



# Marketplace Moments

## Bibliophoria

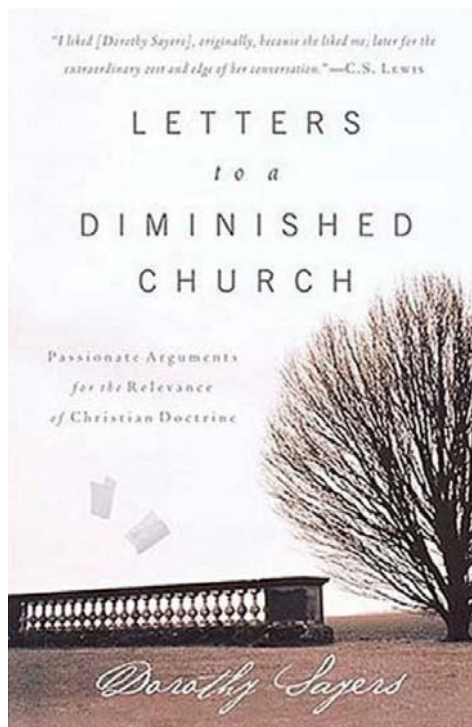
### Letters to a Diminished Church Dorothy Sayers

Dorothy is an extraordinary woman with a passion and zest for the relevance of God's word in daily life. She lived in extraordinary times, during the period of the second world war. Yet her writing is still so relevant in today's world amidst rising commodity prices, earthquake and all. In this small book, she has addressed major shortfall of churches today and explores why the church is losing relevance and influence.

In her plea for the church again to teach the relevance of Christian dogma, she wrote, 'It is worse than useless for Christians to talk about the importance of Christian morality unless they are prepared to take their stand upon the fundamentals of Christian theology. It is a lie to say that dogma does not matter; it matters enormously. It is fatal to let people suppose that Christianity is only a mode of feeling; it is vitally necessary to insist that it is first and foremost a rational explanation of the universe. It is hopeless to offer Christianity as a vaguely idealistic aspiration of a simple and consoling kind; it is, on the contrary, a hard, tough, exacting, and complex doctrine, steeped in a drastic and uncompromising realism.'

What we need today in our world are tough minds and gentle hearts. And unfortunately, we do not find many of those in Christendom.

I particularly like her treatment in



the chapter of *Creed or Chaos?* provides a sweeping overview of God, man, sin, judgment, matter, work and society. It points to erroneous assumptions of the church that needs to be addressed.

In the chapter 'Why Work?', Dorothy wrote of a topic close to my heart. 'Unless we do change our whole way of thought about work, I don't think we shall ever escape from the appalling squirrel cage of economic confusion...' The current escalation of commodity prices has the potential to lead us into another world war.

As a playwright, Dorothy has also laid succinctly a foundation for Christian esthetics and a biblical approach to the arts, which is hugely deficient in church doctrines today. A must read.

By Timothy Liu

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## Of the Heart and Mind

### False and True Economy

It is quite true that false Economics is one of the root causes of the present war; and one of the false ideas we had about Economics was a false attitude both to Work and to the goods produced by Work. This attitude we are now being obliged to alter, under the compulsion of war—and a very strange and painful process it is in some ways. It is always strange and painful to have to change a habit of mind; though, when we have made the effort, we may find a great relief, even a sense of adventure and delight, in getting rid of the false and returning to the true.

Can you remember—it is already getting difficult to remember—what things were like before the war? The stockings we bought cheap and threw away to save the trouble of mending? The cars we scrapped every year to keep up with the latest fashion in engine design and streamlining? The bread and bones and scraps of fat that littered the dustbins—not only of the rich but of the poor? The empty bottles that even the dustman scorned to collect, because the manufacturers found it cheaper to make new ones than to clean the old? The mountains of empty tins that nobody found it worthwhile to salvage, rusting and stinking on the refuse dumps? The food that was burnt or buried because it did not pay to distribute it? The land choked and impoverished with thistle and ragwort, because it did not pay to farm it? The handkerchiefs used for paint rags and kettleholders? Electric lights left blaz-

ing because it was too much trouble to switch them off? The fresh peas we could not be bothered to shell, and threw aside for something out of a tin? The paper that cumbered the shelves, and lay knee-deep in the parks, and littered the seats of railway trains? The scattered hairpins and smashed crockery, the cheap knickknacks of steel and wood and rubber and glass and tin that we bought to fill in an odd half hour at Woolworth's and forgot as soon as we had bought them? The advertisements imploring and exhorting and cajoling and menacing and bullying us to glut ourselves with things we did not want, in the name of snobbery and idleness and sex appeal? And the fierce international scramble to find helpless and backward nations a market on which to fob off all the superfluous rubbish which the inexorable machines ground out hour by hour, to create money and to create employment?

Do you realize how we have had to alter our whole scale of values, now that we are no longer being urged to consume but to conserve? We have been forced back to the social morals of our great-grandparents. When a piece of lingerie costs three precious coupons, we have to consider, not merely its glamour value, but how long it will wear. When fats are rationed, we must not throw away scraps, but jealously use to advantage what it cost so much time and trouble to breed and rear. When paper is scarce we must—or we should—think whether what we have to say is worth saying before writing or printing it. When our life depends on the



land, we have to pay in short commons for destroying its fertility by neglect or overcropping. When a haul of herrings takes valuable manpower from the forces, and is gathered in at the peril of men's lives by bomb and mine and machine gun, we read a new significance into those gloomy words which appear so often in the fishmonger's shop: NO FISH TODAY... We have had to learn the bitter lesson that in all the world there are only two sources of real wealth: the fruit of the earth and the labor of men; and to estimate work not by the money it brings to the producer, but by the worth of the thing that is made.

