

Feeding Sheep or Amusing Goats?

by Charles Hadden Spurgeon

An evil is in the professed camp of the Lord, so gross in its impudence, that the most short-sighted can hardly fail to notice it. During the past few years it has developed at an abnormal rate, even for evil. It has worked like leaven until the whole lump ferments. The devil has seldom done a cleverer thing than hinting to the Church that part of their mission is to provide entertainment for the people, with a view to winning them. From speaking out as the Puritans did, the Church has gradually toned down her testimony, then winked at and excused the frivolities of the day. Then she tolerated them in her borders. Now she has adopted them under the plea of reaching the masses.

My first contention is that providing amusement for the people is nowhere spoken of in the Scriptures as a function of the Church. If it is a Christian work why did not Christ speak of it? "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." That is clear enough. So it would have been if he had added, "and provide amusement for those who do not relish the gospel." No such words, however, are to be found. It did not seem to occur to him

Again, providing amusement is in direct antagonism to the teaching and life of Christ and all his apostles. What was the attitude of the Church to the world? "Ye are the salt," not the sugar candy -- something the world will spit out, not swallow I do not hear [Jesus] say, "Run after these people, Peter, and tell them we will have a different style of service tomorrow, something short and attractive with little preaching. We will have a pleasant evening for the people. Tell them they will be sure to enjoy it.

Be quick, Peter, we must get the people somehow!" Jesus pitied sinners, sighed and wept over them, but never sought to amuse them. In vain will the Epistles be searched to find any trace of the gospel of amusement

Lastly, the mission of amusement fails to effect the end desired. It works havoc among young converts. Let the careless and scoffers, who thank God because the Church met them half-way, speak and testify. Let the heavy laden who found peace through the concert not keep silent! Let the drunkard to whom the dramatic entertainment had been God's link in the chain of their conversion, stand up! There are none to answer. The mission of amusement produces no converts. The need of the hour for today's ministry is believing scholarship joined with earnest spirituality, the one springing from the other as fruit from the root. The need is biblical doctrine, so understood and felt, that it sets men on fire.