

CHRISTIAN RECREATION

versus

WORLDLY AMUSEMENTS

"We cannot advance in Christian experience until we put away everything that separates us from God." CT 329.2

Christian Recreation is a very important topic because **the way we spend our spare time will influence our characters**. And whatever influences our characters, can be **decisive for our eternity**. This study is aimed to be a guide for all those who want to follow their precious Savior, Jesus Christ. We strongly recommend a prayerful attitude while you read every page. And if you discover things that are new and which should be corrected in your life, we pray that our Lord will anoint you with His Holy Spirit to accept His will and follow Him. There is such a big need of faithful people who can be a good example for those around them. May our Lord bless you in this study!

Bible References (all verses are quoted from the King James Version)

Gen.2:8,15 'And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed... And the LORD God **took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.**' [Useful activity]

Gen.6:5 'And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that **every imagination** of the thoughts of his heart was **only evil** continually.'

Ex. 23:2 'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil...' [Swimming against the stream, courage to be different]

Ex.32:6,7,25,26 'And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace **offerings**; and the people sat down to **eat** and to **drink**, and rose up to **play**. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have **corrupted** themselves... And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD'S side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.' [Worldly amusements and idolatry]

Lev.18:3,4 '**After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do:** neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I [am] the LORD your God.' [The culture of the land is most of the times in opposition to God's will and God's word]

Deut. 7:26 '**Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house**, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing.' [Watch what kind of practices you bring or allow into your house]

1 Kings 19:19 'So he departed thence, and found **Elisha** the son of Shaphat, who **was plowing** with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him.' [Useful work was part of Elisha's training for ministry and part of his re-Creation]

2 Kings 6:1,2 'And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye.' [Work was part of the education received in the schools of the prophets]

2 Chron. 36:14-16 'Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, **transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen**; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.' [Warning against the temptation to copy what the non-believers are doing]

Prov. 1:10 'My son, if sinners entice thee, **consent thou not.**'

Prov. 16:25 'There is a way that **seemeth right** unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.'

Prov. 19:3 'The foolishness of man perverteth his way: and his heart fretteth against the LORD.'

Prov. 19:16 'He that keepeth the commandment keepeth his own soul; but **he that despiseth his ways shall die.**'

Eccl. 9:8 '**Let thy garments be always white**; and let thy head lack no ointment.'

Eccl. 11:9 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.'

Is. 5:20 '**Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!**'

Is. 52:11 'Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, **touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the LORD.**'

Jer. 6:16 'Thus saith the LORD, **Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.** But they said, We will not walk therein.'

Ez. 22:30 'And **I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it:** but I found none.'

Mt. 5:29,30 'And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.' [the cost of discipleship]

Mt. 7:13,14 '**Enter ye in at the strait gate:** for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because **strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.**'

Mt. 7:21 '**Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.'**

Mt. 13:44 'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and **for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath**, and buyeth that field.'

Mr.9:34 'But they held their peace: for by the way they had **disputed** among themselves, **who [should be] the greatest.**' [Competition with others]

Lk. 5:28 ' And **he left all**, rose up, and followed him[Jesus].'

Jn. 8:12 'Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, **I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness**, but shall have the light of life.'

Jn. 15:19 'If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because **ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world**, therefore the world hateth you.'

Jn. 17:14 'I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because **they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.**'

Acts 9:36 ' Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named **Tabitha**, which by interpretation is called **Dorcas**: this woman was **full of good works and almsdeeds** which she did.' [Very busy with good things, contributing to the re-Creation of others]

Rom. 6:13 '**Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin**: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.'

Rom. 8:6,7 'For **to be carnally minded is death**; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because **the carnal mind is enmity against God**: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.'

Rom. 8:12,13 'Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For **if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die**: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.'

Rom. 12:1,2 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye **present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God**, which is your reasonable service. And **be not conformed to this world**: but **be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.'

Rom. 13:12 'The night is far spent, **the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.**'

1 Cor. 2:14 'But **the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God**: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.'

