

Games ~~Abstract~~ A-186

QA 10-6

Box 31, Sanitarium, California,
December 7, 1930.

537 Twenty-fifth Street,
Oakland,
California.

Dear Sister,---

This morning I have looked through your excellent little study on recreation and amusement. I like it very well, and am sure that it will fill a real need. I liked especially the columns at the close setting forth qualities by which to test amusements.

If I have any criticism or question about its being extreme, my questions would largely center around the quotation from Elder Montgomery regarding card games. One question would be regarding the propriety of putting in this one quotation as an answer to a question in a document where all the other quotations are from the Bible or Sister White. (And I feel that it would be even stronger than it is if more Scripture quotations could be given) But the main question is regarding the position that seems to be taken that any kind of a game in which cards are used is sinful. This statement would put the ban on all educational games based on questions and answers. It would even make it a sin to use the games that ~~we~~ have been recommended as helps to a knowledge of the Bible. I doubt if Elder Montgomery had these in mind when he spoke, but it needs modification I think if it is used.

Also he seems to introduce a test regarding competitive games that I question. He asks if one would ~~begin~~ begin such a game with a prayer that he might beat the other fellow, or words to that effect. This test would rule out any sort of a contest. It presupposes a feeling of selfishness that does not necessarily enter into a game even though not objectionable. I should hate to think that any church, for instance, should make a call to prayer that it might beat its competitors in Harvest Ingathering. Yet do not our conference secretaries make great appeals to competition in reporting and comparing various church activities?

There are some card games that, if used aright and for the right purpose, may prove to be educational, especially for young people. And there are some games that might be regarded as near the border line. Must we not leave these to individual consciences somewhat, while urging all to make such a test as you have outlined. Also should we say that certain games are sinful in themselves, when the sin may not lie in the games so much as that it has a tendency to lead to conditions that produce sin?

I remember an experience at a camp-meeting in Colorado. Another minister and myself were visiting at a home about a mile from ~~the~~ camp ground. The parents were busy, and as it came time for us to leave, there came on a terrific gale of wind and rain. Seeing a checker board, and both of us having at one time been fond of the game, it was natural for us to make use of the opportunity of playing. I am not sure that we even finished the game. But one little girl looked at us for a time, and then said, "My mamma says it is a sin to play checkers?" Of course it was horrifying to her in the light of such instruction to see two ministers sinning that way. I tell this, not to justify what we did.

We might have found something more profitable to do. But it does illustrate the effect on the minds of children and youth, if they are taught to regard as "sin" that which can be shown to be wrong only by the results of the action being detrimental to Christian growth.

I do not know whether these studies have been sent out or not, but I wish that this quotation from Elder Montgomery might be omitted, and something substituted that would lead the individual to reach the conclusion or the near-conclusion by his own process of reasoning and his own conscience, rather than to ask him to accept as authoritative the conclusion of some one else, who is not accorded the position of being inspired.

I also wish that the quotation from the Caro letter regarding ball playing might have been just a wee bit longer, including the next sentence or two. This letter has recently been printed in one of the leaflets, and would be good to circulate among the young people. It is number 17C of the Educational series.

With kind regards, and with deep interest in your efforts to help our Young People, I remain

Yours sincerely,

