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PROPRIETOR OF

ELLEN G. WHITE Publications



Office Address:

GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS
TAKOMA PARK, WASHINGTON 12, D.C.

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701 Greenslake Road
Rossville, Georgia

Dear Miss

I have a letter from your mother in which she tells me that you have been discussing in a class taught by Dr. Kennedy the matter of play as a part of recreation, and your mother refers to a statement appearing in Counsels to Teachers on page 308.

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

The question is asked if this means for adults all sports and play should be discontinued, and that all recreation should be through different types of work. I would not read this into the statement. Please read carefully that which precedes it and follows it on page 308 and 309.

Ellen White does not say that it is wrong to engage in play. She is dealing here with that which is essential. It is essential that mature students, adult students, shall study diligently, and she points out that it is also essential that they engage in hard work. The play could be skimped without any great loss, and in fact, there are certain perils in certain types of play.

If you will turn the The Adventist Home, page 499, you will find the statement, "I do not condemn the simple exercise of playing ball." In other words, Ellen White tells us in this statement written to a young man in medical school who made inquiry of her, that there is nothing inherently wrong in playing a game in which a ball is used. The reason the young man wrote to Ellen White is that she had written some things against baseball and he asked why. We should note however that the sentence indicating that there was no condemnation for the simple exercise of playing ball is followed by this phrase: "But this, even in its simplicity, may be overdone."

Then Ellen White goes on to enumerate the reasons why an engrossment in the playing of ball might be detrimental. She states, "The way that they

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have been conducted at the college does not bear the impress of heaven." A careful reading of the statement reveals some of the reasons. There was an outlay of means in the use of time which was disproportionate, especially for the Christian; there was the glorifying of the players; there was the cultivation of the love of pleasure until it was written in the books of heaven that the young people were lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.

I like this statement because it deals with principles and we as a people live by principle. If you will read this entire chapter, "What Shall We Play?" you will find that Ellen White points out certain things that should not be done, but at the same time, she says, "Something perfectly harmless should be substituted in their place." And she urges that we supply sources of pleasure that are pure, noble, and elevating. These principles should guide us in the choice of those things which we do in connection with our recreation.

At the same time, Sister White has made it very clear in her writings that young people may engage in useful labor of one kind and another and something which leaves something worthwhile in its wake, and we will gain a recreation and have the satisfaction of accomplishing something which is of service to ourselves and to others. As we grow more mature, this type of recreation becomes more appealing and there is less desire for that which is purely play. We may go to a picnic, that is the kind of picnic which Seventh-day Adventists usually conduct, take our lunch, going into the country, having a pleasant day. We may play some games. It is good recreation and there is certainly nothing wrong with this. This is quite different from engaging in sports where there is a great deal of time spent in practicing, the competition is keen, and there is glorification of the players. This can be detrimental.

I am sending to you with this a statement I prepared some months ago in reply to a question which came from a student in one of our colleges. The question is of just a little different nature, but I think you will find some of the principles laid down in this to be of service in dealing with the question which is before you at this time. I trust that this information may be of service to you.

With the best of wishes, I am

Sincerely your brother,

Arthur L. White, Secretary
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