1 Cor. 10:31 'Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or **whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.**'

1 Cor. 12:31 'But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you **a more excellent way.**' [This should be our target, to find a more excellent way]

Gal. 5:19-21 'Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are [these]; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, **strife**, seditions,

heresies, **envyings**, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told [you] in time past, that **they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**'

Gal. 6:8 'For **he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption**; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.'

Eph. 4:22-24 'That ye **put off** concerning the former conversation **the old man**, which is corrupt according to the **deceitful lusts**. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind. And that ye **put on the new man**, which after God is **created in righteousness and true holiness.**'

Eph. 5:10,11 '**Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord**. And **have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness**, but rather reprove them.'

Phill. 2:5 'Let **this mind** be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus' [It is vital to have the right philosophy of life]

Phill. 4:8 'Finally, brethren, **whatsoever things are true**, whatsoever things [are] **honest**, whatsoever things [are] **just**, whatsoever things [are] **pure**, whatsoever things [are] **lovely**, whatsoever things [are] of **good report**; if [there be] any **virtue**, and if [there be] any **praise**, **think on these things.**'

2 Tim. 2:22 '**Flee also youthful lusts**: but **follow righteousness**, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.'

2 Tim. 4:3 'For **the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine**; but **after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.**'

Titus 2:11,12 'For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. Teaching us that, **denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.**'

1 John 2:15 '**Love not the world**, neither the things that are in the world. **If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.**'

1 John 5:21 'Little children, **keep yourselves from idols**. Amen.'

Rev. 21:8 'But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and **idolaters**, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.'

“There is a distinction between recreation and amusement. **Recreation**, when true to its name, recreation, tends to strengthen and build up. Calling us aside from our ordinary cares and occupations, it affords refreshment for mind and body and thus enables us to return with new vigor to the earnest work of life.

Amusement, on the other hand, is sought for the sake of pleasure and is often carried to excess; it absorbs the energies that are required for useful work and thus proves a hindrance to life's true success.”
AH 512

Separation From the World

‘The true followers of Christ will have sacrifices to make. They will shun places of worldly amusement because they find **no Jesus there** - no influence which will make them heavenly-minded and

increase their growth in grace. **Obedience to the word of God will lead them to come out from all these things and be separate.**' CT, 328

'The great Head of the church, who has chosen His people **out of the world**, requires them to be **separate from the world**. He designs that the spirit of His commandments, by drawing His followers to Himself, shall **separate them from worldly elements**. To love God and keep His commandments is **far away from loving the world's pleasures and its friendship**. There is no concord between Christ and Belial...

The youth who follow Christ have a **warfare** before them; they have a daily cross to bear in coming **out of the world** and imitating the life of Christ.' CT, 329

'Between the associations of the followers of Christ for **Christian recreation**, and **worldly gatherings for pleasure and amusement**, will exist a **marked contrast**. Instead of prayer and the mentioning of Christ and sacred things, will be heard from the lips of worldlings the silly laugh and the trifling conversation. The idea is to have a general high time. Their amusements commence in folly and end in vanity.' CT 337

'The Eternal God has drawn the **line of distinction** between the saints and the sinners, the converted and the unconverted. **The two classes do not blend** into each other imperceptibly, like the colors of the rainbow. They are as **distinct as midday and midnight.**' CT 341

A Blessed Recreation

a) The best recreation:

• Work:

way of healthy recreation: 'Those of sedentary and literary habits should take physical exercise, even if they have no need to labor as far as means are concerned. Health should be a sufficient inducement to lead them to unite physical with mental labor.' CT 290

part of God's discipline to prepare us for higher service: 'The early years of the prophet Elisha were passed in the quietude of country life, under the teaching of God and nature and the **discipline of useful work**. In a time of almost universal apostasy his father's household were among the number who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Theirs was a home where God was honored and where faithfulness to duty was the rule of daily life.

