

ing forward of the complete Junior work which was sanctioned by the Missionary Volunteer Department at the General Conference of 1922. The entire morning session, which lasted from 6:30 to 11 A. M., except for an intermission of an hour and a half for breakfast, was devoted to the discussion of these resolutions. An epitome of all this discussion is given in the section devoted to the resolutions. (For this special subject see pages 600-630.)

#### Special Meetings

Because of the stress of business, two special Missionary Volunteer sessions were called, one on Saturday night, June 16, at 7:30. All workers whose presence was not demanded by the business of the educational sessions, were requested to be present. The whole time of both meetings was devoted to the presentation of resolutions and their free discussion, a report of which will be found on pages 600-630.

### NINTH MISSIONARY VOLUNTEER SESSION

June 17, 2:15 P. M.

AFTER prayer by W. W. Eastman, the subject of recreation was announced by Professor Kern, our chairman. Our union secretary from the Northern Union presented the subject.

#### GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN THE MATTER OF RECREATION

H. J. SHELDON

THE age in which we live has been accurately described in the following words from the spirit of prophecy:

"The young generally conduct themselves as though the precious hours of probation, while mercy lingers, were one grand holiday, and they were placed in this world merely for their own amusement, to be gratified with a continued round of excitement. Satan has been making special efforts to lead them to find happiness in worldly amusements, and to justify themselves by endeavoring to show that these amusements are harmless, innocent, and even important for health."—*Testimonies*, Vol. I, p. 501.

The statements quoted present a true picture of hundreds of youth who have a knowledge of present truth. Yet we know that there is a legitimate desire for recreation and change which is not sin, but which must be recognized and

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—*Id.*,

answered. There are two extreme views of this question of recreation.

"There are persons with a diseased imagination to whom religion is a tyrant, ruling them as with a rod of iron. Such are constantly mourning over their depravity, and groaning over supposed evil. Love does not exist in their hearts; a frown is ever upon their countenances. They are chilled with the innocent laugh from the youth or from any one. They consider *all* recreation or amusement a sin, and think that the mind must be constantly wrought up to just such a stern, severe pitch. This is one extreme. Others think that the mind must be ever on the stretch to invent new amusements and diversions. . . . They learn to depend on excitement, and are uneasy without it. . . . They go to another extreme."—*Id.*, p. 565.

The spirit of prophecy has had much to say on general principles, and has specifically pointed out certain amusements that are wrong for the Christian. And let it be said that the prohibitions stated by the Spirit are not arbitrary, unreasonable restrictions, but in every case in which a form of amusement is disapproved, a clear, definite reason is given.

1. *Self-denial*.—First among these general principles is self-denial. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me," said Jesus.

"God sees that there is no other way to save man than to cut away from his life the selfishness which, if retained, would degrade the whole being."—*Id.*, Vol. IX, p. 49.

It is very clear that those who are followers of Jesus, those who are preparing for the pure kingdom into which shall enter nothing that defileth, must deny themselves those recreations and amusements which would bring them under the influence of worldlings and which would place them in the company or society of those who know not Jesus. There is no call for the Christian to mingle with the world, even in amusements which in themselves might be innocent.

2. *Proper Recreation Necessary*.—On the other hand, we are repeatedly instructed that recreation of some kind is an essential to the physical, mental, and spiritual health of God's children.

"Recreation is needful to those who are engaged in physical labor, and is still more essential for those whose labor is principally mental. It is not essential to our salvation, nor for the glory of God, to keep the mind laboring constantly and excessively, even upon religious themes."—*Id.*, Vol. I, p. 514.

"Those who are engaged in study should have relaxation. The mind must not be constantly confined to close thought, for the delicate mental machinery becomes worn."—*Id.*, Vol. IV, p. 652.

3. *Temperance.*— Even truly recreative activity must be indulged in moderately by the Christian, else body and mind will be weakened rather than strengthened, and the way opened for temptation. Be temperate in all things.

"Let your moderation be known unto all men." Phil. 4: 5.

"There is great need of temperance in amusements, as in every other pursuit."—"*Testimonies*," Vol. IV, p. 652.

"The character of these amusements should be carefully and thoroughly considered. Every youth should ask himself, What influence will these amusements have on physical, mental, and moral health? Will my mind become so infatuated as to forget God? shall I cease to have His glory before me?"—*Ibid.*

4. *Recreation versus Amusement.*— The line seems clearly drawn between recreations and amusements that refresh and strengthen, that are truly recreative, and those whose object is the pursuit of pleasure for the sake of itself.

