

Ecclesiastical . . .

Amusements

By . . .

Rev. E. P. Marvin.

Introduction by

Rev. Drs. John Hall and Crosby.

2 COR. 6, 14-18.

SEVENTIETH THOUSAND, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE THIRD EDITION.

With the views of the Tract entitled "ECCLESIASTICAL AMUSEMENTS" I have full sympathy; and I think its circulation would do good to many, who from "want of thought" have been led along where the Church of God is not strengthened, but weakened.

If it be said that some are drawn to, or held in, the Church only in the ways censured, the reply is, that such bring no spiritual good, and rarely receive any. There are secessions from our congregations at times, which strengthen their position before God, and in the judgment of conscientious men.

JOHN HALL.

New York.

The Rev. E. P. MARVIN'S pamphlet on "ECCLESIASTICAL AMUSEMENTS" should be read by every pastor in the land, and every pastor should have spiritual backbone enough to enforce its teachings in his Church.

There is nothing so degrading to the Church, and so destructive to its godliness, as this attempt to vie with the world in popular amusements. Infinitely better is it to worship in a barn than in an edifice erected through picnics, fairs, theatrical shows and musical entertainments. A small, pure Church is better than a large smirched one. "*Rem, rem, quocunque modo rem,*" is the motto of these worldly Churches that sink their spirituality in outward success, and by bowing down to the world's level receive the contempt of even the world which they try to please. Let us, for Christ's sake, have a pure gospel in a pure Church, even if it be through trial and persecution. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord."

New York.

HOWARD CROSBY.

ECCLESIASTICAL AMUSEMENTS.

BY E. P. MARVIN, LOCKPORT, N. Y.

Sixth Edition, Enlarged.

"Then the Church sat down at her ease and said
'I am rich and in goods increased ;
I have need of nothing, and naught to do,
But to laugh and dance and feast.
I will welcome the world to my festal halls,
With attractions varied and new ;
And thus easily done, with frolic and fun,
I will give the Lord His due.' "

The Church has gone into the amusement business largely. In the days of primitive simplicity, it was thought that the world and Satan had a monopoly in the line of fun and sin. This, however, is 'an age of progress,' so called, and the Church has entered the market, and is in competition with these great caterers.

Men and women are working their wits to amuse themselves and others with religion.

Indeed the whole alphabet of worldly sports and all the colors of the rainbow are exhausted in these carnal and crazy forms of ecclesiastical amusement. But such is the continued complaint against "long-faced piety" and the demand for an "attractive religion," that no one can predict the future career and end of this modern craze.

"It grows by what it feeds upon."

The idea is becoming popular, that we cannot attract people to anything serious or elevating without the bait of food or fun.

The craze of the world for time-killing amusements has invaded the Church.

The parlor is fast superseding the prayer-room ; fire in the cooking-stove that of the altar, and food for the flesh on the banquet table, food for the soul from God's word.

Rev. Archibald G. Brown, of London, has lifted a clarion and a denunciatory voice against this evil in his "Devil's Mission of Amusement."

The case indeed seems to call for severity.

Mr. Spurgeon says :

"This is the suggestion of the present hour : if the world will

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not come to Jesus, shall Jesus tone down his teachings to the world? In other words, if the world will not rise to the Church, shall not the Church go down to the world? The new plan is to assimilate the Church to the world, and so include a larger area within its bounds. By semi-dramatic performances they make houses of prayer to approximate to the theater; they turn their services into musical displays, and their sermons into political harangues or philosophical essays."

Says the editor of the "Christian at Work": "The question of attending Church is decided by ever-growing numbers, solely on the ground of entertainment. Conscience has given place to the itching ear. What is there in the Church to draw? Is the preacher famous for his racy style, his sonorous periods, his devotional graces, his eccentric manners, his flashes of wit, his frequent vulgarities and his *outré* remarks?"

"Does he, in spite of himself, fetch now and then a tear as a variety to ripples of smiles?"

"And how about the music? Have they a first class soprano and alto? Is the tenor pure and sweet, and the bass—is he a basso profundissimo? Or did you ever hear such a boy choir, or such thrilling renderings, of portions of well known operatic airs?"

The discovery has been made that the Church, in order to hold the young people to its altars, must provide for the natural craving for amusements. It used to be held that Jesus and his work furnished ample resources to meet the loftiest aspiration of a saved soul. It was sung—

"Thou, O Christ, art all I want:
More than all in thee I find."

That sort of sentiment is now thought not to be up to "the times." A little amusement must be thrown in. In order to keep the people from the theater and opera, our churches must be made into semi-theaters and semi-operas. We must have posey piety, musical worship and a pretty sermonette, from ten to twenty minutes in length, with no breadth or height.

The blood-bought Church must be made a friendly club for the pleasant entertainment of saints and sinners.

We must bring in "strange fire, sugar-coat the gospel and play at church." The bare old gospel fails.

The royal ordinance of preaching retires before the popular ordinance of entertainment. All sorts of anniversaries and holidays furnish convenient seasons for these unblest practices.

Protestant holidays, jolly days, and folly days, far less reverent and religious than those of the Church of Rome, are multiplying, and all sorts of superfluous societies, and needless leagues, unauthorized by the Lord, are splintering, confusing and superseding the Church.

I submit whether some of these inventions do not impeach God of a lack of wisdom in not organizing the Church in adaptation to its proper work.

“Go teach Eternal Wisdom how to rule,
Then drop into thyself and be a fool.”

Their chief occupation is to cater to carnal pleasure and worldly pride.

Government by “Elders” retires before government by “Youngers,” and young preachers are wanted to join in the sport.

Now I wish to utter some earnest words of testimony to God’s professed people, concerning fairs, festivals, concerts, orchestras, tableaux, amateur theatricals, farces and variety shows, as methods of winning the heart and purse of the world.

1. As methods of raising money for the Lord these are *all contrary to the precepts and examples of his Word*, and therefore, they cannot please him.

They are counterfeit methods of giving, and they cultivate bogus benevolence.

On a certain occasion “Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld *how* the people cast money into the treasury.” (Mark 12:41.)

The motive and manner of giving to the Lord should be regarded as much as the amount given. (Matt. 6:1-4.)

God even curses services of any kind performed in a wrong spirit. (Jer. 23:36 40.)

The simple method of free-will offerings alone is approved, and all other methods are virtually condemned. (Study Ex. 35: 5, 21, 29:2; Cor. chapters 8 and 9; Luke 6:35; and Matt 10:8.)

The least departure from this, is the first step toward all current abominations.

One-tenth, or more, cheerfully and directly given, was the

law of Old Testament stewardship, and it is the privilege of the new.

These unscriptural methods are often very costly in time and money, as well as offensive to God.

What if Moses had instituted a grand carnival or bazaar to draw the surrounding heathen into his camp and get means to build the tabernacle? How would it comport with the character of the early Christians to read in one of Paul's epistles a suggestion that the saints at Corinth get up some amateur theatricals or Isthmian games to raise money for the poor saints at Jerusalem? or an exhortation to Lydia to stir up the godly women of Philippi to get up a grand fair, festival, crazy tea or baby show, with fantastically dressed Christian girls and all our latest modern devices?