The son of a wealthy farmer, **Elisha had taken up the work that lay nearest. While possessing the capabilities of a leader among men, he received a training in life's common duties**. In order to direct wisely, he must learn to obey. **By faithfulness in little things, he was prepared for weightier trusts.**

Of a meek and gentle spirit, Elisha possessed also energy and steadfastness. He cherished the love and fear of God, and **in the humble round of daily toil he gained strength of purpose and nobleness of character**, growing in divine grace and knowledge. **While co-operating with his father in the home duties, he was learning to co-operate with God.**' Ed 58

part of true education: 'Let the **study of books** be combined with **useful manual labor**, and by faithful endeavor, watchfulness, and prayer secure the wisdom that is from above. This will give you an **all-round education.**' COL 334

'**Daily, systematic labor** should constitute a **part of the education of youth** even at this late period. Much can now be gained in connecting labor with schools. The students will acquire, in following this plan, elasticity of spirit and vigor of thought, and **can accomplish more mental labor, in a given time, than they could by study alone.**' CE, 22

'The pupils of these schools [of the prophets] **sustained themselves by their own labor in tilling the soil or in some mechanical employment**. In Israel this was not thought strange or degrading; indeed, it was regarded as a **sin to allow children to grow up in ignorance of useful labor**. Every youth, whether his parents were rich or poor, was taught some trade. Even though he was to be educated for holy office, a knowledge of practical life was regarded as essential to the greatest usefulness. Many, also, of the teachers supported themselves by manual labor.' Ed 47

a dignifying occupation: 'In the beginning He created man a **gentleman**; but though rich in all that the Owner of the universe could supply, **Adam** was not to be idle. No sooner was he created than his work was given him.' CT 273

good shield against temptations: 'It was God's purpose to alleviate by toil the evil brought into the world by man's disobedience. By toil the temptations of Satan might be made ineffectual and the tide of evil stayed. And though attended with anxiety, weariness, and pain, **labor** is still a **source of happiness and development**, and a **safeguard against temptation**. Its discipline places a check on self-indulgence and **promotes industry, purity, and firmness**. Thus it becomes a **part of God's great plan for our recovery from the Fall**.' CT, 274

walking on His footsteps: '**The path of toil** appointed to the dwellers on earth may be hard and wearisome; but it is **honored by the footprints of the Redeemer**, and **he is safe who follows in this sacred way**. By precept and example, **Christ has dignified useful labor**.' CT, 276

treatment for the sin of laziness: 'There is a remedy for indolence, and that is to **throw off sluggishness as a sin that leads to perdition, and go to work**, using with determination and vigor the physical ability that God has given. The only cure for a useless, inefficient life is determined, persevering effort... And while **indolence and drowsiness grieve the Holy Spirit and destroy true godliness**, they also tend to poverty and want. "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand." Proverbs 10:4.' CT 278

the best physical exercise: '**Those who combine useful labor with study have no need of gymnastic exercises**. And **work performed in the open air is tenfold more beneficial to health than in-door labor**. Both the **mechanic** and the **farmer** have physical exercise, yet **the farmer is the healthier of the two**. Nothing short of nature's invigorating air and sunshine will fully meet the demands of the system. **The tiller of the soil finds in his labor all the movements that were ever practiced in the gymnasium**. His movement-room is the open fields. The canopy of heaven is its roof, the solid earth its floor. Here he plows and hoes, sows and reaps. Watch him, as in "haying time" he mows and rakes, pitches and tumbles, lifts and loads, throws off, treads down, and stows away. **These various movements call into action the bones, joints, muscles, sinews, and nerves of the body**. His vigorous exercise causes full, deep, strong inspirations and exhalations, which expand the lungs and purify the blood, sending the warm current of life bounding through arteries and veins. **A farmer who is temperate in all his habits, usually enjoys health. His work is pleasant to him. He has a good appetite. He sleeps well, and may be happy**.' FE 73

need of self education: 'On every hand **parents are neglecting to instruct and train their children for useful labor**. The youth are allowed to grow up in ignorance of the simple and necessary duties. **Those who have been thus unfortunate must awake and take the burden of the matter upon themselves**; if they ever expect to succeed in life they must find incentives to the useful employment of their God-given powers.' CT, 280

• **Contemplation of nature**

'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**.' CT, 335

'Let several families living in a city or village unite and leave the occupations which have taxed them physically and mentally, and take an **excursion into the country**, to the side of a fine lake or to a nice grove, **where the scenery of nature is beautiful**. They should provide themselves with plain, hygienic food, the very best fruits and grains, and spread their table under the shade of some tree or under the canopy of heaven. The ride, the exercise, and the scenery will quicken the appetite, and **they can enjoy a repast which kings might envy**.