The question that I will ask you to consider today is this: When the war is over, are we likely, and do we want to keep this attitude to work and the results of work? Or are we preparing and do we want to go back to our old habits of thought? Because I believe that on our answer to this question the whole economic future of society will depend.

Quoted from Dorothy Sayers  
Letters to a Diminished Church

These words were written about 60 years ago and where have we come to today in an economic system that produces and consumes more than ever before?

## Eyes in a Darkened Room

### Prince Caspian

The movie is about the saga of Prince Caspian, the prince of the Telmarines, who wants to reclaim back his kingdom from his evil uncle who sought to kill him. In desperation, the prince summoned the ancient kings and queens of Narnia to his aid. These kings and queens are none other than the four Pevensie siblings Peter, Edmund, Susan, and Lucy from the first movie.

The movie highlights an illuminating insight on our perception to stewardship through the portrayed conflicts and the diverse ambitions among the royalties. The prince deem himself as the rightful ruler who will restore the co-habitation between the Telmarines and the Narnians. His uncle, Mizar, wanted the Telmarines' throne and the whole of Narnia. Peter, the eldest sibling of the Pevensie, sought to re-establish the freedom of the Narnians by reclaiming back his sovereignty in the land.

All of them desire to be sovereign over Narnia. All of them think they can rule the land better than the rest. All they could care about is their ambition and achievements. They are driven by what they think they can and want to accomplish. But have they ever stopped to ponder whether does Narnia belongs to them in the first place?

Narnia belongs to Aslan.

Our world belongs to Christ (Col 1:16). When we are

driven into accomplishing and achieving for ourselves, we have put ourselves in the shadow of those Narnian kings, queens, and prince.

"Who exactly are you doing this for, Peter?" asked queen Susan. That prompted me to ask, "Who exactly are we doing our living for?" King Peter fought for Narnia until he realized that his kingship is to be a steward of Narnia for Aslan and not to own the land for himself.

Prince Caspian, Mizar, and king Peter did not get this perspective right. They thought that it is only through recognizing their own potential that order can be restored and brought to the land. But Narnia was not designed to work that way. So also is our world. Hence, if we do not to get this right, we failed. Stalin and Hitler did not get it right hence they fell and fail. It is only through recognizing our role as steward ruler that order can be restored.

### Aslan's Absence

Throughout the whole show, we are being given the impression that all the characters, besides Lucy, have forgotten about Aslan. Reason is that he has disappeared from the Narnians for a very long time. Many have thought that Aslan has abandoned them. And it is especially so during testing time such as the nearing war between the Narnians and the Telmarines.

Aslan's absence signifies



the solidarity that we experienced during tough times. These are the times when we are desperate for dependence and divine help. But usually it seems like we do not get the right attention and solution that we wanted. "What is happening?" we might ask. And very often, the reply is a plain cold silent. "Aslan is not here."

Gradually, we will grow tired of asking. And more gradually, we stop asking altogether. And that is the time when we start to forget about Aslan. That was what happened to the Narnians. When the Telmarines ridding off of them, Aslan was not there.

Was it Aslan's fault for not being there during testing times? Or could it be that none of the Narnians went to look for him during those times? The story and the attitudes of Caspian, Mizar, and Peter deem to suggest the latter.

It was Lucy who did not forget about Aslan. Eventually she found him, and that ensued the salvation of the Narnians. This tale has much to tell about our expectation of future glory, and our patient for present procrastination.

Within the silence of anticipation, we have to bear in mind

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## Kingdom Building at the Workplace

### Coming Events

For more information check our web-site.

30 Jul – Crossings (Transition for school to work)  
By MCN. 7:30pm

Above Events at 420 North Bridge Road, #05-04  
Graduates' Christian Fellowship Office.

8-10 Aug – Intersect 08  
Everyday Spirituality in a  
Fallen World  
Austin Hills Golf Resort,  
Johore Bahru

19 Sep – GCF Annual Dinner  
Christian Disciplines in Times of  
Economic Challenges  
NUSS Kent Ridge Guild House



Lucy's incessant affection for Aslan. We do not anticipate for anything lesser than vindication over our own frailty and others' hostility. Lucy rejuvenates our memory of the child-like innocence that all of us once had. The innocence that is able to empowers us to devote ourselves deeply to our King.

### Prince Caspian: Overall Remarks

Though the movie is aesthetically well produced, it lacks the character of being an 'epic' as compared to the CG-loaded 300 or the first epic blockbuster of

the twenty-first century, the Lord of the Ring trilogy. Each of the four Pevensie siblings and prince Caspian lacks depth and nuance in their character. There is only little character development. For instance, king Peter's unsettling and wavering attitude was not being brought out well. I was not able to dwell into his character to understand why he reacted or acted in certain ways. In fact, I find that the musketeer mouse Reepicheep has a more forceful, developed, and recognizable character than Peter and Caspian.

Besides that this movie is excessively long. The final scene of the war between the Telmarines and the Narnians are not really breathtaking as compared to other epic movie such as the Kingdom of Heaven. One compliment deserved by this sequel is the CG of Aslan. He was being portrayed as more powerful and majestic than in the previous movie. Overall, despite the plainness of characters, it is still a beautiful and manageable family movie.

By Joshua Woo