Were the early meeting-houses bazaars or restaurants? The word of God and the ritual of our Churches, teach that giving is an act of worship as seen in Acts 10:4—but these ecclesiastical Vanity Fairs are scenes of carnal revelry and ungodly mirth.

Paul made tents, sold them in legitimate trade, and gave the money to the Lord, but he did not beg the patronage of pagans for his cause, and then credit them with giving to the Lord.

The early missionaries went forth "taking nothing of the Gentiles." (3 John 7.)

Imagine Christ or Paul at a modern Church fair, or strawberry festival!

Man's method may sometimes procure more money, but God's way will procure the greater blessing. No other way can be acceptable to him.

"O, how unlike the complex works of man,
Heaven's simple, easy, unencumbered plan."

A distinguished bishop of the Church of England in Canada recently found it necessary to say in a circular to his clergy: "Serious injury has for sometime past been inflicted on the Church of Christ in our diocese by the use of unscriptural and utterly fallacious methods of raising money for church purposes." He "formally inhibits" all Churches and congregations within his diocese from raising money for any purpose by (1) "Raffling, throwing of dice, games of chance or gambling of any kind; (2) All theatrical, dramatic or impersonating exhibitions, whether public or private."

When the Churches were far poorer than now, they were supported without these methods.

It was indeed an evil hour when this passion for money-making amusement entered the Church, for Satan came also.

2. These unblest devices *are belittling, contemptible and sometimes positively dishonest.*

They minister to the selfish and sensuous instead of the benevolent and spiritual nature.

It is almost a shame to even speak of them in detail as they appear in all our newspapers, not unfrequently as the butt of worldly ridicule and contempt:

“The focal point of million fingered shame.”

Is it unjust or inappropriate for journalists to place these notices in the column of the drama, minstrelsy, and other works of the flesh?

The ecclesiasticism of all Christendom is affected. Everywhere under Church Notices, entertainments and amusements seem to be the chief commodity. If this be truly apostolic why is it not written “He gave Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors—and *Caterers?*” Eph. 4:11.

“There is much said in these days about ‘church work,’ and curious work some of it is. It comprehends religion, education, amusement, worship, fairs, levees, concerts, grab-bags, broom-drills, necktie parties, suppers, sociables, and we know not what else, and all having for their object to sustain the cause, and support the minister.”

When the Churches become ashamed to practice such things and our Missionary Journals ashamed to tempt the young by advertising and commending them, we shall be ashamed to mention them.

What shall we say, what would the Master say, of a bevy of vain and bedizened young ladies, fascinating and cornering susceptible young men, to sell them commodities above value and which they did not want? or a dance gotten up by the “King’s Daughters, I. H. N!” Is this the King’s business which so imperatively demands haste? What if the King should come in the midst of this revelry? Matt. 24:42. What of the many devices like grab-bag, fish-pond, bean-counting, ring-cake and raffle involving the gambling principle? A minister visiting a young

man of his congregation imprisoned for forgery, was met with a defiant spirit and a severe reproof. "You and the Church," said the young man, "were the authors of my crime. I began the business in your Sunday-school, when they hid a gold ring in the cake." What of the Church of God showing wax-works and peddling small wares and fun to the world:—voting canes or kissing Miss Prettygirl for a price—getting up a farce or a variety show of Mother Goose and the Old Woman in her Shoe, a Fan Flirtation, a Donkey Social, a Punch and Judy Show, or a gathering of fantastic Merry Andrews and Belly-worshippers, (Phil. 8:19) or a box of Monkeys! All for the good of the Church!

These things appear like mockeries, gotten up by enemies of the Church.

Of course "they have lots of fun," but how does God look upon it and what is its influence upon the Church?

At one of these shows a lady sang the song beginning with "Lord, send me a husband," An owl is supposed to respond, "Who, who?" She answers, "Almost any one, Lord, will do."

Comic songs, humorous recitations, dramatic exercises, and operatic selections are employed, often with the help of professionals, and sometimes advertised as "Howling Entertainments."

Ministers of the Word not unfrequently take part in these accursed things, and allow the programmes to be distributed in the pews of the sanctuary.

We give but a few samples, and these with grief and shame. What a "Book of Ecclesiastical Sports" could be made up! How belittling to the Church, how dishonoring to God, and how contemptible in the eyes of the world!

Our gay ecclesiastics, in smart contempt of the past, and in pride of these novelties, remind us that "Progress is in the air!" Let us remind them that Satan is the prince of the power of the air. Eph. 2:2. Surely the wisdom that devises such methods in the Church is not from above, but is "earthly, sensual, devilish." Jas. 3:15.

Who can say that ere long, instead of some fantastic young lady fiddling a solo at the opening of church worship, we may not hear the pastor himself perform on the fiddle or the banjo?

Hear the ringing testimony of Rev. John McNeil of London: "When we see what music sets itself to cure—London's music, London's sacred music or its secular music—when we see what it

is called in to cure, it is no wonder if I should get a little outspoken about it. Music for a mad man!—whenever did it cure madness? Music for a man who needs Almighty God!—what a pitiful remedy! And is not that what the very Church of God is saying to-day? The masses—the squirming, wretched, howling masses—fiddle to them, oh fiddle to them; get up music for them, get up popular entertainments for them. Cast out the devil with the fiddle! Well, if he can be cast out with the fiddle, I am taking a wrong plan. It is a ludicrous mistake for me to have gone eight years through the college, when I ought to have been learning the banjo; was it not? If that is going to do it, we are on the wrong system.

“You talk about curing earthquakes with pills, it is very much the same as curing poor Saul’s trouble by getting a man who was skillful with his hands upon the harp. If the organ is going to do it, it was an awful mistake for Christ to have climbed upon the cross. That was the blunder of all time—the Crucifixion was not needed if music and organs and choir can cast out the evil spirit from a man. Yes, grant that you feel it, and I feel it—those inexpressible shivers that go all through us when there is splendid music, either of instrument, or the splendid musical crash of well-trained and well-balanced choirs. But tell me, you people, emotional people, and I am one of you, what good does it do in the end? How does it leave you afterwards? It leaves the heart as wicked as ever. David’s harp! Oh! man and woman, turn from all physicians who would heal your wounds *slightly*, saying ‘Peace! Peace! when there is no peace.’ Your wound is no slight wound; your wound is desperate, your wound is deadly. Nothing will cure thy heart but the almighty grace from the Lord Jesus Christ, through the Word and Truth of his Gospel.”

Said an infidel to me, “I think your God must be in great need of money, by the tricks the churches practice to get it for him.” Many of the pious grieve over these things and hang their heads in shame. Even those who aid and attend these performances cannot well approve them. Why have they not conscience and courage enough to witness against them and stop them? No intelligent Christian can ask God’s blessing upon such practices, nor expect it to rest upon money so procured. Says the *Christian*:

"The primitive Churches had their 'agapæ,' or 'feasts of charity,' or love, where social intercourse of a strictly religious character was enjoyed by the disciples of the Lord. Instead of these ancient and pious festivals, we are now accustomed to a class of social gatherings of an entirely different character which are inaugurated and perpetuated for the special object of getting money and making cheap and poor fun which crowds closely upon absolute sin."