On such occasions parents and children should feel free from care, labor, and perplexity. Parents should become children with their children, making everything as pleasant for them as possible. Let the whole day be given to recreation.' CT 347

• **Meetings for praising God's providence and thanksgiving for the prospective rest in Paradise**

‘Would it not be well for us to observe holidays unto God, when we could revive in our minds the **memory of His dealing with us**? Would it not be well to consider His **past blessings**, to remember the **impressive warnings that have come home to our souls**, so that we shall not forget God?’

Shall not the people of God more frequently have **holy convocations** in which to **thank God for His rich blessings**? Shall we not find time in which to praise Christ for His rest, peace, and joy, and make manifest by daily thanksgiving that we appreciate the great sacrifice made in our behalf, that we may be partakers of the divine nature? Shall we not speak of the prospective rest in the Paradise of God, and tell of the honor and glory in store for the servants of Jehovah? "My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places." Isaiah 32:18. We are homeward bound, seeking a better country, even a heavenly.' CT 343

• **Meetings to plan evangelistic programs**

‘Gatherings for social intercourse may be made in the highest degree profitable and instructive when those who meet together have the love of God glowing in their hearts, when they **meet to exchange thoughts in regard to the word of God**, or to **consider methods for advancing His work and doing good to their fellow men**. When nothing is said or done to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, but He is regarded as a welcome guest, then God is honored, and **those who meet together will be refreshed and strengthened**.

"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels." Malachi 3:16, 17.' CT 339

• **Missionary Work**

‘There are plenty of necessary, useful things to do in our world that would make the pleasure amusement exercise almost wholly unnecessary. Brain, bone, and muscle will acquire solidity and strength in using them to a purpose, doing good, hard thinking, and devising plans which shall train them to develop powers of intellect and strength of the physical organs, which will be putting into practical use their God-given talents with which they may glorify God.

It is our duty ever to seek to do good in the use of the muscles and brain God has given to youth, that they may **be useful to others, making their labors lighter, soothing the sorrowing, lifting up the discouraged, speaking words of comfort to the hopeless, turning the minds of the students from fun and frolic** which often carries them beyond the dignity of manhood and womanhood to shame and disgrace. The Lord would have the mind elevated, seeking higher, nobler channels of usefulness.

The same power of exercise of mind and muscle might invent ways and means of altogether a **higher class of exercise, in doing missionary work** which would make them laborers together with God, and would be educating for higher usefulness in the present life, in doing useful work, which is a most essential branch in education. . . .' AH 509

b) Less recommended:

• **Gymnastic exercises:**

‘Gymnastic exercises fill a useful place in many schools, but without careful supervision they are often carried to excess. In the gymnasium many youth, by their attempted feats of strength, have done themselves lifelong injury.' AH 499

• **Simple games:**

‘I do not condemn the simple exercise of playing ball; but this, even in its simplicity, may be overdone.

I shrink always from the almost sure result which follows in the wake of these amusements. It leads to an outlay of means that should be expended in bringing the light of truth to souls that are perishing out of Christ. The amusements and expenditures of means for self-pleasing, which **lead on step**

by step to self-glorifying, and the educating in these **games for pleasure** produce a love and passion for such things that is **not favorable to the perfection of Christian character**.

The way that they have been conducted at the college does not bear the impress of heaven. It does not strengthen the intellect. It **does not refine and purify the character**. There are threads leading out through the habits and customs and worldly practices, and the actors become so engrossed and infatuated that they are **pronounced in heaven lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God**. In the place of the intellect becoming strengthened to do better work as students, to be better qualified as Christians to perform the Christian duties, **the exercise in these games is filling their brains with thoughts that distract the mind from their studies.** . . .

