

Church Amusements

by George Kulp

The sermon emphasizes the failure of amusements in the church and the need to sanctify ourselves and put away evil.

Scripture: Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:38, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 1:18, 2 Corinthians 6:17, 1 Thessalonians 1:5, 2 Timothy 4:2, Hebrews 4:12, 1 Peter 1:16, Revelation 3:16

Topics: "Evangelism Methods", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

George Kulp preaches against the mission of amusement, stating that it fails to impact the unsaved and causes harm among young converts. He emphasizes the importance of relying on the preaching of the Word as the true power of conversion, contrasting it with the failures of using amusements for evangelism. Kulp urges Christians to sanctify themselves, reject worldly assistance, and focus on the plain preaching of the Word to bring about true conversion and spiritual growth.

Transcript

AMUSEMENTS A FAILURE

The mission of amusement utterly fails to effect the desired end among the unsaved, but it works havoc among the young converts. Were it a success, it would be none the less wrong. Success belongs to God; faithfulness to His instructions to me. But it is not. Test it even by this, and it is a contemptible failure. Let that be the method which is answered by fire, and the verdict will be, "The preaching of the Word, that is the power."

Let us see the converts that have been won by amusements. Let the harlots and the drunkards, to whom a dramatic entertainment has been God's first link in the chain of their conversion, stand forth. Let the careless and the scoffers, who have cause to thank God that the Church has relaxed her spirit of separation and met them half way in their worldliness, speak and testify. Let the husbands, wives and children that rejoice in a new and holy home through "Sunday evening lectures on social questions," tell out their joy. Let the weary, heavy-laden souls that have found peace through a concert, no longer keep silent. Let the men and women who have found Christ through the reversal of apostolic methods, declare the same, and show the greatness of Paul's blunder when he said, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." There is neither voice nor any answer. The failure is on a par with the folly, and as huge as the sin. Out of thousands with whom I have personally conversed, the mission of amusement has claimed no convert.

Now let the appeal be made to those who, repudiating every other method, have staked everything on the Book and the Holy Ghost. Let them be challenged to produce results. There is no need. Blazing sacrifices on every hand attest the answer by fire. Ten thousand times ten thousand voices are ready to declare that the plain preaching of the Word was first and last the cause of their salvation.

But how about the other side of this matter ? -- what are the baneful effects? Are they also nil? I will here solemnly, as before the Lord, give my personal testimony. Though I have never seen a sinner saved, I have seen a number of backsliders manufactured by this new departure. Over and over again have young Christians, and sometimes Christians who are not young, come to me in tears, and asked what they were to do, as they had lost all their peace and fallen into evil. Over and over again has the confession been made, "I began to go wrong by attending worldly amusements that Christians patronized."

"Come out," is the call for today. Sanctify yourselves. Put away the evil from among you. Cast down the world's altars and cut down her groves. Spurn her offered assistance. Decline her help, as your Master did the testimony of devils, "for He suffered them not to speak, for they knew Him." 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 this weapon only, and always. Cease to amuse, and seek to arouse. Shun the clap of a delighted audience, and listen to 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, and warn, and plead, and entreat, as those who feel the waters of eternity creeping upon them.

Let the Church again confront the world; testify against it; meet it only behind the cross; and, like her Lord, she shall overcome, and with Him share the victory.

AN AMUSEMENT BUREAU

The Church is not bound to provide amusement for her young people. The Bible sanctions no such theory. The apostles had no time for such business. The Church of Jesus Christ was organized for holy, spiritual, and saving purposes. It is a school, and not a playground. It is a work-shop; not a pleasure resort. It is the birthplace of souls; not the sporting ground of adolescence. There is an urgent need in many quarters for a return to this Scriptural conception. The young ought to be educated to the idea that the soul is of the first importance, and that all else must be subordinate to its conversion and sanctification.

-- The Presbyterian.

WHOOOP EASY

Thirty years ago there was a band of Indians going about the country giving exhibitions of their peculiar customs, manners, and dress (or undress), from the "barking-up" of the baby to the national dance and war whoop. I cannot be sure at this distance of time whether they were bona-fide Indians or make-believes, like the so-called negro minstrels; but that is quite aside from my story.

