

TALKS IN PUBLIC CONDEMNS THEATER

A Few Theaters Would Have Saved Pilgrim Fathers From the Follies Into Which They Fell.

HONEST CRITICISM CAN'T HARM HONEST RELIGION

One day recently a stingy man stood on the steps at the Medina traction station and soliloquized on the sin of the picture theater in particular, and the theater in general, and gave vent to a prophecy of great evil to the world and community unless this "child of the devil" was driven from society.

The poor ignoramus, a man who has—probably—never read a book other than some trifling story, reads few newspapers and never a magazine, with barely enough knowledge of the world to say that he has been outside his county, attempting to judge the world and the people who live a little different from himself by and with the aid of his ignorance.

He, like many others, has not the education in world matters to teach him that the picture show and the theater has done more for the world within the last 25 years than the church has for that same 25 years since the Christian era began. He doesn't know enough to know that the theater has always been the "salt which has kept the savor" in the church and its uplift work; he doesn't know that the theater has been the very inspiration that has led mankind to root out the very evils that long

before this would have destroyed the church itself.

The theater was the monumental evil in the eyes of the Pilgrim Fathers and of other goody-goody church people in certain of the other colonies. The church was the only rock to which the world could go and be saved; the only salt whose savor could save. But with a few short centuries of that teaching we find these "Christians" driving Roger Williams and Anna Hutchinson out into the wilds of the woods in mid-winter with a fervent prayer that they might perish before they could be rescued. And a little later the people of Massachusetts were burning innocent men and women and irresponsible children at the stake in the name of the God whom they professed to worship. And the world today sees the enormity of these crimes, and that they were crimes.

And when in one of the latest orgies, in those days called trials, men who saw the enormity of these crimes came to the rescue of a 12 year old girl doomed to die for witchcraft, their papers in speaking of the incident told how the "ungodly rabble" had saved the child in question. The ungodly saved them from this particular crime and a few "ungodly theaters" would have saved them from the whole series.

The people of the world have always been divided into five general classes: Strenuous christians, christians, lukewarm christians, non-professors, and anti-christians. The strenuous christians would herd the masses and drive everyone into the christian fold and compel him to stay there. The anti-christian would tear up christianity by the root. The first is just as evil an influence as the last, and is as destructive of true christianity. The lukewarm christians were the ones Paul would spew out of his mouth. There are, then, but two classes that give much promise—the "just christians" and the non-

christians. The "just christians" are the leaven that must leaven the whole lump, and the non-christians are those from which converts must be made.

But the christian tells us that God is good, wise, and does all things well. Then He must have provided for this whole five of the genus homo. Of what use is the anti-christian you may ask. Is he not needed, think you, to offset the "strenuous christian?" What other influence have we with which to combat that terrible evil but for him?

In one of his series of sermons in Cleveland some years ago. Rev. Sprecher—the brainiest preacher that Cleveland has ever produced—put forth the argument that God knew what he was doing when he permitted these several classes of individuals; he said God had to permit them to allow the law of redemption to do its full work. The anti-christian in making his fight against religion could not but call attention to his own errors at the same time that he placarded the errors of the church and those errors certain to creep in to religion through the imperfection of man. And he argued further that the anti-christian often did see the errors of christians before they would see them themselves, and in pointing them out the anti-christian was doing a wonderful work.

That has always been the province of the theater: To point out the errors of professing christians who were in the wrong, and many times trying to force down the necks of honest christians their own pet schemes. For the theater to personalize these errors, often enlarging on the evil itself, has enabled many a christian to see the error satirized, and to see it in time to correct it before great damage has been done. In doing this the theater has not only done a great work in itself, but it has saved the church from many continuous errors and aided the church in turning about and doing good when if left to itself it would have continued on in evil indefinitely.

One has but to study the history of the church through the many centuries before the theater. In the early days the public worship was termed temple worship rather than church service. It was the same as now; the same God served, the same arguments put forth for the service—where it was not compulsory—and the gifts and sacrifices conformed as nearly to those of today as the finances of the times would permit.

There was no theater to satirize the follies into which men drifted and note the result: Where is the Egyptian religion, the Babylonian, either the old or the new; where the Carthaginian, the Greek, the Persian, the Assyrian under which Moses sat for so long; where any of those older religions by and through which many millions went to heaven?

They have all fallen into the discard; but not a religion has fallen by the wayside in any country where there has been a theater since the theater was instituted. The theater teaches many good things itself aside from the furnishing of amusement. But its greatest work has been in breaking up the very things that would have broken up the church; and permitted the church, before it fell into the discard, to destroy the lives of many of its votaries.

It has always been the ignorant and evil men who have committed the crimes in the church; the crimes that have made it possible to destroy many individuals in the church and in the end destroy the church itself. The ignorant man has been the big factor in the evils of the church and the world, for it has been an easy thing for the evil man to use him unwittingly. The ignorant man has a flight of fancy and almost immediately he, without any study or thought, accepts it as a fact. If he was educated his learning would show him his flight of fancy was wrong, and he would forget it. But having no learning he imagines he has had a vision and at once begins to tell it and men and women as ignorant as himself are impressed and convinced.

This ignorant man condemned the theater without sufficient knowledge to judge the theater, himself, or the world in which both he and the theater now live. He may be simply repeating what he has heard others say, but in any event he was ignorant and without knowledge to warrant him in opening his mouth. And this old world is suffering today from people of this class.

WHAT'S SPIRITUALISM IN ITS LAST ANALYSIS?

People who used to pooh-pooh spiritualism—i. e., intelligent people—are beginning to study this phenomena, and have at this time been forced to recognize that there is something in it. Not in the fake table-tipping, chair-turning, slate-writing, wall-rapping kind, but in the fact that there are spiritual phenomena that do seem to have something in them that so far man has not been able to entirely fathom and reduce to teachable science. What it really is, to what extent it proceeds, what it is intended to teach, is yet to be worked out. But it is now generally agreed that the veil between the spiritual and the earthly is very thin, and that it may yet be possible to fathom it.

Perhaps never in the history of the world has this fact been given as much discussion as now, and at no time have so many men of large mind been giving it study. With this in mind Rev. Caulk has decided to preach one or more sermons on kindred topics as soon as he has the subject matter formulated to suit him. Announcement of the time will be made later. Three topics that he purposes to discuss are:

Spiritualism—communion of the saints; teaching of the church and the Bible on this score.

Second Day Adventism, with the Bible light thrown athwart this theme.

The teaching of the church on the "Intermediate State".

WHEELING WIDE OPEN; NO SNOW, ICY STREETS

O. B. Cornwall, who has been assisting his father in line construction work for the Wheeling phone company, came home Saturday suffering with an attack of the grippe. He says that there was no snow in and about Wheeling but that on Friday night there was a rain covering everything with water and that about 2 o'clock Saturday morning it turned cold and froze, turning the walks and streets into a sheet of ice.

He tells a story of a near-accident on the traction line there. As the construction car was making the run to the barns Thursday, going at a 35 mile clip, the motorman sighted a team crossing the track and the driver half asleep. The whistle was sounded, waking the driver who did not have time to back off or pull across the track. The team, scenting danger, reared up just in time to let the car run under the forward part of the animals. The uplifted feet of the horses scraped across the legs of three men riding on top of the car, tearing their clothes and nearly brushing them off the car.

Speaking of prohibition Mr. Cornwall says that Wheeling is wide open to everything usually prohibited, and has been for some time. What the future may bring forth no one can tell, but at this time what a man can put across is only limited by the amount he wants to spend for his sport.

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