Is the eye single to the glory of God in these games? I know that this is not so. There is a losing sight of God's way and His purpose. The employment of intelligent beings, in probationary time, is superseding God's revealed will and substituting for it the speculations and inventions of the human agent, with Satan by his side to imbue with his spirit. . . . **The Lord God of heaven protests against the burning passion cultivated for supremacy in the games that are so engrossing.**' AH 499-500

'The greatest benefit is not gained from exercise that is taken as play or exercise merely. There is some benefit in being in the fresh air, and also from the exercise of the muscles; but **let the same amount of energy be given to the performance of useful work, and the benefit will be greater.** A feeling of satisfaction will be realized, for such exercise carries with it a sense of helpfulness and the approval of conscience for duty well done.

Students should go forth from our schools with educated efficiency, so that when thrown upon their own resources they will have knowledge which they can use and which is needful to success in life. **Diligent study is essential, so also is diligent hard work. Play is not essential.** Devotion of the physical powers to amusement is not most favorable to a well-balanced mind. If the time employed in physical exercise which step by step leads on to excess were used in working in Christ's lines, the blessing of God would rest upon the worker. The discipline for practical life that is gained by physical labor combined with mental taxation is sweetened by the reflection that it is qualifying mind and body better to perform the work that God designs men to do. The more perfectly the youth understand how to perform the duties of practical life, the greater will be their enjoyment day by day in being of use to others. The mind educated to enjoy useful labor becomes enlarged; through training and discipline it is fitted for usefulness, for it has acquired the knowledge essential to make its possessor a blessing to others.

I cannot find an instance in the life of Christ where He devoted time to play and amusement. He was **the great educator for the present and the future life, yet I have not been able to find one instance where He taught the disciples to engage in amusement in order to gain physical exercise.** The world's Redeemer gives to every man his work and bids him, "Occupy till I come." Luke 19:13. In doing this the heart warms to the enterprise. All the powers of the being are enlisted in the effort to obey. **We have a high and holy calling.** Teachers and students are to be stewards of the grace of Christ, and they are always to be earnest.' CT 308-309

'If in our schools the land were more faithfully cultivated, the buildings more disinterestedly cared for by the students, **the love of sports and amusements, which causes so much perplexity in our schoolwork,** would pass away.' CT 312

'Vigorous exercise the pupils must have. Few evils are more to be dreaded than indolence and aimlessness. Yet the tendency of most athletic sports is a subject of anxious thought to those who have at heart the well-being of the youth. Teachers are troubled as they consider the influence of these sports both on the student's progress in school and on his success in afterlife. **The games that occupy so much of his time are diverting the mind from study. They are not helping to prepare the youth for practical, earnest work in life. Their influence does not tend toward refinement, generosity, or real manliness.**' AH 500

Highly unrecommended for a born again Christian

Short intro:

☛ *Swimming against the stream:*

‘You may see no real danger in taking the first step in frivolity and pleasure seeking and think that when you desire to change your course, you will be able to do right as easily as before you yielded yourselves to do wrong. But this is a mistake. By the choice of evil companions many have been led step by step from the path of virtue into depths of disobedience and dissipation to which at one time they would have thought it impossible for them to sink.

If you truly belong to Christ, you will have opportunities for witnessing for Him. **You will be invited to attend places of amusement**, and then it will be that you will have an opportunity to testify to your Lord. If you are true to Christ then, you will not try to form excuses for your nonattendance, but will **plainly and modestly declare that you are a child of God, and your principles would not allow you to be in a place, even for one occasion, where you could not invite the presence of your Lord.**’ AH 519

☛ *Taken by the worldly wave:*

‘**Satan has been multiplying his snares** in ----; and **professed Christians** who are **superficial** in character and religious experience are **used by the tempter as his decoys**. This class are **always ready for the gatherings for pleasure or sport**, and their influence attracts others. **Young men and women who have tried to be Bible Christians are persuaded to join the party**, and they are drawn into the ring. They do not prayerfully consult the divine standard, to learn what Christ has said in regard to the fruit to be borne on the Christian tree. **They do not discern that these entertainments are really Satan's banquet**, prepared to keep souls from accepting the call to the marriage supper of the Lamb and preventing them from receiving the white robe of character, which is the righteousness of Christ. They become **confused** as to what it is right for them as Christians to do. **They do not want to be thought singular**, and naturally incline to follow the example of others. **Thus they come under the influence of those who have never had the divine touch on heart or mind.** . . .’ CT 340

