



catches away the good seed of the Word, and the former religious exercise is rendered ineffectual.

Now, they that frequent promiscuous [i.e. *mixed*] dancings, or that send their children thereunto, walk disorderly and contrary to the apostles' doctrine. It has been proved that such a practice is a scandalous immorality and therefore to be removed out of churches by discipline, which is the broom of Christ, whereby He keeps His churches clean.

But will you that are professors of religion have your children to be thus

taught? The Lord expects that you should give the children who are baptized into His name another kind of education, that you should bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord [Eph. 6:4]. And do you not hear the Lord expostulating the case with you and saying, you have taken my children, the children that were given unto me; the children that were solemnly engaged to renounce the pomps [i.e. *pompous works*] of Satan; but is this a light matter that you have taken these my children and initiated them in the pomps [i.e. *pompous works*] and vanities of the wicked one, contrary to your covenant? What will you say in the day of the Lord's pleading with you?

We have that charity for you as to believe that you have erred through ignorance and not wickedly; and we have, therefore, accounted it our duty to inform you in the truth. If you resolve not on reformation, you will be left inexcusable. However it shall be, we have now given our testimony and delivered our own souls. Consider what we say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.



This excerpt is taken from *Annals of America: Volume 1 1493-1754*.  
Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica Inc., 1976, pp. 272-273.

The entire work is available online at:  
<http://www.covenanter.org/IMather/arrowagainstmixtdancing.htm>

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Faithful Sayings Issue 14.41 October 7, 2012

# Welcome Visitors

We are so glad that you joined us today.  
Please come again.

ISSUE

14.41

BULLETIN OF  
THE OLSEN  
PARK CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

# Faithful Sayings

October 7  
2012



## Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM  
10:20 AM  
6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

## Elders:

Pat Ledbetter  
Jeff Nunn  
Kyle Pope

## Deacons:

Dean Bowers  
Eddie Cook  
Bill Davis  
Steve Dixon  
Pat Goguen  
Jack Langley  
Neil Ledbetter  
Brady McAlister  
Walker McAnear  
Lance Purcell  
Rusty Scott

## Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

## An American Colonist on Dancing

By Kyle Pope

The Holy Spirit, long ago led Solomon to write “**there is nothing new under the sun**” (Eccl. 1:9). How true this is! Over three hundred years ago, colonists in New England were debating one of the same questions Christians continue to struggle with today—*should Christians dance?* Increase Mather, a Puritan preacher heavily involved in the politics of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, wrote a thirty page treatise arguing against dancing. As a Puritan, Mather was a strict Calvinist and did not accept the biblical pattern of conversion, the authority of the New Testament, the organization of the church, and many other doctrines of Christ. While we must oppose many of his beliefs and actions, in his work on dancing Mather made some powerful arguments that apply as much today as they did when he wrote them. I offer the following excerpt for your consideration.

We should note that the English of Mather's time was much different than modern English, and some words he used are now obsolete, obscure, or have dramatically different meanings

today. Most notable among these is the word “promiscuous.” In modern English this is usually used of uncontrolled and unlawful sexual behavior. As Mather uses it, he is only talking about activities in which men and women are “mixed” together. I have inserted definitions for some of these lesser known words in brackets [...] to help us capture the sense.



Olsen Park church of Christ

### *An Arrow Against Profane and Promiscuous Dancing Out of the Quiver of the Scriptures*

By Increase Mather (Boston, 1684).

CONCERNING THE CONTROVERSY about dancing, the question is not whether all dancing be in itself sinful. It is granted that pyrrhical [i.e. *rhythmic*] or polemical saltation [i.e. *passionate jumping*], i.e., when men vault in their armor to show their strength and activity, may be of use. Nor is the question whether a sober and grave dancing of men with men or of women with women be not allowable; we make no doubt of that, where it may be done without offense, in due season and with moderation. The Prince of Philosophers has observed truly that dancing or leaping is a natural expression of joy;<sup>1</sup> so that there is no more sin in it than in laughter or any outward expression of inward rejoicing.

But our question is concerning gynecandrical [i.e. *women with men*] dancing, or that which is commonly called mixed or promiscuous [i.e. *mixed*] dancing, viz., of men and women (be they elder or younger persons) together. Now this we affirm to be utterly unlawful and that it cannot be tolerated in such a place as New England without great sin.

And that it may appear that we are not transported by affection without judgment, let the following arguments be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary.

*That which the Scripture condemns is sinful.* None but atheists will deny this proposition; but the Scripture condemns promiscuous [i.e. *mixed*] dancing. This assumption is proved by the

<sup>1</sup> “Prince of Philosophers” is probably a reference to Jesus. If so Mather may elude to Jesus’ words in Matthew 11:17 and Luke 7:32 comparing that generation to the taunt of children “we played the flute for you and you did not dance.”

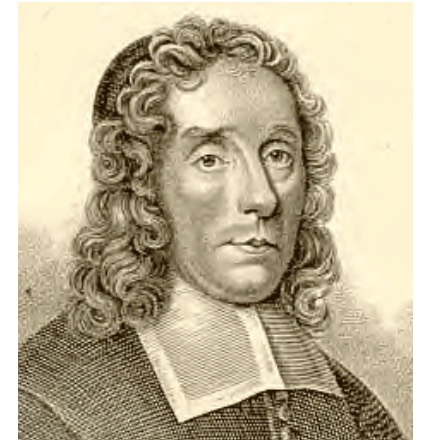
Seventh Commandment.<sup>2</sup> It is an eternal truth to be observed in expounding be Commandments that whenever any sin is forbidden, not only the highest acts of that sin but all degrees thereof and all occasions leading thereto are prohibited.<sup>3</sup> Now we cannot find one orthodox and judicious divine [i.e. *a respected church writer*] that writes on the Commandments but mentions promiscuous [i.e. *mixed*] dancing as a breach of the Seventh Commandment, as being an occasion and an incentive to that which is evil in the sight of God....

The unchaste touches and gesticulations [i.e. *movements of the arms and legs*] used by dancers have a palpable tendency to that which is evil. Whereas some object that they are not sensible of any ill motions occasioned in them, by being spectators or actors in such saltations [i.e. *jumpings*], we are not bound to believe all which some pretend concerning their own mortification [i.e. *self-imposed discipline*].

Now then, shall the gentiles, who had only the dark light of nature to show them what things are good and what evil, condemn petulant dancings? And shall Christians, who have the Scriptures and the glorious light of the Gospel to illuminate them, practice [i.e. *practice*] or plead for such works of darkness? And shall that abomination be set up in New England (the place where the light of the Gospel has shined so gloriously), which moral heathen have detested? The Lord lay not this great sin to the charge of any who have at all been guilty of it....

<sup>2</sup> “You shall not commit adultery” (Exod. 20:14; Deut. 5:18).

<sup>3</sup> “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt. 5:27-28).



Increase Mather

A Christian should do nothing wherein he cannot exercise grace or put a respect of obedience to God on what he does. This in lawful recreations may be done.... But who can seriously pray to the Holy God to be with him when he is going to a promiscuous [i.e. *mixed*] dance? It is that which hinders religious exercises, especially for persons to go immediately from hearing a sermon to a gynecandrical [i.e. *women with men*] dance. It is a high degree of profaneness, an impudent contempt put upon the Gospel. The devil thereby