

Reformation
& Revival



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It cannot be easily imagined that if people did ever rightly understand what it is to worship God, they should ever fancy that coming to church and continuing there while one man prays and preaches is all the worship that he that made them requires of them.

William Beveridge

Those that worship God give Him their hottest love, their highest joy, their deepest sorrow, their strongest faith, and their greatest fear. As when Abraham gave Isaac, he gave all.

George Swinnoek

We may be truly said to worship God, though we want [lack] perfection; but we cannot be said to worship Him if we want [lack] sincerity.

Stephen Charnock

What we worship determines what we become. If we worship material possessions, we tend to grow more materialistic. If we worship self, we become more selfish still. That is why Christ continually endeavored to direct men's worship.

Harvey F. Ammerman

Every act of worship is its own justification. It is rendering to God that of which He is worthy.

Eric Mascall

To worship means to recognize supreme worth.

Harold C. Bonell

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 into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." 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. Then again, "It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ might be built up. . . ." Where do entertainers come in. The Holy Spirit is silent concerning them. Were the prophets persecuted because they amused the people, or because they refused? The concert has no martyr roll.

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? "You are the salt of the earth," not the sugar candy—something the world will spit out, not swallow. "Let the dead bury their own dead. . . ." He was in awful earnestness!

Had Christ introduced more of the bright and pleasant elements into His mission, He would have been more popular

when they went back, because of the searching nature of His teaching. I do not hear Him 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. Their message is, "Come out, keep out, keep clean out!" Anything approaching fooling is conspicuous by its absence. They had boundless confidence in the gospel and employed no other weapon. After Peter and John were locked up for preaching, the church had a prayer meeting, but they did not pray, "Lord grant unto thy servants that by a wise and discriminating use of innocent recreation we may show these people how happy we are." If they ceased not for preaching Christ, they had not time for arranging entertainments. Scattered by persecution, they went everywhere preaching the gospel. They "turned the world upside down." That is the only difference! Lord, clear the church of all the rot and rubbish the devil has imposed on her and bring us back to apostolic methods.

Lastly, the mission of amusements fails to effect the end desired. It works havoc among the 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.