Forbidden for faithful Christians:

‘The public feeling is that manual labor is degrading, yet men may exert themselves as much as they choose at **cricket, baseball**, or in **pugilistic contests**, without being regarded as degraded. **Satan is delighted** when he sees human beings using their physical and mental powers in that which does not educate, which is not useful, which does not help them to be a blessing to those who need their help. While the youth are becoming expert in games that are of no real value to themselves or to others, **Satan is playing the game of life for their souls**, taking from them the talents that God has given them, and placing in their stead his own evil attributes. It is his effort to lead men to ignore God. He seeks to engross and absorb the mind so completely that God will find no place in the thoughts. He does not wish people to have a knowledge of their Maker, and he is well pleased if he can set in operation **games and theatrical performances that will so confuse the senses of the youth that God and heaven will be forgotten.**’ CT 274

‘**Card playing should be prohibited.** The associations and tendencies are dangerous. . . . There is nothing in such amusements beneficial to soul or body. There is nothing to strengthen the intellect, nothing to store it with valuable ideas for future use. The conversation is often upon trivial and degrading subjects. . . .

Expertness in handling cards often leads to a desire to put his knowledge and tact to some use for personal benefit. A small sum is staked, and then a larger, until a **thirst for gaming** is acquired, which leads to certain **ruin**. How many has this pernicious amusement led to every sinful practice, to poverty, to prison, to murder, and to the gallows! And yet many parents do not see the terrible gulf of ruin that is yawning for our youth.’ CT 334

‘There are amusements, such as **dancing, card playing, chess, checkers**, etc., which we cannot approve, because **Heaven condemns them**. These amusements **open the door for great evil**. 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**. All such plays **should be condemned by Christians**, and something perfectly harmless should be substituted in their place.' CT 346

'In many religious families **dancing and card playing** are made a parlor pastime. It is urged that these are quiet home amusements, which may be safely enjoyed under the parental eye. But a love for these exciting pleasures is thus cultivated, and that which was considered harmless at home will not long be regarded dangerous abroad. It is yet to be ascertained that there is any good to be obtained from these amusements. **They do not give vigor to the body nor rest to the mind**. They do not implant in the soul one virtuous or holy sentiment. On the contrary, **they destroy all relish for serious thought and for religious services**. It is true that there is a wide contrast between the better class of select parties and the promiscuous and degraded assemblies of the low dance house. Yet all are steps in the path of dissipation.' AH 516

'Among the most dangerous resorts for pleasure is the **theater**. Instead of being a school for morality and virtue, as is so often claimed, it is **the very hotbed of immorality**. Vicious habits and sinful propensities are strengthened and confirmed by these entertainments. **Low songs, lewd gestures, expressions, and attitudes, deprave the imagination and debase the morals**. Every youth who habitually attends such exhibitions will be corrupted in principle. There is no influence in our land more powerful to poison the imagination, to destroy religious impressions, and to blunt the relish for the tranquil pleasures and sober realities of life than theatrical amusements. The love for these scenes increases with every indulgence, as the desire for intoxicating drink strengthens with its use. **The only safe course is to shun the theater, the circus, and every other questionable place of amusement.**' CT 334

'Many of the amusements popular in the world today, even with those who claim to be Christians, tend to the same end as did those of the heathen. There are indeed few among them that Satan does not turn to account in destroying souls. Through the **drama** he has worked for ages to excite passion and glorify vice. The **opera**, with its fascinating display and bewildering music, the masquerade, the dance, the card table, Satan employs to break down the barriers of principle and **open the door to sensual indulgence**. In every gathering for pleasure where pride is fostered or appetite indulged, where one is led to forget God and lose sight of eternal interests, there Satan is binding his chains about the soul.' AH 515

'But there has been a class of social gatherings in-- of an entirely different character, **parties of pleasure** that have been a **disgrace to our institutions and to the church**. They encourage pride of dress, pride of appearance, self-gratification, hilarity, and trifling. Satan is entertained as an honored guest and takes possession of those who patronize these gatherings.