Thus:

"Mirth doth into folly glide,
And folly into sin."

Dare any one say that if Christ were here, he would approve of these practices ?

It was reported boastfully of one of these gatherings that "even the deacons got wild and coquetted with their neighbors' wives!" Shame! Christians according to Christ are salt and not ice cream to the world. If they make a feast it should be after the pattern of Luke 14:12-14.

The early saints were not coaxers and amusement venders. They filled Jerusalem with their "*doctrine*" and not with tickets for festivals, minstrel shows and ecclesiastical vanity fairs.

Are not all such things "works of the flesh?" Gal. 5:17-21.

Tickets are hawked about town to the disgust of all right-minded people.

H. L. Hastings says:

"When church members are truly converted to God, and have a religion that goes pocket-deep, there will be no need of calling in the flirts and fops and loafers of the town to dicker over rag dolls and India-rubber babies, and other tomfooleries, to raise money for the support of the gospel. If churches cannot live without dishonoring the Lord, then let them die decently and speedily, and when such cumberers of the ground are cut down, there may be room for other trees that will bear good fruit."

Does God reach for the "pocket nerve" through the risibles or the stomach ?

When the blood-bought Church of God, with all her store of wealth, resorts to such miserable shifts to get help from the world, what must worldlings, with their lavish outlay for the pleasures of sin, think of the value of our salvation ?

Rev. R. M. Patterson, of Philadelphia says :

“One particularly disgraceful phase of the general inconsistency of the Christian life which is so harmful to the progress of Christ’s cause may be noted—the growing disposition to administer churches as if it was a part of their mission to provide entertainment for the people. Fairs, concerts, comical lectures, oyster suppers, turning the dedicated house of worship into a place of hilarious amusement, are fearfully demoralizing to the religious life. They dispiritualize the people ; merge the high sense of obligation into pleasure-seeking ; blot out that line of demarkation between the Church and the world which cannot be destroyed without debasing the one and affording rare comfort to the other in its sins. The piety of congregations which tolerate such things has lost the high old Puritan type. They are full of weaklings, with itching ears and sensual stomachs, who measure a church by its amusement-producing capacity.”

Beware of all bastard societies, born of the alliance of the Church with the world and devoted chiefly to ecclesiastical amusements.

Theodore L. Cuyler says :

“It is the mark of a baby to be everlastingly crying for amusements,” and these in the Church are wiles of the devil borrowed to support the professing body of Christ.

3. These methods *abate and corrupt the spirit of gospel benevolence in the Church and bring it under bondage to the world.*

Instead of “acts of worship ” and exercises of benevolence, they are scenes of carnal revelry and selfish pleasure.

Sometimes we see the awful mockery advertised of “*Ye World-lie Songs*” in connection with solemn judgment Hymns on exhibition !

These methods foster the worldly spirit of self-indulgence instead of the Christian spirit of self-denial, as designed by the institution of alms-giving. They are tricks of traffic with the Lord, and devices by which to give him “what costs us nothing.”

They are “giving made easy ” patents for the convenience of stingy saints, cloaks for covetousness, anesthetics for the painless extraction of charitable (?) gifts from ungodly people, yoking up the sheep and goats for food, frolic and funds.

Says a pert disciple of this school, "I am not going to give my money unless I get some fun for it."

Well, if persons cannot be persuaded to give to the Lord, "hoping for nothing again," in the spirit of willing and cheerful benevolence, we have the best reason to believe that he does not want them to give at all. Luke 6:35, 2 Cor. 9:7, Matt. 10:8.

Perish the jesuitical principle that "the end sanctifies the means!"

The *Sunday-School Times* waxes satirical over the matter.

"And now, brethren, let us get up a supper and eat ourselves rich," said a witty Presbyterian elder, in keen satire on the church fair plan. "Buy your food" he said; "then give it to the church. Then go buy it back again. Then eat it up, and your church debt is paid."

If that is the best way of getting all hands to contribute to a good cause, by all means let it be introduced into the churches for every Sunday service. Just think of it. The deacons or vestrymen pass around the boxes on Sunday morning, at the same time they offer to serve refreshments to all who give liberally. The pastor at his desk repeats appropriate sentences meantime. For example: *Pastor*: "Give and it shall be given unto you." *Deacon* (reaching out contribution box to a stranger in the congregation): "A plate of ice cream goes to every person who contributes twenty-five cents or more. Can you help us this morning?" *Pastor*: "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth." *Deacon* (to father of the family): "A bag of peanuts goes to each child who contributes not less than five cents; lemonade to the father. Let all take hold to-day. We need the money." *Pastor*: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." *Deacon*: "Tickets for the young people's entertainment only ten cents."

That is the church fair idea. If it works well in one place, why not in another? If it is the way of promoting God's cause on week day evenings, why not make it available for the same cause Sundays?

Can there be any doubt as to the sin and folly of this double-faced, indirect method of trying to raise money for the Lord's cause, in contrast with the straightforward, honest appeal to men to give of their substance to him on whom they depend for all things?

The consecrated steward says freely :

“ Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold.”

These methods are especially designed to draw money from the “outsiders” and thus spare the “insiders,” but we should remember that the world, the flesh and the devil claim a mortgage on all institutions which they help to support. We should not expect Satan to help pay for the weapons with which we assail him. The world expects its stock to vote as well in a church as in a railroad corporation. If we beg of the world to help us support the Church, we must allow the world a measure of control in it, and it will gradually become “a church of the world,” in the broad way, a “union church.”

Does God indeed want Mr. Oscamp to help erect, and Mrs. Osham to help decorate his places of worship ?

John Wesley said :

“ Let all our churches be built plain and decent, and with free seats wherever practicable ; but not more expensive than is absolutely unavoidable, otherwise the necessity of raising money will make rich men necessary to us. But if so, we must be dependent on them, yea and governed by them. And then farewell to Methodist discipline, if not doctrine too ”

We need piety to win souls rather than money to erect churches to be proud of. It might greatly promote the spirituality and usefulness of many churches if their vain and showy extravagances were curtailed. Better have lower spires and higher spiritual aspirations ; better be a little less ornamental and more useful ; better be without silver or gold, with apostolic power, than as we are. Acts 3:6.

Rev. C. H. Parkhurst naively says : “ One of the strongest points in the early Church was that they had so little money.”

The early Christians never dreamed of asking the world to support the Church.

Long before this, Abraham and Zerubbabel had refused such offered aid, even “ from a thread to a shoelatchet,” or a finger’s lift. Gen. 14:22-23. Ezra 4:1-3.

