

Entertainment in the Church House

“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.” Acts 5:42

"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. It has worked like leaven until the whole lump ferments. The devil has seldom done a more clever thing than hinting to the church that part of their mission is to provide **entertainment for the people with a view to winning them**. The church has gradually toned down her testimony, then winked at, and excused the frivolities of her day. Then she tolerated them in her borders. Now she has adopted them under the plea of reaching the masses. Had Christ introduced more of these elements into His mission He would have been more popular when they went back to work because of the searching nature of His teaching. I do not hear Him say to Peter, 'Run after these people 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, Peter, that they will be sure to enjoy themselves. We must get the people somehow.' Jesus pitied sinners, sighed and wept over them, but He never sought to amuse them. In vain will the epistles be searched to find any trace of the gospel of amusement. The message, rather, of these books is 'come out,' 'keep out,' 'keep clean out.' 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 wise and discriminating use of innocent recreation we may show these people how happy we are, and how happy they might be.' If they ceased not for preaching Christ they had no time for arranging entertainments. Scattered by persecution they went everywhere preaching the gospel. ... Lord, clear the church of all the rot and rubbish the devil has imposed on her and bring us back to apostolic methods. The mission of **amusement fails to effect the end it desires**. It works havoc among the young converts. Let the careless and the scoffers who thank God because of the church meeting them halfway stand up and testify. Let the heavy-laden who found peace through the concert not keep silent. Let the drunkard to whom the dramatic entertainment has been God's link in the chain of their conversion stand up. There are none genuinely to answer. The mission of amusement produces no lasting 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 doctrines so understood and felt that it sets men on fire.**"

Written by C. H. Spurgeon, 1870's