

The evaluation of this book is not easy. It has pluses in its style, holding the readers' attention, saying things that need to be said (pp. 90 ff.). The two minuses are (1) lack of solid exegesis as foundation for what is said and (2) a libertine impression that is left after reading certain sections. The basic thesis that worldliness, separation, etc. are matters of the heart is true, but it is also true that these things may involve outward things, rules, etc. The author does not deal with the problem of how to guide immature Christians to maturity. Nor does he mention the place of church leaders in "ruling" their members (Heb. 13:7,17).

Specifically in chapter 1, p. 9 the question of social responsibilities of Christians is introduced but not elaborated. In other words, he raises an issue and leaves it hanging. p. 10, line 10, the truth is that the Bible is both a rule and guide book. Actually these two criticisms from the first chapter exemplify the rest of the book: (1) raising questions without giving a solid biblical answer and (2) avoiding the aspect of Christian living which does rightly involve rules.

Chpt 2, pp. 13-15. The discussion of art and music is very shallow. It is true that all truth is from God, but it is equally true that the depravity of man corrupts truth in his various modes of expressing it. Lutzer almost reasons thus: all beauty is from God; art and music are forms of beauty; these in all contemporary forms are from God and OK for the believer unless immoral. But it's not as simple as that, especially in music. He has not considered the corrupt association of these forms. pp. 24 ff. on the lust of the eyes is one of the better sections.

Chpt 3 lacks any treatment of the biblical passages on separation for doctrinal, practical and personality reasons.

Chpt. 4. On p. 64 social drinking is not condemned and it will be assumed that the author has approved it. If one of 3 social drinkers become problem drinkers (p. 65 footnote) then how can even the occasional glass of wine be acceptable? On p. 66 he admits that smoking is harmful to the body; so is alcohol. P.96: the discussion about when is a beard a beard or a mini-skirt a mini-skirt is ridiculous. You may not be able to measure the point at which modesty becomes immodesty but you can discern modest apparel without using a ruler. Why not emphasize the fact that you never have trouble telling if a man is clean-shaven, and maxi-dresses have not raised any problems about modesty! p. 99, line 9 "it may be possible" this kind of phrase occurs often in the work and leaves the question under discussion open (and MBI open too!) Where is the discussion of the specifics in 1 Tim. 2:9?

Chpt 5 is OK, not exciting, not harmful.

On balance, I could not recommend the manuscript in present form. Whether the author's own convictions would permit him to revise it as I would think necessary, I do not know. He must sound a clear trumpet about negatives as well as positives.

I find the evaluation of this book a very difficult task. On the plus side, it moves along, keeps the reader's attention, contains stimulating illustrations, and says many things that need to be said (esp. pp. 90 ff.).

The principal negative feature in my judgment is the attitude conveyed which will be considered by some to be a libertine attitude. While it is certainly true that worldliness, separation, Christian conduct are basically matters of the heart, it is equally true that they may involve outward things, rules, etc. While it is true, for example, that it is wrong to inveigh against smoking and tolerate gossiping, he leaves the impression that smoking is really not too bad. He does not clearly say that both are wrong for the believer. On p. 64 social drinking is not condemned, and many will consider that the author has approved it.

Specifically: in chapter 1, p. 9--<sup>question of</sup> the social responsibilities of Christians is introduced here but never elaborated on. In other words, he raises an issue which he never discusses later--just leaves it hanging. p. 10--line 10--the Bible is both a rule both and a guide book. To say it is not a rule book is an error and opens the way for all kinds of libertinism. Actually these two criticisms from the first chapter exemplify the rest of the book--(1) raising questions without giving a solid biblical answer and (2) avoiding the aspect of Christian living which does involve rules.

Chpt 2 pp. 13-15. The discussion of art and music is very shallow. It is true that all truth is from God, but it is equally true that the depravity of man corrupts truth in his various modes of expressing it. Lutzer almost reasons thus: all beauty is from God; art and music are forms of beauty; these are from God and OK for the believer unless immoral. But it's not so simple as that, especially in music. He has not considered the corruption and associations of these forms. Pp. 24 ff. on the lust of the eyes is one of the best sections.

Chpt 3 really lacks any treatment of the biblical passages on separation-- 1 John 2:18; 2 John 10; 2 Tim. 2:18; Gal. 1:8; 2 Thess. 3:14; Rom. 16:17 etc etc.

Chpt 4. p. 64 on wine, see above. If one out of 3 social drinkers become problem drinkers (p. 65 footnote) then how can even the occasional glass of wine be acceptable? On p. 66 he admits that smoking is harmful to the body; so is alcohol. p. 78 is true, but where is the consideration of the problem of immaturity in this chapter? Or obligations of leaders to "rule" their people (Heb. 13:7, 17). p. 96 all the discussion about when is a beard a beard or a mini-skirt a mini-skirt is ridiculous. You may not be able to measure the point at which modesty becomes immodesty but you can usually discern modest and immodest apparel without using a ruler. You never have any trouble telling if a man is clean-shaven, and maxi-dresses have never raised any problems! p.99, l. 9 "it may be possible" this kind of phrase occurs too often in the work leaving the question too open. (and MBI open too!) Funny, I missed any discussion of 1 Tim. 2:9 which does contain specifics.

Chpt 5 is OK, not exciting, not damaging.

I cannot recommend the manuscript. The author needs as firm convictions about negatives as he has about positives, for both are biblical. Today, there came to hand a booklet published by Phila. College of Bible by Renald Showers on the same subject, and it is much more biblical and solid. <sup>the not with</sup> Lutzer really doesn't exegete relevant Scriptures, and I'm afraid that what comes through is that he is riding a hobby horse and the horse is going in the wrong direction.