Hear Rev. A. J. Gordon, a faithful witness, concerning this Chromo Christianity :

“ How much we are coming to lean on mere human agencies upon art and architecture, upon music and rhetoric, and social

attractions! If we would draw the people to church that we may win them to Christ, the first question with scores of Christians now-a-days is, what new turn can be given to the kaleidoscope of entertainment? What new stop can we insert in our organ, and what richer and more exquisite strain can we reach by our quartette? What fresh novelty in the way of social attraction can we introduce? or what new coruscation can be let off from the pulpit to dazzle and captivate the people?

Oh, for a faith to abandon utterly these devices of naturalism, and to throw the Church without reserve upon the power of the supernatural! This is a generation bent, as few have been, on reconciling the claims of religion with those of pleasure, and thus solving the problem of 'making the best of both worlds.' Would that our eyes were really open to what is passing! To dissuade Christians from going to the theater would be very tame advice in these days, when the theater with rapid strides is pushing itself into the Church. To tell the disciple of Jesus to 'love not the world, neither the things that are in the world' would seem a very mild dissuasion and almost unkind, when the world has come to such friendly terms with the Church, that it willingly lends all its machinery of entertainment and art and amusement, to make the gospel more attractive. Our power is in our separateness from the world, not in our affiliation with it."

4. Many of these practices are *evil in their desecration of our places of worship, and in degrading them into places of merchandise.*

Even if we do not regard places now as consecrated, like the temple, all agree in the expediency and importance of hallowed associations.

Though there be "no religion in surroundings," there are powerful incentives or hindrances to spiritual worship.

After the memorable scene of Transfiguration, Peter calls the place a "holy mount." Reverence in worship is naturally connected with reverence for the sanctuary of worship. Certainly the spirit of the law in Lev. 19:30, "Ye shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary. I *am* the Lord," has never been made void. But what undevotional associations must linger on Sunday in the sanctuary where we lately attended a "necktie and apron social," or saw the Sunday-school children play "Cock Robin" or "Mother Hubbard," or where the pastor lately lectured on Jack Horner and Jack Spratt.

A pastor used the following language in dedicating his Church: "Holiness becometh thy house. Let this church never be desecrated to worldly and secular use. Let the tables of the money changers and of groveling worldlings never find a place here. Every part is sacredly the Lord's."

After an entertainment in this church, I asked a friend to what the church was dedicated. He replied, "We dedicated it first to the Lord, but last night we dedicated it to Shakespeare, Dickens and Bret Harte." The law to tax churches that are used as play and pay houses, is just and equal. Our solemn ceremony of dedicating or consecrating buildings to religious instruction and worship, is manifestly a sacred farce if they are to be used as play-houses or club-rooms.

A church and world play-ground is not a good sanctuary for worship.

Fair and festival, frolics untold,
Are held in the place of prayer;
And maidens, bewitching as syrens of old,
With worldly graces rare,
Invent the very cunningest tricks,
Untrammelled by gospel or laws,
To beguile and amuse, and win from the world
Some help for the righteous cause.

Christ twice cleansed even the outer temple court of abominations far less offensive than these, and if he were here we may be sure that nothing less severe than a whip of small cords would suffice. Jno. 2:14-17. Luke 19:45-46.

If pulpit watchmen would give clear and ringing testimony to the imminence of the Lord's coming again, it would startle many a slumbering saint out of these abominations. Matt. 24:42-51.

I know not a church in christendom in which this blessed and purifying hope prevails, and where the New Testament watchword "Maranatha" is faithfully sounded out, that is guilty of these abominations.

Immediately after God's ancient Israel began to worship the "golden calf," we read, "And the people sat down to eat and to drink and rose up to play." Ex. 32:6. The apostle Paul says, "These things are our example, to the intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolators as

were some of them." And then a little further on he explains: "What, have ye not *houses to eat and drink* in? or *despise ye the Church of God*, and shame them that have not?"

We must know the mind of God concerning such things, and it is no wonder that the doctrine of the Lord's coming is unpopular in many of our Churches.

5. Amateur dramatics to please the world and put money in the purse of the Church, *silence the testimony of the pulpit against the stage, and even promote its interests.*

Never before since the idle and dissolute Roman used to cry, "Give me bread and the theater," has there prevailed such a passion for dramatic performances, as we now see throughout all Christendom.

Magnificent and costly theaters are multiplying, and they are everywhere thronged with eager if not frenzied votaries. Fabulous sums are expended for dramatic amusements, especially for female singers, actresses and dancers. The support of churches in our cities is really beggarly in the comparison.

Six star actors in twenty-six weeks received \$1,600,000. New York City spends about \$5,000,000 annually in the play-house, and the United States \$200,000,000.

With its numerous performances to the masses inside, and its blazing show-bills constantly before the eyes of all people outside, the drama is doing more to mould the character of our people, and especially the young, than most good people realize.

Its influence pervades almost everything, and is seen almost everywhere. A Missionary, or Moral Reform Society (and shall I say even a Church) is scarcely organized before some dramatic and musical entertainment is planned, with its "Splendid Programme of Exercises," songs and recitations for amateur play actors. This is called in our churches, "getting to work." Funny work!

The Hebrew people, under God's training for purity, never had a theater. Their public performances were not artistic but oracular. The Roman empire was never more corrupt, and the theater never more popular than when Christianity appeared, and as it superseded paganism, dramatic performances were almost wholly banished from the empire.

One of the earliest formulas used in confessing Christ, "I re-

nounce the devil and all his works ; the vain pomp and glory of the world," etc., had special reference to the scenic representations of the stage.

Christians never visited the theater, and they maintained the utmost simplicity and artlessness of worship in contrast with its mimicry. The Christian religion was uncompromisingly hostile to the stage and even to the dramatic art.

Early Synods and Councils condemned it, and even in the decline of the Middle Ages, the Church of Rome raised her voice against it. Almost all the modern Reformed Churches have officially taken the same ground. Those of Scotland, France and Holland have declared it "unlawful to go to comedies, tragedies, interludes, farces or other stage plays, acted in public or private, because in all ages these have been forbidden among Christians, as bringing in a corruption of good morals."

What would they say of bringing these things into the Church ? ? ?

The theater has always been a school of immorality, from the time when the Greeks sang and danced around their wine-god Bacchus until now, and these performances are training-schools for the play-house. A young man who has been employed in a Brooklyn theater told me he received his first training and taste for the stage in Sunday-school concerts.

The Sunday-schools in Hamilton, Canada, have lately furnished three actors for the stage.

In fact most of these leading ecclesiastical play people attend the theater and the dance, and play cards, and not a few leading pulpits are weakened or silenced in their testimony against these things.

And this babel cry for "amusements" with the frenzy of enterprise in the Church to meet it, has not yet culminated. God only knows where it will lead ! It is world wide. I am told that a Colored Church, South, lately dramatized and acted the Prodigal Son, actually killing and eating the Fatted Calf. It is said that their Church festivals are often characterized by the vilest orgies. Eph. 5:12.

Stories of Sacred Writ are turned into laughable farces.

The blasphemy of acting the parable of the Ten Virgins, with the pastor as the Bridegroom, is enacted with applause in our Churches.