A view of one such company was presented to me, where were assembled those who profess to believe the truth. One was seated at the instrument of music, and **such songs were poured forth as made the watching angels weep**. There was mirth, there was coarse laughter, there was abundance of enthusiasm, and a kind of inspiration; but **the joy was such as Satan only is able to create**. This is an enthusiasm and infatuation of which all who love God will be ashamed. It **prepares the participants for unholy thought and action**. I have reason to think that some who were engaged in that scene heartily repented of the shameful performance.

Many such gatherings have been presented to me. I have seen the gaiety, the display in dress, the personal adornment. All want to be thought brilliant and give themselves up to **hilarity, foolish jesting, cheap, coarse flattery, and uproarious laughter**. The eyes sparkle, the cheek is flushed, conscience sleeps. With eating and drinking and merrymaking, **they do their best to forget God**. The scene of pleasure is their paradise. And Heaven is looking on, seeing and hearing all. . . .

The tenor of the conversation reveals the treasure of the heart. The cheap, common talk, the words of flattery, the foolish witticism, spoken to create a laugh, are the merchandise of Satan, and all who indulge in this talk are trading in his goods. Impressions are made upon those who hear these things, similar to that made upon Herod when the daughter of Herodias danced before him. All these transactions are **recorded in the books of heaven**, and at the last great day they will appear in their true light before the guilty ones. Then all will discern in them the alluring, deceptive workings of the devil, to lead them into the broad road and the wide gate that opens to their ruin.' CT 339-340

'The true Christian will not desire to enter any place of amusement or engage in any diversion upon which he cannot ask the blessing of God. He will not be found at the **theater, the billiard hall, or**

the **bowling saloon**. He will not unite with the gay **waltzers** or indulge in any other bewitching pleasure that will banish Christ from the mind.

To those who plead for these diversions we answer, We cannot indulge in them in the name of Jesus of Nazareth. The blessing of God would not be invoked upon the hour spent at the theater or in the dance. **No Christian would wish to meet death in such a place. No one would wish to be found there when Christ shall come.**' AH 515-516

'Be sober, be vigilant" [not in kicking **football** and in educating yourselves in the objectionable games which ought to make every Christian blush with mortification at the afterthoughts] "be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Yes, **he is on your playground watching your amusements**, catching every soul that he finds off his guard, sowing his seeds in human minds, and controlling the human intellect. For Christ's sake call a halt at the Battle Creek College, and consider the after-workings upon the heart and the character and principles, of these **amusements copied after the fashion of other schools. You have been steadily progressing in the ways of the Gentiles, and not after the example of Jesus Christ.** Satan is on the schoolground; he is present in every exercise in the schoolroom. The students that have had their minds deeply **excited in their games**, are **not in the best condition to receive the instruction, the counsel, the reproof, most essential for them in this life and for the future immortal life.**' FE 225

'What force of powers is put into your games of **football** and your other **inventions after the way of the Gentiles** -- exercises which **bleed no one!** Just put the same powers into exercise in doing useful labor, and would not your record be more pleasing to meet in the great day of God?

Whatever is done under the sanctified stimulus of Christian obligation, because you are stewards in trust of talents to use to be a blessing to yourself and to others, gives you substantial satisfaction; for all is done to the glory of God. **I cannot find an instance in the life of Christ where He devoted time to play and amusement.** He was the great Educator for the present and the future life. I have not been able to find one instance where He educated His disciples to engage in amusement of **football** or **pugilistic games**, to obtain physical exercise, or in **theatrical performances**; and yet **Christ was our pattern in all things.** Christ, the world's Redeemer, gave to every man his work and bids them "occupy till I come." FE 229