Upon reaching a certain town inhabited by a quiet, thrifty, and pious folk, they found that there was no public hall of any description in the place. There were no less than four churches, but to have such a performance in a church building was entirely out of the question. There was, however, a lecture room belonging to one of the churches, a commodious and comfortable building used for Sunday School and prayer-meeting, and some times for concerts and fairs. The Indian troupe applied for this lecture room, and grave was the debate of the perplexed deacons, torn by their contending desires; they would be

faithful to their trust, but they wished to see the Indian show.

A comical compromise was at last agreed upon: the Indians were to have the lecture-room upon condition that in their painted war dance they would "whoop easy."

We have been laughing at those absurd old churchwardens all these thirty years, but verily we sit upon the same bench with them -- some of us. How often do we weakly indulge ourselves in what is inconsistent with our Christian profession, secretly promising ourselves the while that we will whoop easy! Leaving out of consideration such worldly amusements as may (or may not) be innocent within moderate bounds, consider, for example, the matter of uncharitable gossip. In its rude extreme we all dislike such gossip, calling it slander. But day after day we allow in ourselves and encourage in others that small, unnecessary criticism, spiced with ridicule, which we call social chat; we make room for the savages, provided they will "whoop easy."

And so with many another evil practice; we stand back with uplifted hands from the side on which it runs into vice, while dallying carelessly within its bounds.

Yet it is a fact of solemn significance that one of the few contemptuous expressions in God's Word is directed against these middle-course people: "Because thou art neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth."

And dare we excuse what the Lamb in the midst of the throne, the tenderness that is in the midst of Almightyness, could find no patience for?

A QUEER STEER

In the slang parlance of some of our great cities a bunco steerer is a man whose occupation consists in luring unsuspecting countrymen into games of chance and defrauding them of their money.

Billy Bunco, however, is not a man, but a Texas steer, and is probably the greatest arch-traitor in the land. For six years he has been employed in such a wholesale betrayal of his comrades that the burden of his sins, as expressed numerically, is simply astounding. Billy is owned by Armour & Co., the great Chicago beef house, and his vocation consists in leading cattle to slaughter.

The cattle on arriving at the stock yards are much alarmed at the smell of blood, and it is exceedingly difficult to drive them, as they seem to have a premonition of their impending doom, but where one of their number leads they follow blindly. So when the pens are opened Billy is at hand to lead his trusting companions to their death.

An employee opens the gate of a pen and calls out, "All right, Billy," and Billy without delay places himself at the head of the frightened herd, and unhesitatingly marches to the door of the slaughter house, where he quickly steps aside, while his deluded followers are driven to meet their fate.

He then makes his way back to the yard, and waits for the next pen to be opened, and at the signal, "All right, Billy," he conducts fresh victims to the house of death.

It is impossible to have very much respect for this wholesale and professional betrayer, Billy; but perhaps he is not so much to be blamed, as he probably knows that, if he should fail to perform the unpleasant duties connected with his office, he would forfeit his head, and disappear in the house whither he has seen

so many of his kind enter, never to reappear, except in the form of steaks, roasts, and canned beef.

It is probable that he purchases his life at the expense of his happiness, for this betrayal of nearly a million lives a year is telling on him, and he wears a sad and shame-faced expression; so possibly some day he will mix with the herd as they go to their death, and sacrifice his life to atone for his misdeeds.

-- Harman's Young People.

SOME CHURCH PROBLEMS IN APHORISM

The world's deepest misery, like its sublimest faith, is without speech.

Only small needs have vital force enough to utter the wild wail of despair.

The Protestant world builds its churches as if it expected only our most worthy selves and well-behaved and highly respected neighbors, and advantageous commercial friends, to worship in them.

The anarchist is a person who believes that his worst enemy is the man who owns a house; that dynamite is the only true gospel; and that the only future is none at all.

American infidelity is only the cast-off rags from the infidel wardrobes of Germany.

Prescription for making an anarchist: Between the upper millstone of our neglect to meet the immigrant on his arrival, with the Gospel in his own tongue, and the nether millstone of a criminal neglect of his children, we grind out the anarchist.

The wine glass is an opaque thing, and God cannot be seen through it.

America is the only country on earth where the city church possesses the monstrosity of a frequent flitting day.