How quickly this sacrilegious comedy would be changed to dreadful tragedy if the Lord should suddenly appear! We can only present a little rude dramatic art, which whets the appetite for the real thing, breaks down barriers, and swells the throngs of saints and sinners at the opera and at the theater. The Church theater trains for the world theater. Indeed, professionals in costume are sometimes employed.

Papers and books are printed by religious societies to promote this bastard business.

Shame on the Church for making this low and smiling bow to the stage! Men reason that it is better to witness the legitimate drama by artists than the illegitimate by amateurs in a primary school. The Romish Church of the Middle Ages abolished the "Mysteries and Moralities," because they found no good, but evil, resulting from dramatizing any part of the sacred Scriptures. They were written and acted by the clergy, to satisfy the popular passion for the drama.

They represented the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Adam and Eve, the Crucifixion and all the most popular parts of the Bible, with ever present masked demons and gaping dragons.

How absurd to attempt in a realistic spirit, to act out everything written and spoken, and especially spiritual truth.

Charles Lamb, speaks with contempt of "the mimetic phantasmal tinkling of the stage," and even says that Shakespeare is better read than acted.

"The Romish Church has ever relied largely upon the effect exerted by sensual displays upon its adherents, and has defended the practice as necessary to convey important truths to those who were ignorant. The Greek Church has pursued the same plan, and after the hiatus of the reformation fervor, many of the Protestant bodies have shown a strong tendency to revert to the same or closely allied practices. It was the attachment to this line of action which gave rise to ritualism in the English Church, which found a fitting stock for its development in the high church theories."

True Christian worship is simple and spiritual, not complex and spectacular.

Certainly Christ never told us to put the gospel on stage exhibition.

What possible good can result from these juvenile exhibitions of elocution and song, finery and vanity, flowers and gilt pasteboard, fiddling and bird singing?

They certainly are not worship. They do indeed "draw" immensely, but not to the truth or to Christ. They please little Miss Vanity, and her doting mamma, but not God.

Is there nothing better than these "Children's Snares" for "Children's Day?" Is not the "Lord's Day" better?

Indeed, the more you draw to these "Heavenly Knick Knacks and "Variety Shows," the less you can draw to "dull preaching, and the more money you get in this way, the less you will get in God's way. Can God bless missions supported by such means?

I have known the spirituality of a congregation so reduced that about twenty-five would come out to Sunday night preaching, and one hundred and fifty came to a silly and immoral "Clothes Pin Social."

Our Sunday night "Choral Services," and "Sabbath-school Concerts," with their speaking, singing, and orchestral boys and girls, advertised as "Entertainments," are really feeders of the opera and the theater, and not counter attractions, and probably a strict enforcement of the law would close both.

They are juvenile theaters. Calling them "Missionary Meetings" does not sanctify them.

A romantic or dramatic interest, such as may be awakened by tableaux vivants, or "three little maids" in Japanese costume, never makes true missionaries, and God never can accept and bless funds thus procured.

Ten times as many of our young people in the church go to the play-house and the dance, as when this era of counterfeit giving and ecclesiastical amusement began. Our course should be separation, consecration, and concentration.

These parasites of the body of Christ who want religious comedy, will fail to find it in the Bible, and those who seek tragedy, will meet that soon enough. 2 Thess. 1:8. Matt. 25:31-46.

Hear Howard Crosby's testimony.

"The Church of God is to-day courting the world. Its members are trying to bring it down to the level of the ungodly. The ball, the theater, nude and lewd art, social luxuries, with al-

their loose moralities, are making inroads into the sacred inclosure of the Church, and as a satisfaction for all this worldliness, Christians are making a great deal of Lent, and Easter, and Good Friday, and Church ornamentations. It is the old trick of Satan. The Jewish Church struck on that rock, the Roman church was wrecked on the same, and the Protestant Church is fast reaching the same doom."

No wonder this ecclesiastical worldliness is calling for a new theology, a revised creed, a little pill gospel with more "sweetness and light, safety and love."

No wonder that with such a *cultus* many go where they can hear the shortest sermon and the best music. No wonder that our sing-song revivals at best are shallow and transient. No wonder that instead of the "breaking down and coming out" of former days we simply read that "a large number of persons *signified their intention* to become Christians." The Holy Spirit is grieved and no mighty works are done.

This does not accord with saving gospel truth.

This decay of faith and leaven of skepticism demands a jovial ministry and pretty preaching, to make religion attractive and easy and bring in a revenue. It demands willowy men, who try to widen the strait gate.

It calls for pleasing pulpiteers,
Modern and brilliant and fast ;
Who will show how men may live as they list,
And go to heaven at last.

And the demand brings the supply. Thus the world controls the Church, and the Church controls the preacher.

But some one may say : "Suppose we should have fearless and faithful pulpit testimony, go out of the show business, and administer wholesome discipline, according to our standards, *who would be left in our churches?*"

I reply, *Christians would be left!* And they would be left, disencumbered of a great mass of ecclesiastical worldlings who are falsifying the gospel, caricaturing Christianity, grieving the Savior, hindering the Spirit's work, and thwarting the endeavors of those unequally yoked Christians. Yes, "*lovers of God*" would be left when these "*lovers of pleasure*" were gone, and I

should expect the grandest revival of salvation ever witnessed in America !

If they do not want to be "tied up," let them go and take their Kitchen Annex and Club House with them, And if men are doing something else and calling it preaching the gospel, let the fraud be exposed.

6. These practices *turn the Church aside from its legitimate and heavenly calling, and fritter away its spirituality, its time and energies.*

Church kitchens are to the Church what theaters and dancing-halls are to the world—places of dissipation ; and it would be an everlasting benefit to the Church if they were banished from the house of God.

The Church was purchased by the blood of Christ for no such secular, trifling or corrupt purpose. Her mission is her commission. The Church is not designed to be a bureau of amusements for the world, strew the broad way with flowers, and cheer on the world's frolic to perdition. It is her mission to save "our young people," and God does not bless such means, directly or indirectly, to this end.

It is well known that the leaders in these secular performances for raising money, or entertaining the people, are not spiritually-minded people to say the least. Mark these who come to the front for festivals, dramatic entertainments, and the sacrilegious show music of festal holidays.

Mrs. Pride, Mrs. Skinflint, and the Misses Tattle, Flirt and Frolicker with their unsanctified and susceptible male admirers. And these "butterfly saints" are in their native element of worldliness and "razzle dazzle."

They indeed may boast of "Keeping things alive," and say with the cultured infidel Pope, Leo 10th, "This Christianity ! how profitable a farce it has proved to us !" She that liveth in pleasure, is dead while she lives, I Tim. 5:6.

When the world coquettes and decorates the expectant bride of Christ, angels veil their faces for shame and sorrow.

What an infallible token of back-sliding when professing Christians demand amusement at any cost, in every place and at all times ! Read Isa. 47:18, I Cor. 10:6, I Tim. 5:6 and II Tim. 3:1-5.