"God does not own the pleasure seeker as His follower. . . . Those only who are self-denying, and who live a life of sobriety, humility, and holiness, are true followers of Jesus."—*Id.*, Vol. I, p. 269.

"There is no time for engaging in trifling amusements, the gratification of selfish propensities."—*Id.*, Vol. VII, p. 204.

5. *Amusements Condemned.*— Some forms of amusement are definitely condemned and clear reasons are given. Much is said in the "*Testimonies*" of "vain and trifling diversion," "unprofitable visiting," and "exciting amusements." (See Vol. III, p. 146.)

"The true followers of Jesus will discard picnics, donations, shows, and other gatherings for pleasure. They can find no Jesus there, and no influence which will make them heavenly-minded, and increase their growth in grace."—*Id.*, Vol. I, p. 288.

This statement as applied to picnics and certain social gatherings seems to apply particularly to mixed gatherings where Christians and non-Christians mingle, for we read,

"The most discerning eye would fail to detect in such professed Christians one mark of Christianity. . . . The professed Christian, the profligate, the open scoffer at religion, and the openly profane, all mingle together as one. And God regards them as one in spirit and practice."—*Id.*, p. 404.

This instruction evidently does not apply to properly conducted recreation in the open air, by those who are Christians, for we are told,

"Let several families . . . unite and leave the occupations which have taxed them physically and mentally, and make an excursion into the country, . . . where the scenery of nature is beautiful. . . . All who can, should feel it a duty to pursue this course. Nothing will be lost, but much gained."—*Id.*, pp. 514, 515.

6. *Sports Disapproved.*—Certain athletic sports and games are disapproved by the Christian for very good reasons. Football and boxing are placed in this list.

They "have become schools of brutality. . . . The love of domination, the pride in mere brute force, the reckless disregard of life, are exerting upon the youth a power to demoralize that is appalling."—*"Education,"* p. 210.

What shall we say of baseball, cricket, and tennis? On one occasion tennis and cricket were presented to the prophet "as a species of idolatry, like the idols of the nations."—*"Counsels to Teachers,"* p. 350. Can we doubt that the great American game of baseball, the British game of cricket, and the game of tennis are to multitudes a species of idolatry? One needs only to live within ten blocks of a baseball park in one of our cities, or to glance at the sport page of the daily paper, to know that the spirit of prophecy speaks truly. Must our youth then be taught that there is sin in a game of tennis or baseball under any circumstances whatsoever?

In the "Testimonies" we read,

"Music has occupied the hours which should have been devoted to prayer. Music is the idol which many professed Sabbath-keeping Christians worship."—*Vol. I,* p. 506.

Again, concerning gatherings for singing,

"How many souls have these gatherings for conversation and the practice of music been the means of saving? . . . *Pray more than you sing.*"—*Id.*, p. 513.

In recreation as in music, idolatry is evidently not in the thing itself, but in the attitude toward it of those who become its devotees.

Undoubtedly, tennis has at times become a species of idolatry to individuals. Such also will baseball prove to be if permitted to claim any considerable amount of time and interest among the youth of our schools.

But we are not warranted in drawing the conclusion that every game of tennis or baseball, under whatever circumstances engaged in, is the sin of idolatry or a sin of any kind.

7. *Indoor Games.*—Cards, checkers, and chess are condemned, because Heaven does not approve of them.

“They are not beneficial in their tendency, but have an exciting influence, producing in some minds a passion for those plays which lead to gambling and dissipation.”—*Id.*, Vol. I, p. 514.

They are a form of mental exercise which “excite and weary the brain” instead of proving beneficial. As for card playing, its “associations and tendencies are dangerous. The prince of the powers of darkness presides . . . wherever there is card-playing. Evil angels are familiar guests in these places.”—*Id.*, Vol. IV, p. 652.

Must we then class all games using cards of any kind in the same category? In the writer's opinion, it depends upon the associations and conditions under which the playing is done. When students at school spend study hours, or hours which should be spent in useful employment or in healthful recreation, or spend many vacation hours at flinch or similar games, they cannot be meeting the approval of Heaven.

