

The Case for Dancing

When the more genteel Routiers (including many of the women) started a dance group, it shocked some of the older, more gnarled, men – people were wasting perfectly good drinking time! Indeed, Paul the Gross hearing of this and a fundraising cake stall (the 17th century recipes were very well received by the general public) on the same day, was never seen again (except when there's cheap beer on offer!)

This excerpt is from Puritan William Prynne, c 1650.

Dancing is for the most part attended with many amorous smiles, wanton complements, unchaste kisses, scurrilous songs and sonnets, effeminate music, lust-provoking attire, ridiculous love-pranks, all which savour only of sensuality, of raging fleshy lust. Therefore it is wholly to be abandoned of all good Christians.

Dancing serves no necessary use – no profitable, laudable or pious end at all. It issues only from the inbred depravity, vanity, wantonness, incontynency, pride, profaneness or madness of men's depraved natures. Therefore it must needs be unlawful unto Christians.

The way to heaven is too steep, too narrow, for men to dance in... No Way is large or smooth enough for capering roisters or for skipping, jumping, dancing dames but that broad, beaten, pleasant road that leads to Hell! The gate of Heaven is too narrow for whole rounds, whole troops of dancers to march in together.

This is why we dance!