By these unblest performances carnal hearts are rendered more carnal and hard to convert ; worldliness, not Christianity, is rendered attractive, and given baptismal sanction, and the blood-line between the Church and the world obliterated. (2 Cor. 6:14-18.)

Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, from her full treasury of observation and experience, says : " It may be set down I think, as a general axiom, that people feel the need of amusements less and less, precisely in proportion as they have solid reasons for being happy." Much of what we hear in some Churches of " religion making people happy " is a mixture of truth and error, and it serves as an apology for worldly amusements.

The devil can make his own fun for his subjects, and our young people, trained in good principles, are capable of entertaining themselves. The effort to remove " the offense of the cross," make Christianity attractive to the carnal heart, and convert the world by conforming to it, is diametrically opposed to the Divine plan, and it is rapidly converting the Churches to the world and transforming our Sunday-schools and Churches, into Kindergartens and Social Clubs.

Hear the ringing testimony of Arthur T. Pierson.

" We build gorgeous gothic fanes, furnished with crimson and gold, garnished with the artist's pencil and chisel ; then we secure for the pulpit the princes of oratory, and for the choir the star singers of the opera ; then we multiply concerts and chorals, fairs and festivals, entertainments and excursions ; and by such allurements hope to draw the people and to ' evangelize the masses.' But the hope is found to be delusive.

" These worldly expedients have proved very successful in secularizing the Church but have sadly failed in evangelizing the world. They do not even draw the people, except so far and so long as their novelty attracts curiosity seekers, or feeds the morbid appetite for excitement.

" The fact is, Zion's attractions are unique ; like her Lord, they are not of the world—they belong to another order of beauty, ' the beauty of holiness.' When the Church robes herself in the charms of worldly attire and adornment, she not only fails to draw the world to herself and to Christ, but she actually takes the infection of the ' Spirits of the Age,' and which, however disguised, is hostile to God.

“It is time all such measures were abandoned as helps to the work of evangelization. They are rather hindrances ; for they destroy the peculiar character of *God's people* as a *separate* people, they divert attention from eternal things, and they grieve the Spirit of God, on whose presence all power depends.”

If it be said that we cannot otherwise hold our young people, we reply :

The Primitive Church held the young without these worldly devices, and in spite of rack and flames and lions.

The primitive Methodist Church held her young people by spiritual forces alone. The Puritans held their children and young people better than we do. They began to lose them when they became lax. What has been done can be done again. The name Puritan suggests to some a sneer at “Blue Laws” and “Long Faces,” but they greatly mistake who regard the Puritans or their children as melancholy people. They were the happiest mortals living.

Landing at Plymouth,

“They shook the depths of the desert gloom,
With their hymns of lofty cheer,
Amid the storm they sang,
And the stars heard and the sea.
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang,
With the anthem of the free !”

They sang because they *were happy*, and they did not need the wild warblings of the opera to *make them happy*.

When imprisoned like Paul and Silas, they entertained each other with hymns, and burst forth in doxologies. Their joy came from heaven and not from the May-pole, the virginal, or the cap and bells. They were not born haphazard, and thrown out upon pastime. They came because sent with a great moral purpose, and they were happy in it.

They found no account that Christ and the apostles amused themselves with singers, clowns or stage players, and they practiced Christianity according to Christ.

The Puritan Church was filled with the joy and peace of God's salvation, and both old and young were satisfied with it. They were like giants filled with new wine. Our limp Christians and sporting ecclesiastics are but sorry Lilliputians beside them.

We must not forget that the cross itself, with all that it represents of toil and suffering, attracts heroism. The Church triumphed when it was the fashion to believe, to love and to suffer.

Christ saved others; himself he could not save.

The Church has made its grandest conquests when most holy and separate from the world, so that God could work through her, and the world could see something to be converted to. Christianity has its repulsions, and the Church ought to be holy enough to expel the unholy.

Christ knew how to attract and hold, and what is his call? Mark 8:34-38.

The gospel is designed to make sinners uncomfortable. It was never applauded by the world until it was corrupted.

"We study to please," is the motto of the stage, but "We study to save," is the motto of the Church. The Church is to be a Christ-witnessing, light-bearing missionary agency. It is a Divine propaganda, and it has no apology for its existence in any other character.

Christ and the Apostles never dreamed of making almsgiving, preaching or worship, an entertainment. The Church in its corporate state has but one thing to do.

It is not a business or a matrimonial mart. We have a clearly defined working commission. A church carried on for any other purpose, is not worth the ground on which it stands.

Said Wesley to his preachers, "You have nothing to do but to save souls: therefore spend and be spent in this work."

Other institutions can excel it in traffic and entertainment. It can excel them only in holiness and usefulness. The *N. Y. Herald* gave as a reason why some Churches are declining in New-York City, that preachers could not be expected to run dime museums and small theaters, and succeed in preaching the gospel. "The Church is not a trader though its members may be. It is appointed to a mightier work than dabbling in tapes and pin cushions. Its appointment is to divine communion and the saving of souls. It has a psalm to sing whose volume reaches the throne, but it has no groceries to sell. There is not a command, allowance, or example in all the Holy Scriptures that makes the Church a merchant, or tells it to pay its way by holding a fair."

Our great Missionary Societies, while teaching that "giving is

an act of worship," still wink at these unhallowed methods, and even furnish "Exercises" for them, and constantly beg for more money.

This "Amusement Heresy," this "Kitchen and Cooking-Stove Apostasy," which is even being built into our church architecture, is one of the clear and dreadful prophetic tokens of the apostasy of the last times.

Take the testimony of the word. Luke 16:26-30. Luke 18:8. 1 Tim. 4:1. Rev. 8:16.

We are forced to the sorrowful confession that the current popular religion of our Churches is not the religion of the New Testament. It is not Christianity according to Christ. Under this regime in which the world dominates, additions to the Church may indeed increase, but real conversions must decrease.

We may have many added to the professing Church, and few to Christ, so that we have a mixed flock of sheep and goats.

It is a fearful fact that the professing Church is manifestly filling up with baptized worldlings and their demands must be met or "how can we get money to run the thing?" Probably this class of sorry formalists who lead the show business in our Churches, and who want to be saved by Christ and made happy by the devil, are the hardest of all classes to convert.

How numerous they must be when an evangelist, Dr. Pentecost, reports that one-third of his converts in a large city were Church members.

Hence all services must be adapted to entertain or amuse, from the sermon down.

Men are not so unwise as to insist on such qualities in connection with other institutions established for the improvement and progress of society. Do parents send their children to school to be amused? Do they require factories to furnish attractive entertainments for young people before they will send their sons to learn a trade? Children go to school to learn, not to be amused. Young men enter a factory or a store to learn the trade and to work, not to be entertained.

Evangelists everywhere, like Mr. Moody, deplore and denounce these things as one of the greatest obstacles to genuine revivals.

Dr. Pentecost says: "If any person or persons make a propo-

sition to hold a fair, or festival, or bazaar, or broom drill, or any other worldly device for getting money for the Church this winter, move to amend by substituting a protracted meeting for the preaching of the gospel to sinners."