But for the children at home to spend an occasional hour with authors, anagrams, or some other instructive game, under the supervision of their parents, could not meet with the same objection.

8. *Physical Health Promoted by Outdoor Exercise.*—The spirit of prophecy is very explicit that recreation in the open air is essential to physical, mental, and spiritual health. The danger to health and morals of physical inaction is clearly pointed out. There are times when even physical workers are in need of a change and recreation other than a change of work. (See “Education,” p. 209.)

The ideal recreation, therefore, is that taken in the open air and that which involves muscular activity of some kind.

“In order for children and youth to have health, cheerfulness, vivacity, and well-developed muscles and brains, they should be much in the open air, and have well-regulated *employment* and *amusement*.”—“*Testimonies*,” Vol. III, p. 137.

"The students' employment and amusements should have been regulated with reference to physical law, and should have been adapted to preserve to them the healthy tone of all the powers of body and mind."—*Id.*, p. 142.

9. *Useful Employment as Recreation the Better Way.*— In our schools, and wherever possible, it should be recognized that useful employment in agricultural or industrial lines, will very largely supply the need for physical exercise and recreation. But there is a place for recreation aside from actual labor in the shop or the farm.

10. *The Question of Time in Recreation.*— We are living in the last days of probationary time, and a world is yet to be warned. Our work demands an earnest and serious use of the time God has given us.

"The lifetime is too short to be squandered in vain and trifling diversion, in unprofitable visiting, in needless dressing for display, or in exciting amusements. . . . We have none too much time for the discharge of necessary duties."—*Id.*, p. 146.

Thus there are many forms of amusement which in themselves are not debasing or demoralizing, yet they are surely unprofitable for him who realizes that every talent, every power, every ability, has been given him of God for use in giving the last gospel message to a world ready to perish.

11. *The Ultimate Guiding Principle.*— Our youth and older ones must have some forms of recreation, but the individual must decide by study and prayer what God will permit him (or his children) to do without harm to his own soul or hindrance to others.

"An enlightened, discriminating mind will find abundant means for entertainment and diversion, from sources not only innocent, but instructive."—*Id.*, Vol. IV, p. 653.

"Christians have many sources of happiness at their command, and they may tell with unerring accuracy what pleasures are lawful and right. They may enjoy such recreation as will not dissipate the mind or debase the soul, such as will not disappoint, and leave a sad after-influence to destroy self-respect or bar the way to usefulness."—"*Counsels to Teachers*," p. 342.

In conclusion, let us state the supreme test as given by the spirit of prophecy:

"Any amusement in which they can engage asking the blessing of God upon it in faith, will not be dangerous. But any amusement which

disqualifies them for secret prayer, for devotion at the altar of prayer, or for taking part in the prayer meeting, is not safe, but dangerous."—*Testimonies*, Vol. III, pp. 222, 223.

### DISCUSSION

L. F. THIEL: In the matter of amusements we cannot expect to supply at all times the demand of our young people in making thrills for them, for already they are thrilled to an extent that is quite sufficient. The guiding principle is that we must educate the young people to that which is right.

A. W. SPALDING: The environment which we place about the children and youth will be a large factor in determining how much they will want to enter into athletics or amusements. In the industrial schools with which I have been connected in the past, the stress that was placed on the vocational work, and the way in which the teachers led in that work, working with their students in the field and in the shop, was a deterrent to overemphasis on sports. The more stress we lay upon vocational work, which interests the mind and draws all the energies into it, the less difficulty we shall find in sports.

MEADE MACGUIRE: Whenever this question is up for discussion, there is a verse that comes to my mind, the words spoken by the apostle Paul: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." This is a distinction which we need to make in considering this whole subject of amusements and recreation. Men and women, or those approaching maturity, ought to be able to get real pleasure and enjoyment out of recreation that is constructive and really re-creative, and I believe we can accomplish a great deal of good by education along this line.

J. A. BURDEN: When the power of God has control in the life, that settles the whole thing. All these earthly thrills go without consideration. What we need is the vitalizing power of Him who fills our souls with a delight that is above these earthly pleasures that fill the life for a season.

S. A. SMITH: There are a few statements in the spirit of prophecy concerning this vocational question and games which I have to explain to almost every class of students I have. I should like to have some enlightenment on these two points. One is on page 308 of "Counsels to Teachers: "

"Diligent study is essential, so also is diligent, hard work. Play is not essential."

