

or a pious manager, or a pious amateur?" A converted actor once said, while passing a playhouse in which he had often performed: "Behind those curtains lies Sodom." This is an appalling truth, yet it is only one which must be believed when we learn the character of the theatre. It rejects the Word of God, which is the standard of character in the Church of God. The presence of God is not recognized on the stage. He is present there continually as a Witness and Judge of all that is done and said. His eye is on every actor, and His ear hears every word of every play which is performed. But there He must not be recognized, although He is known to be present, there prayer would be an insult, and devotion a mockery. Alas! what is that place to be called where God's immediate presence dares not to be welcomed, and where the preaching of Christ would be considered a mockery? I say that it is to be called something, which is in character at an infinite distance from God's sanctuary.

The religion of Christ is ridiculed on the stage, sin is made the subject of merriment. Crime is represented in all its details for amusement, gratification and gain to the actors. The name of Almighty God is habitually profaned. The proper distinctions of sex are broken up there in order to meet exigencies, or in order to produce certain dramatic effects.

In the face then of all this, why, we ask, should a Christian hesitate in concluding that theatre going is deteriorating to the spiritual life of the Church of Christ?

The above are merely some of the influences which the theatre has upon the church with regard to Christians in general, but look also at the powerful influence for evil it has upon the church with regard to the people who are not professing Christians, and who have as their criteria of right and wrong their own desires. I maintain that any influence for good, which is brought to bear upon a person in the church is destroyed in the theatre. How many ruined young men date their first steps in ruin from the time they began to frequent the theatre! They were at first comparatively pure and free from open or decided vice. They were easily approached by Christian influences, and easily attracted by the preaching of the Word in that state of innocency, as it were, but play-going opened their eyes to a new sphere of life, and completely altered their habits of thinking and acting. The good influence of the church has become a thing of the past with them, for the theatre