

Contributed Articles.

THE THEATRE AND THE CHURCH.

THIS is a subject which calls for special attention, and one which is much discussed to-day both in public and in private, by Christians and non-Christians.

It is surprisingly strange, when we consider the unfathomable gap which intervenes between the theatre and the church, that Christians should, in any degree, hesitate in their opinion regarding the evil and the good respectively which is connected with them. They overlook the fact that theatre-going is one of the sensual pleasures of the world; "that whosoever will be a friend of the world is an enemy of God," and that no snare is so subtle, constant and perilous to the followers of Christ, as conformity to the world. Nothing sooner saps true spirituality; nothing hinders a revival in the church more effectually. Conformity implies resemblance. And when a professed Christian begins to patronize the theatre, and thus look like a worldling and act like one, his spiritual sincerity cannot but become questionable, for there is a complete and irreconcilable antagonism between the theatre, estimated as a totality, and the Church of Christ. But some will ask the question, is not a church member justifiable in attending the theatre a few times in order to find out for himself its character? This may or may not be a legitimate question, but my object in writing is to refer exclusively to the professed Christian who is an habitual frequenter of the playhouse, and who goes there not merely for information, but to gratify his sensual pleasures. Such persons, I say, are more of a curse to the Church of Christ than anything else, for they are, as it were, standing on the fence anxious to join hands both with the world and the church and thus try to please God and Mammon. They forget that the chief end of their lives is to glorify God, and that all the influences which are brought to bear upon the church should be of a pious character. But what is the influence of the theatre on the church? As it has been properly asked, "Who ever heard of piety on the stage? Who ever heard of a pious actor or a pious actress,