The other is on page 350:

"In the night season I was a witness to the performance that was carried on on the school grounds. The students who engaged in the grotesque mimicry that was seen, acted out the mind of the enemy, some in a very unbecoming manner. A view of things was presented before me in which the students were playing games of tennis and cricket. Then I was given instruction regarding the character of these amusements.

They were presented to me as a species of idolatry, like the idols of the nations."

During the fifteen years in which I have been putting my entire time to the vocational end of our school work, I have tried to get my students to find their recreation in the shop and on the farm. I find that games and learning to do things do not go together. Either they work or they play. If it was the nature of those particular games that is referred to, then I will back down; but if it means tennis and cricket, I shall have to explain to my students as I have in the last fifteen years.

A. W. SPALDING: I am thoroughly in sympathy with the position which Professor Smith takes with reference to the value of games and sports, but I should like to read a passage from "Counsels to Teachers," pages 76, 77:

"There is danger that both parents and teachers will command and dictate too much, while they fail to come sufficiently into social relation with their children or scholars. They often hold themselves too much reserved, and exercise their authority in a cold, unsympathizing manner, which cannot win the hearts of their children and pupils. If they would gather the children close to them, and show that they love them, and would manifest an interest in all their efforts, and even in their sports, sometimes even being a child among them, they would make the children very happy, and would gain their love and win their confidence. And the children would more quickly learn to respect and love the authority of their parents and teachers."

This recognizes that parents have their place, but it is speaking of children, and I think there is a distinction to be made between children and young men or young women who have grown to maturity. Let us not, however, say there is no place for sports at any age.

W. W. RUBLE: I think we ought to be careful that we get both sides of what the spirit of prophecy teaches, and follow it carefully, or we are going to drive our young people away from us instead of winning them. I read:

"There are modes of recreation which are highly beneficial to both mind and body. An enlightened, discriminating mind will find abundant means for entertainment and diversion, from sources not only innocent, but instructive. Recreation in the open air, the contemplation of the works of God in nature, will be of the highest benefit."—"*Counsels to Teachers*," page 335.

I could read page after page along the same line, so I think we ought to balance it up carefully and go away with a definite understanding.

R. S. OWEN: I have been connected with our schools for a long time, and I want to give testimony that whenever I saw baseball engaged in by students, I never saw it controlled; it has always run to the extreme.

S. A. SMITH: Any one who has been associated with me will agree that I favor amusements, but I am not clear on that statement of tennis and cricket. Is it the games themselves? Our schools are not agreed on that. In some schools you will find baseball, and in some no games. We take

different views, and I do not want to go away from here without some definite light.

C. P. CRAGER: I wonder if Professor Irwin was not with Mrs. White when this was written. For many years I, too, have wanted to know just what it meant.

C. K. MEYERS: I was a member of the Avondale school board for three years, and we always let the students have an outing, from year to year, in which they engaged in games; and I am told they did this when Mrs. White lived there. If a person will read the context on that whole chapter and see what transpired on that holiday, he will find that the students ran riot. It seems to me that where we establish schools for a certain purpose, that purpose must be kept before the student, and the supreme test is revealed in the struggle which often comes to divert the students and the school from their fundamental purpose. I feel like following the instruction which the Lord has given for our schools; and then this other instruction which Professor Sheldon has read, is for our young people generally.

M. E. KERN: It seems to me it is the craze after amusements, the love of excitement, the constant effort to find something to take the place of useful employment and helpful service, that is condemned in the spirit of prophecy.

### **PROBLEM OF THE MOVIES**

C. A. RUSSELL

#### **Influence of the Moving Picture**

ABOUT one and one-half years ago it was my privilege, along with several of our young people's workers, to attend in Chicago a meeting of the World's Purity Federation. There were gathered on that occasion social workers from all parts of the United States, England, and Australia. They were men and women who knew whereof they spoke. They were not calamity howlers.

There was one man who addressed himself to the matter of the motion pictures. I remember very well this utterance: "The moving picture today is a greater menace to the morals of young America than ever the saloon in its palmyest days." That seems a startling statement, but you will remember that in the days of the open saloon we did make an attempt to keep the boys and girls out of the saloons; but they are the ones who attend the movies by hundreds of thousands, and even millions, and this in the formative period of their lives. He made the statement that the motion picture today ranks fourth