purity of mind and heart.

'It is conceivable that there are persons who may dance without impure thoughts. There are even today persons who have the gift of chastity, and to accuse them of willful deceit is to sit in judgment over motives. But persons who possess the gift of continence are, as a rule, quite careful not to expose their talent to the allurements of the modern dance. So much is certain that only one in a thousand may honestly lay claim to purity in dancing.

There are also degrees of intimacy on the dance floor, but the fact remains that, modern dancing being what it is and human nature being what it is, few can judge themselves innocent with the unbiased rectitude with which God judges them.

However, the plea of innocence does not entitle a person to a dance permit. Dancing involves not one but two persons. And whereas certain individuals may possess the gift of chastity, their dancing partners may not. And whereas a person may, in rare instances, plead innocence i’or himself, he may not plead innocence for the dancing partner. "

At best, any dancing person may plead only half-innocence, for in dancing he permits himself to become an instrument for the other person’s possible indulgence in fleshly lusts. This is giving
offense, which means giving another person occasion to sin. ... In the modern dance, because of its adulterous significance and purpose, it is a deliberate sharing of guilt to dance with someone else. ... With promiscuity rampant in the modern dance and the custom of cutting in quite prevalent, no person may lay claim to complete innocence in modern dancing. We are responsible not only for our own conduct, but to a limited extent also for the conduct of others, and that extent goes beyond Christian conscience in the modern dance.

**IT CANNOT BE SUPERVISED**

Equally indefensible is the position of those who think that the element of wrongness can be eliminated from the modern dance through supervision. Bearing in mind that both in concept and design the modern dance is adulterous, no amount of supervision can correct its inherent immorality. Therefore it also successfully defies supervision whenever this is attempted.

What is supervised dancing? Does it mean that someone is present who taps those couples on the shoulder who indulge in movements that are regarded more improper than others? Does it mean that dancers are chilled into a sense of modesty by the disapproving glances of self-appointed Emily Posts?

The error in the argument for supervised dancing is that no amount of supervision can deprive the modern dance of its evil meaning and
purpose, nor does the heart permit of outward supervision.

Far from being a measure to restrain licentiousness, supervised dancing has proved a feeder for more ill-reputed dancing resorts and a snare for many who but for the cloak of respectability would never engage in it.

PAGING THE SCRIPTURES

Solidly the Scriptures are lined up against the modern dance. “Flee youthful lusts” (2 Tim. 2:22); “flee fornication” (1 Cor. 6:18). God has reserved all sex relation to his ordinance of marriage, in which it should find manifestation to the welfare of the home, the church, and the state.

The commandment is against it: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." When, according to our Lord’s interpretation, it is adultery to look upon a woman to lust after her, what shall be said of the modern dance with its suggestive positions and provocative movements and its temptation not only for the eyes, but for all senses!

The Lord’s Prayer is against it: "And lead us not into temptation." To dance is to rush into temptation, in fact, to embrace it.

It is sufficient condemnation of the modern dance that the Word of God forbids all indulgence in fleshly lusts. It does that with such frequency
and candor that no one need plead ignorance of the will of God in respect to the modern dance.

No argument can make dancing consistent with our baptism, in which we renounced the devil and all his works ... wherein we receive the forgiveness of our sins and promise "henceforth to lead a decent life in thought, word and deed."

WORD TO PARENTS

Many parents do not realize the vicious character of the modern dance nor that of the world to which their children are exposed. It is no longer the world of our youth; it is more wicked by far. The temptations to sin are many more and greater because modern science has also been pressed into the service of sin.

If Christian mothers would keep their daughters off the dance floors, many dance halls would be closed, for men will not dance alone or with each other.

Should a Christian mother place her daughters on the marriage mart of the dance floor to be handled like an article of commerce by any obscene Tom, Dick, and Harry? A daughter’s chastity should be of priceless value to any mother, and guarding her daughter’s virtue a sacred obligation toward her future son-in-law.

IN THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH

Youth is the time of pristine vitality and the joy of newness of living. As such it is intended
by God. But young people need not dance to fulfill this purpose.

With all nature, as well as the world of modern civilization and culture around, it is a shame to dance.

Christian young people should plan their dates to enjoy themselves without the recourse to dancing. If haphazard, dates are dull and tend to dancing, drinking, and adolescent love-making. If planned, a date runs a fine chance of being wholesome and delightful. A young man might plan for the things to do, the young woman for things to talk about.

Everywhere there are a hundred things to see and do. There are the art museums, civic centers, good lectures, concerts. There are countless occasions for watching or engaging in a great variety of fun-giving sports and games. And there is always a thrill in good conversation.

Begin a hobby, and invite others to pursue it. Look around for unusual and interesting things to do, novel places to visit, pleasant things to talk about.

Christian young people do not need to join the world to live out their youth in Go&pleasing mirthfulness and friendship. "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth," and flee the modern dance.
The following is a selection from “The Dance of Modern Society,” by W. C. Wilkerson.

My accusation is that the dance, instead of affording an opportunity for mutually ennobling companionship between man and woman,—that the dance consists substantially of a system of means contrived with more than human ingenuity to excite the instincts of sex to action, however subtle and disguised at the moment. Passion—passion, and nothing else is the true basis of the popularity of the dance.

It is no accident that the dance is what it is. It mingles the sexes in such closeness of personal approach and contact as, outside of the dance, is non-here tolerated in respectable society. It does this under a complexity of circumstances that conspire to heighten the impropriety of it. It is evening and the hour is late, there is the delicious intoxication of music and motion .... there is the strange, confusing sense of being individually unobserved among so many—such is the occasion, and still, hour after hour, the dancer whirl. .... bringing hearts so near that they almost beat against each other, mixing the warm mutual breaths ..." flushing the face and lighting the eyes with a quick language subject often to gross interpretations on the part of the vile-hearted—why, this fashionable institution seems to me to have been invented in an unfriendly quarter, usually conceived of as situated under us, to give our human passions leave to disport themselves, unreproved

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by conscience, by reason, or by shame, almost at their will.

When men of the denominational world see the dangers of the dance and warn their young people so effectively against its debilitating effect on their moral nature, it certainly behooves every sincere member of the Lord’s church to unite with its faithful preachers in a staunch opposition to any encroachment of the dance, in any of its forms, upon the lives of young Christians.

It is a crying shame that churches of Christ, which stand for primitive Christianity in all of its purity, including purity in the lives of its members, should now be permeated with dancing members. Such laxity in personal conduct can only eventually lead to laxity in worship and in doctrine.

The course of action clearly required of each of us is that he speak openly in his opposition to this evil. “To sin by silence when they should protest makes cowards of men.” Let us not sin by silence, but let us by protesting be loyal to our profession of truth.
Let each preacher denounce from the pulpit the dance, not neglecting to explain in the clearest terms why it is wrong. Let every faithful elder admonish each of his flock to abstain from this fleshly lust. Let each God-fearing parent teach his child at home, from childhood, that the dance is incompatible with morality and with the life of a Christian, especially emphasizing the dangers during the period of adolescence. Let every teacher refuse to participate in the school dances; and, so far as it is possible, in any arrangements in preparation for them. May the God of heaven give the youth of the church the courage to refuse to attend any function in which dancing is a part, whether it be the school prom or a party at the home of friends.

In these ways many young people will be saved from shipwrecking their faith. Those who persist in dancing will feel the pressure of disapproval and may eventually be led to abandon the sin, and the churches of the brotherhood will once again stand as bastions of purity in the midst of this sinful world.
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