These are the days and America is the paradise of doing all things, or pretending to do them by the omnipotent committee.

The crown and glory of all true union is for each unit to be at its best. The links, and not the impersonal chain, hold the anchor.

That is the most efficient organization which compels the most effective use of the individual force.

The only way to melt the wall of ice which rises between the masses and the Church, is for every individual Christian to kindle a fire at its base.

Let the Church observe as much system in its evangelistic methods to reach the one house and the one person as the politician does to reach the one voter.

Christ always fed the hungry multitude by individual servitors.

Protestantism has yet to learn from Romanism the whole lesson of woman's worth and force in the Church.

The Church of Christ, in its most exalted hours, has never been afraid to be in the most unpopular minority.

Nothing strong in truth or magnificent in possession has ever come to the Church by falling, as ripe fruit, in its open hand. The treasures of the Church have been won, like pearls, from the ocean depths, or pure gold from the white heated furnace.

The birthplace of the Church was at the foot of the cross.

God is always on the side of His kingdom and the men who love it.

The American Church is getting into the firm conviction that the whole heathen world will be won to Christ. But when shall we be convinced that the whole Christian world will be won to Christ?

We have half won our victory when we see the place where defeat is possible.

The glory of the weak is that before them God has placed His greatest promises.

The Chinaman ought to be as free to land anywhere on our shores as the American missionary is to step ashore on every foot of the twenty-five hundred miles of the Chinese coast.

The day is sure to come -- we see the twilight now -- when the saloon will be so deep that no pick and spade of even a Schliemann shall be able to exhume it.

The saloon, that venerable structure of the alcoholic style of architecture, is already taking on the look of a useless antique of the palaeolithic age.

LOYAL TO GOOD TRAINING

A young man was recently graduated from a scientific school. His home had been a religious one. He was a member of a Christian church, had pious parents, brother, and sisters; his family was one in Christ. On graduating he determined upon a Western life among the mines. Full of courage and hope, he started out on his long journey to strike out for himself in a new world. The home prayers followed him. As he went, he fell into company with older men. They liked him for his frank manners and manly independence. As they journeyed together they stopped for a Sabbath in a border town. On the morning of the Sabbath, one of his fellow travelers said to him, "Come, let us be off for a drive and the sights." "No," said the young man, "I am going to church." His road acquaintance looked at him for a moment and then, slapping him on the shoulder, said, "Right, my boy. I began in that way. I wish I had kept on. Young man, you will do. Stick to your bringing up, and your mother's words, and you will win." His companions had their drive, but the boy gained their confidence and won their respect by his manly avowal of sacred obligations. Already success is smiling upon the young man. There is no lack of places for him.

-- Christian Weekly.

BROTHERS IN DISTRESS

Little Roland, an orphan who had been accustomed during the life of his parents to generous nurture, and even to indulgence, went, after their death, to an uncle, who believed in severe treatment of children. The boy was put at once upon a plain diet of oatmeal, bread and butter, a little meat and a carefully regulated allowance of fruit.

This the poor boy regarded as next door to starvation, and he ate so little that it was remarked in his presence that he was growing thin.

One day his uncle took him out to walk in the suburb where he lived. While they were walking they met a friend of the uncle, accompanied by a large greyhound.

The boy had never seen a dog of this sort before, and was greatly astonished by its extraordinary thinness. He looked very sympathetically at the animal.

"Ah," said the owner to Roland, "you think he's pretty thin, don't you?"

"Y-yes," said the boy. "Does he live with his uncle?" Roland's allowance of meat was considerably increased after this incident, and now and then he was even allowed a bit of pastry.

-- Youth's Companion.

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A boy astonished his Christian mother by asking for a dollar to buy a share in a raffle for a silver watch that was to be raffled off in a beer saloon. His mother was horrified, and rebuked him. "But," said he, "mother, did you not bake a cake with a ring in it, to be raffled off in the Sunday School fair?" "But my son," said she, "that was for the Church." "But if it was wrong," said the boy, "would doing it for the Church make it right? Would it be right for me to steal money to put it in the collection? And if it is right for the Church, is it not right for me to get this watch if I can?" The good woman was speechless, and no person can answer the boy's argument. The practices are both wrong or they are right.

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