Another wise and faithful witness says :

"The evil which now imperils the Church is the substitution of social forces for spiritual ones. The two, with a faint resemblance, are as opposite as the poles.

"The Church by constitution and prerogative is designed and must be rigidly held to her one purpose of saving men from sin and hell, and preparing them for heaven. She can have no higher purpose ; she can neither by the way of episode nor bivouac turn aside or descend to any lower. The ends of entertainment, pleasure-giving, social enjoyment are not in her character or by-laws; they are foreign to her purpose in every respect.

"The social forces have neither relish for, nor reference to the spread of holiness. Faith is no way necessary to their execution. There is nothing distinctly religious about them. They are as good or better for the sinner than for the saint. Everything about them has a light, undevout, self-indulgent air. The spirit and surroundings are counter to prayer. Whatever they may be as entertainments, however relished and applauded they may be as performances, or financial devices, to the true ends of the Church they are an offence, an impertinence, an apostacy. The social can raise money, excite activities, stir young blood, stimulate rivalries, multiply organizations, but no sanctifying grace flows through them. The social may add numerical strength to the Church, increase the finances, attract the devotee of social positions ; but this is no evidence that God is in her. The mosque, the synagogue, the club can do the same. Church methods, plans, agencies must be sacred ; they must be of a character used and indorsed by the Holy Ghost ; faith, holiness, prayer must color, tincture, impregnate all. The use by her of agencies which the Holy Ghost cannot sanctify and use, to which faith and prayer are foreign, is disloyalty to her Lord.

"Where the social enters largely into the life of a Church, the distinctly spiritual forces are enfeebled and disrelished. The ways and methods used, while more attractive to the unregenerate or half-hearted Christian, are foreign to God's house, stran-

gers to the Holy Ghost, never have and never can be channels through which grace flows. To such a Church, a genuine and thorough work of grace is an impossibility. The hearts and hands of its members have been preoccupied and filled, but not with those exercises which secure God's presence. The whole Church life has been trained into methods of activities which absolutely unfit it for the favor of God. To secure convicting and converting grace, it is powerless. That which must be the all-absorbing idea of God's Church has, for the major part of them, neither form nor comeliness. A revival is as much out of harmony with them as it would be in the club house.

“Churches in which the social prevails, can never be centers of spiritual power. Crowded with organizations, flushed with youthful vivacity or vanity, centers of pleasant, churchly enjoyment, proper meetings, imposing exhibitions, elegant luncheons, financial and fashionable depots they may be; but centers of spiritual power, where holiness and the fear of God are cultured, where the world is denied and crucified, where the hope of heaven is cherished in a real, exultant way; centers of great spiritual movements, entrepots for spiritual supplies they cannot be. The social has been encouraged and advanced until it overshadows and swamps the spiritual.

“The societies based on social principles in many a Church are far more numerous and popular than the spiritual ones. The church parlor and church kitchen, the symbols of self-indulgence and social cheer, have displaced the class and prayer-meetings, or reduced them to their own level. The Church has fallen from its high aim, to a plane where it cannot exercise positive aggressive power. The very atmosphere is repressive of holiness; the surroundings are as ungenial to the sigh of penitence, or the struggles and victories of faith, as polar regions are to tropical flowers and fruits. If the preacher is not tainted, if his spiritual nerves are not softened, the very air chills and blunts. The atmosphere is too rare to transmit or support life; his deliverances fall into vacancy or hit against adamant. The Church is disarmed, her militant attitude destroyed, an enforced and unholy truce is declared; a timid and weak conservatism cuts her sinews and binds her arms. She can have neither face nor heart to fight the world, whose way she has embraced, whose dress she has adopted, and whose spirit she has imbibed.

“The social begets lightness—frivolity becomes its house. It dissipates those graces absolutely necessary to the success of the Church—for the Church cannot possibly succeed but by keeping her flame to fever heat and her efforts strained to the utmost tension of spiritual operations.

“The sociable, the fair, the festival, and parties of pleasure and for exhibitions, must be eliminated from the Church. The church kitchen and the church parlor must go, or the revival. If we retain them the Church is reduced to the minimum of spiritual power and running on a decreasing ratio. Our young people trained by these social methods and Church habitudes, will be total strangers to spiritual operations, its conflicts and victories; not only strangers to a high, conscious experience of God, which is the glory and power of Methodism, but we will rear a generation to whose ideas and tastes such an experience will be offensive.

“Defend or apologize for them as we may, they have entered into the Church of God, not at the instance of deep piety, not inspired by prayer, but as a worldly compromise; are governed by worldly principles, executed by prayerless minds.”

These societies, organized for worldly pleasure, or to do something which it is assumed that God has not adapted the Church to do, may become the crumbling debris of a disintegrating Church.

7. In fine, these methods of ecclesiastical amusement and money-making, **BLIGHT THE SPIRITUAL LIFE, INFLUENCE, ACTIVITY, AND USEFULNESS OF THE CHURCH, AND PROMOTE ALMOST EVERY SPECIES OF CARNALITY AND WORLDLINESS.**

They open not merely a wide door, but the whole broad side of the Church, and invite the world to free and easy fellowship, if they will only help to support the Church. It is both down grade and broad gauge.

As the Church is now drifting, careful and conscientious parents may soon have to withdraw their children from its society to keep them from dancing, theater-going, card-playing and other corruptions. In the Holy Spirit, and with trumpet tone, we utter our solemn declaration and testimony, that this new ecclesiastical dispensation of frolicking and mirth is absolutely contrary to the truth and spirit of our holy religion, corrupting to the Church, ruinous to the world and offensive to God.

We are repeatedly taught sobriety, seriousness and an earnest life purpose. (1 Thess. 5:5, 6.)

Recreation is but an occasional by-the-way matter.

We are purchased, separated and sent into the world for Christian work, and not play. When we magnify the spirit of play and amusement to please our young people, we make them "lovers of pleasure," but not "lovers of God." The Church is always corrupted when "it pays" to join it.

Study such scriptures as Ezekiel 33, Acts 20, 1 Thess. 5, Titus 2 and James 4, and learn the serious import of this present probation in its relation to eternity.

Beware of Laidocce. Rev. 3:14-16.

Salvation is not a selfish luxury, but a tremendous trust. It cannot be propagated in fun, avarice or ease.

Salvation by fun is damnation by sin. Samson making sport for the Philistines is a sorry sight.

James W. Hart asks the following questions of his brethren in the ministry :

"Can one of you name a man who in the past was mighty in lifting men from sin to holiness and God, who used a pop-corn ball for the fulcrum for his lever? When Christ called the fishermen from their nets at Galilee, was it to catch jumping-jacks in Japanese fish-ponds? Did Paul find it necessary to supplement the power and glory of the cross with a butterfly social? Were the prayers of John Knox feared because they would draw a larger crowd to a necktie festival at his church, than the queen could rustle to hers? When the Wesleys, Asbury, and their coadjutors founded a mighty movement designed to revolutionize the theology of the world and lead in Christian thought and activity, did they build with mush and milk mortar? Did Jonathan Edwards shake New England with a baked-bean bazaar? Did any of you ever know a successful revival to go hand-in-hand with making God's house a house of merchandise?"

