

MR. SPURGEON ON THE DRAMA.

Addressing a meeting at the Metropolitan Tabernacle upon the subject of "Timely Cautions," Mr. Spurgeon said.

"I see it publicly stated by men who call themselves Christians that it would be advisable for Christians to frequent theatres that the character of the drama might be raised. The suggestion is about as sensible as if we were bidden to pour a bottle of lavender water into a great sewer to improve its aroma. If the Church is to imitate the world to raise its tone, things have strangely altered since the day when our Lord said: 'Come ye out from among them and touch not the unclean thing.' Is heaven to descend to the infernal lake to raise its tone?"

Such has been the moral condition of the theatre for many a year that it has become too bad for mending, and even if it were mended it would corrupt again. Pass by it with averted gaze; the house of the strange woman is there.

It has not been my lot ever to enter a theatre during the performance of a play, but I have seen enough when I have come home from distant journeys and whilst riding past the play-houses to make me pray that our sons and daughters may never go within the door. It must be a strange school for virtue which attracts the harlot and the debauchee.

It is no place for a Christian, for it is best appreciated by the irreligious and worldly. If our church members fall into the habit of frequenting the theatre, we shall soon have them going much further in that direction of vice, and they will lose all relish for the ways of God. Theatre-going, if it become general among professing Christians, will soon prove the death of piety.

One finds the taste for such things increasing on all hands, inasmuch that we cannot enter places of entertainment once dedicated to science and art without finding ourselves before long in the presence of something like a theatrical performance.

I do not doubt that things which may be in themselves harmless enough have tended to create and foster the taste which leads ultimately to the theatre and its surroundings.

Who can suppose amusements surrounded by the seductions of vice to be fit recreations for a pure mind? Who could draw near to God after sitting to admire the performance of a wanton woman? and I am told that some who have dazzled London society are such.

When manners are growing every day more lax and licentious, shall the Non-conformists of England cease from their godly protest and lower the standard of their lives? If they do so, their spiritual power is departed, and their reason for existence is gone.

If there ever could be a time when Christians might relax their rigidity it surely is not now, when the very air is tainted with pollution and our streets ring with newsboys' cries, vending filthy papers and abominable prints. It is sad to hear our people talk about acts of sin nowadays; how young men and women, without blushing, talk of deeds which deprave and destroy as though they were trifles or themes for jest. It is a thousand pities that the ends of justice should require the publishing of unsavoury details. I suppose there are grave objections to certain cases being heard more privately, otherwise it would assuredly be better for public morals. As for those who not only commit lewdness but take pleasure in those who do it—oh my soul, come not thou into their secret. My heart often cries, 'Oh, that I had the wings of a dove that I might fly away and be at rest.'—*The Freeman*.

A CHEAP AND SHAMEFUL PLEA.

"We have enough heathen at home. Let us convert them first before we go to the heathen abroad." That plea," says Philip Brooks, "we all know, and I think it sounds more cheap and shameful every year. What can be more shameful than to make the imperfection of our Christianity at home an excuse for our not doing work abroad? It is as shameless as it is shameful. It pleads for exemption and indulgence on the ground of its own neglect and sin. It is like the murder of his father asking the judge to have pity on his orphanhood. Even the men who make such a plea feel, I think, how unheroic it is." As to the relative importance of Home and Foreign Mission work it is sufficient to say: "This ought to have been done and not leave the other undone." All the world is the field of the Church, and the Master's imperative, urgent "Go ye!" is still thundering through the ages, rebuking the sloth and [weakness of the disciples, and inciting the most heroic devotion and effort for the salvation of the world. —*Evangelical Messenger*.