



A bi-monthly periodical for young men

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EDITORIAL

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! May you be encouraged to continue "in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (1 Tim 3:14)

I include these selections in the hope that they will be a blessing to you. I would like to encourage you to consider either writing an article, or sending one you have read and found encouraging. This would be a blessing both to you and others.

FEEDING SHEEP OR AMUSING GOATS?

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 the 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 her 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 speak 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. Then again, "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers ... for the work of the ministry." 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 honor 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? "Ye are the salt," not the sugar candy something the world will spit out, not swallow. Short and sharp was the utterance: "Let the dead bury the 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 He and His disciples 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 new kind 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 of 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 had 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 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 halfway, 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 his conversation, 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.

By C.H. Spurgeon

COMFORTABLE CHRISTIANITY

A.W. Tozer says that "To most people God is an inference, not a reality. He is a deduction from evidence which they consider adequate; but He remains personally unknown to the individual." True perhaps, but does it apply to us?

Do we believe in certain things just because we cannot deny the facts given? How often do we actually study the reasons we do things? Do we only do a thing because it is the accepted thing in our circle of friends? These beliefs may be correct, but do we know *why* we believe them?

Let us turn the tables around. Are we guilty of doing things that are not right? Let's imagine a gentleman whom we shall call Bill. He is an author, writing good Christian books that promote good morals. This is his income - his work. One Sunday the preacher convinces his hearers that keeping the Sabbath holy means that we should not work on this day - Bill agrees. Bill thinks to himself 'that is true, good Christians do not work on Sunday; I am a good Christian, I don't work on Sunday'. That afternoon he goes home, and writes books. *His life has not changed.*

His logic seemed logical, but it was more than that - it was very comfortable! He can go along to any Christian meeting; he can hear any good doctrine, receive any good advice, and yet never change. Why? He believes that he is a Christian, and that Christians do, or do not do certain things, and consequently he *already does, or does not do these things.*

Are we guilty of this faulty reasoning? It is very close to the truth, if we are a Christian we should know, and agree with the truth, yet this will require change in our life. The only difference between a true Christian and a comfortable Christian is action.

May God help us to be open to the truth, and ready to change. May we never fall into the trap of assuming that we are obedient to the truth just because we know Christ as our Lord and Saviour.

By J. McPherson

THE FORTRESS OF THE HEART

Proverbs 4:23

'Keep thy heart with all diligence...'

Philippians 4:7

'The peace of God shall keep your hearts...'

In most of the old castles there is an inner keep, which is protected, not only by mighty walls and bastions, but by the portcullis at the gate, and sentries at every approach, who challenged every one that passed in and out. So the heart is continually approached by good and evil, by the frivolities and vanities of the world and the insidious suggestions of the flesh. It is like an inn or hostelry, with constant arrivals and departures. Passengers throng in and out, some of them with evil intent, hoping to find conspirators, or to light fires that will spread until the whole being is swept with passion, consuming in an hour the fabric of years to ashes.

We need, therefore, to be constantly on the watch; we must keep our heart above all else that we guard, for out of it are the issues of life. Our Lord says that "out of the heart of man come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, thefts," etc. The devil and the world without would be less to be feared, if there were not such strong tendencies to evil within--many of them inherited from long lines of ancestors, who, alas! pass down to us the worst features of their characters equally with the best.

Keep it Clean. Just as the eye of the body is perpetually washed with tear-water, so let us ask that the precious blood of Christ may cleanse away any speck of impurity. Remember how delicate a thing the heart is, and how susceptible to the dust of an evil thought, which would instantly prevent it becoming the organ of spiritual vision. Sursum Corda! Lift up your hearts! We lift them up unto the Lord!

The Sentinel of Peace. Then the Peace of God will become the warden or sentry of the heart, and it passeth understanding!

We can understand the apparent peace of some men. They have made money, and their gold-bags are piled around them as a fortress; they have rich and influential friends, within whose protection they imagine they will be sheltered and defended; they enjoy good health, and are held in high esteem. We can understand such peace, though it often proves ephemeral*! But there is a peace that passeth understanding! It is to this that our Lord refers when He says, "My Peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth." "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

By F.B. Meyer

THINE OWN HOUSE

Luke 8:39-40

Christ's command was to for this man to return to his own house and 'shew how great things God hath done for thee'.

Let us consider our own lives in the home. Do our family see how great things God has done for us, or do they see grumpy, short-tempered, proud, self-righteous me? Would it not be better if we could show even our own family what God has done for us - rather than how we have resisted His grace! Bear in mind that our family knows us the best. They will be first to see if we have changed - and also the first to know if we have not. Let us consider our own lives.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The author of *Higher Ground* is Joshua McPherson. He is a young man who desires to walk closer to the Lord each day, and wishes to encourage other young men in the same pursuit.

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* ephemeral: refers to insects that only live for a few days or hours