Study the lives of Christ and Paul and see if you can find in them this "spirit of the times," this gospel of fun, this "jolly club" business, so regnant in many Churches. These lax views, this picnic religion, this go-as-you-please life, cannot possibly coincide with the religion of Jesus Christ. Most of the play-people of the Church have no clear, firm and influential faith in the

creeds to which they have subscribed, and they despise discipline. They propose to "make religion attractive," but they most of all make it appear gloomy, by their manifest disrelish for all spiritual things, lack of the joy of God's salvation, and their frenzy for worldly pleasures at any price. They constitute no part of the true Church, but are merely a dead weight of baptized worldlings, with no self-denial and no real earnest moral purpose. They are with us for society, business or insurance against the peradventure of fire and brimstone. They make light of a serious, consecrated Christian life, and despise those who live as Christ lived. Professing godliness, and practicing worldliness, they are making more infidels than all our enemies outside of the Church. I write thus in tears. Phil. 3:18-19. The gospel demands an earnest life. The doctrine of universal immortality and a conditional salvation is the most solemn and tremendous faith ever conceived. It is the great pending concern of the universe, and if men will not give their money cheerfully and liberally to this cause, we may fear that they have no part or lot in it.

Rev. A. G. Brown, of London, lifts this ringing cry :

"Come out! is the call for to-day. Sanctify yourselves. Put away the evil from among you. Cast down the world's altars and cut down her groves. Spurn her offered assistance. Renounce all the policy of the age. Trample upon Saul's armor. Grasp the book of God. Trust the Spirit who wrote its pages. Fight with his weapons always and only. Cease to amuse and seek to arouse. Shun the clap of a delighted audience and listen for the sobs of a convicted one. Give up trying to 'please' men who have only the thickness of their ribs between their souls and hell."

Does any one then say, "What then is coming?" I answer, judgment is coming fast. It hasteth greatly. Satan, the usurper, who controls this strange business, must soon be cast out, and the crown rights of Jesus Christ be acknowledged.

Maranatha! Rev. 22:20. 2 Peter 3:9-14.

Oh my dear brethren, the radical and effective cure for all those evils, is more truth, grace and love in the heart. Tit. 2:11-15.

Is it not better to celebrate and boast a little less, and fast and pray a little more?

The gospel presents both the brightest and blackest possible future for humanity—morning and night, love and wrath, punishment everlasting and life eternal. The policy of attracting the world by conformity and fun is of recent origin, but it has been tried long enough to prove a wretched failure.

We have met the enemy and we are theirs. The vast and formal visible Church scarcely exerts the strength of her little finger for the world's conversion. Her "mixed multitudes" are "dangerously rich" but she takes to pleasure and merely plays at missions, giving her shreds and crumbs, which cost her nothing. The Church has no relative advantage over apostolic times in the propagation of the gospel.

Our modern improvements are just as available to our enemies as to us. It cost the early Churches something. Self-sacrifice and earnest missionary zeal are just as necessary now as then. In life we are to be neither ascetics nor worldlings. We "rejoice in the Lord always," but have fellowship with a suffering Savior in his great and self-sacrificing mission. We should be earnest and true even if we sometimes appear blue. We should save many out of the world, if we do not always please worldlings. If we sometimes use vinegar instead of molasses, it is because we deal with bad men and not silly flies.

The smiles and kisses of the world are far more dangerous to the Church, than her frowns and curses.

Popularity with the world is treason to Christ. Already have these crooked methods of counterfeit benevolence and carnal pleasure corrupted the Church to a fearful extent. Her benevolence is stunted and frostbitten.

Notwithstanding the untold wealth of the Church, and these novel schemes for extracting it, our Boards are almost constantly in a state of humiliating debt and mendicancy, while Apostolic Missions like those of the "Taylors" are well supplied in the Apostolic way. Our treasuries and spirituality must suffer more and more from these ways that are "nigh unto cursing." The Bible principles and method of giving, for redeemed and consecrated stewards, may be clearly seen. The Pentecostal Blessing made money plenty.—Acts. 2:45.

Will Churches that have exhausted their wits and energies on other methods now try this ?

While our church authorities are timidly advising "caution and patient endeavor to educate the Churches out of these unscriptural methods," the evil is increasing every year. I solemnly appeal to my brethren in the gospel ministry whether the bold and growing evil does not demand special consideration and bold condemnation? Isa. 58:1.

Let us wake up and sober up. 1 Thess. 5:6.

Is this not the burning question in the practice of organic Christianity? Is not a new crusade demanded, not to rescue the holy sepulchre from the Turk, but the holy place from the caterer and the showman?

Let us convert our worldly ecclesiastics or turn them out.

Will not my dear fellow pastors who agree with me speak out? Will not sincere Christians who have thoughtlessly drifted into this worldly tide, abandon it? Will not the Church for the sake of God and humanity, own up its folly and forsake it, come out from the world and be separate, take on a higher type of piety, cultivate the genuine grace of giving, and give the old gospel a fair trial in God's appointed way? Should we not be "about our Master's business?" Luke 2:49.

With hearts of love, and tongues of fire, let us proclaim the sacrificial works, crown rights and the speedy coming of the Son of God!

I am persuaded by hundreds of letters received from all parts of Christendom that if all Christians who are "exercised" in conscience about this matter, had the courage to act out their convictions, this great evil would soon be abated or entirely removed, and we should soon have a better Church and a better world. Let us do it.

O Church of Christ, redeemed by precious blood,

1 Pet. 1:18, 19; Eph. 5:25-27; 3-10.

Break this alliance, glorify your God!

1 Cor. 6:20; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 3:21.

Forsake the Christless world that lures to ill;

Rom. 12:2; Heb. 13:13; Rev. 18:4.

Thou mayest be blessed and prove a blessing still.

Gen. 12:2; Psa. 128:5; Eph. 1:3.

Away with ease and dalliance and play.

Isa. 32:9; 1 Cor. 10:7; Rom. 13:11.

The great commission now in haste obey.

Mark 16:15; John 17:18; 2 Tim. 4:1, 2.

In holiness and zeal thou canst excel,

1 Pet. 1:15, 16; Rev. 8:19; Gal. 4:18.

And save the perishing from sin and hell.

Luke 14:23; James 5:19, 20; Jude 22:23.

Gird on thy robes with purity impeared,

Rev. 7:14; 16:15; 19:8.

And keep thyself unspotted from the world.

James 1:27; 1 John 3:3; 1 Tim. 5:22.

Humbled in dust and ashes, sin no more;

Isa. 60:1; 1 Cor. 15:34; John 5:14.

Repent, while Christ stands knocking at the door.

Rev. 3:20; James 5:9; Rev. 2:16.

Oh, let thy heart be true to him alone,

James 4:4; 1 John 2:15, 16; John 21:15.

For lo, the heavenly bridegroom cometh soon!

Matt. 25:6; Rev. 3:11; Rev. 22:20.