'These poor souls are engaged in a wild chase after worldly pleasure and earthly riches. They have no knowledge of anything more desirable. But **games, theaters, horse races**, will not satisfy the soul. Human beings were not created to be satisfied in this way, to spend their money for that which is not bread.' Ev 267

'How many parents are lamenting the fact that they cannot keep their children at home, that they have no love for home! At an early age they have a desire for the company of strangers; and as soon as they are old enough, they break away from that which appears to them to be bondage and unreasonable restraint and will neither heed a mother's prayers nor a father's counsels. Investigation would generally reveal that **the sin lay at the door of the parents. They have not made home what it ought to be-- attractive, pleasant, radiant with the sunshine of kind words, pleasant looks, and true love.**

The secret of saving your children lies in making your home lovely and attractive. Indulgence in parents will not bind the children to God nor to home; but a firm, godly influence to properly train and educate the mind would save many children from ruin.

It is the duty of parents to watch the going out and the coming in of their children. They should encourage them and present inducements before them which will attract them at home and lead them to see that their parents are interested for them. They should make home pleasant and cheerful.' AH 529-530

'In April, 1900, a holiday was appointed at the Avondale school for Christian workers. The program for the day provided for a meeting in the chapel in the morning, at which I and others addressed the students, calling their attention to what God had wrought in the building up of this school, and to their privilege and opportunities as students.

After the meeting, the remainder of the day was spent by the students in various **games and sports**, some of which were **frivolous, rude, and grotesque.**

During the following night I seemed to be witnessing the performances of the afternoon. The scene was clearly laid out before me, and I was given a message for the manager and teachers of the school.

I was shown that **in the amusements carried on at the school that afternoon the enemy gained a victory**, and teachers were weighed in the balances and found wanting. I was greatly distressed and burdened to think that those standing in responsible positions should open the door and, as it were, invite the enemy in; for this they did in permitting the exhibitions that took place. As teachers, they should have stood firm against giving place to the enemy in any such line. By what they permitted they marred their record and **grieved the Spirit of God**. The students were encouraged in a course the effects of which were not easily effaced. There is no end to the path of **vain amusements**, and every step taken in it is a step in a path which Christ has not traveled.

This introduction of wrong plans was the very thing that should have been jealously guarded against. The Avondale school was established, **not to be like the schools of the world**, but, as God revealed, to be a pattern school. And since it was to be a pattern school, those in charge of it should have perfected everything after God's plan, discarding all that was not in harmony with His will. **Had their eyes been anointed with the heavenly eyesalve, they would have realized that they could not permit the exhibition that took place that afternoon, without dishonoring God.**

On Wednesday morning when I spoke to the students and to the others who had assembled, the words that the Lord gave me to speak, **I did not know anything of what was to take place afterward**; for no intimation of it had come to me. How could those at the head of the school harmonize with the words spoken the proceedings that followed, which were of a character to make of no effect the instruction that had just come to them from God? If their perceptions had not been greatly beclouded, they would have understood this instruction as rebuking all such proceedings.

I felt deeply the importance of the words that the Lord gave me at this time for teachers and students. This instruction presented before the students duties of the highest order; and to efface by the amusements afterward entered into, the good impressions made, was virtually saying, "**We want not Thy way, O God; we want our own way**; we want to follow our own wisdom."

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**.

There were more than visible spectators on the ground. **Satan and his angels were there**, making impressions on human minds. **Angels of God**, who minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, **were also present, not to approve, but to disapprove**. They were **ashamed** that such an exhibition should be given by the professed children of God. The forces of the enemy gained a decided victory, and God was dishonored. He who gave His life to refine, ennoble, and sanctify human beings was grieved at the performance.

Hearing a voice, I turned to see who spoke to me. Then with dignity and solemnity One said, "Is this the celebration for the anniversary of the opening of the school? Is this the gratitude offering you present to God for the blessings He has given you? The world could render as acceptable an offering on this memorial occasion. The teachers are making the same mistake that has been made over and over again. They should learn wisdom from the experiences of the past. **The careless, godless world can offer an abundance of such offerings as these, in a much more acceptable manner.**"

Turning to the teachers, He said, "You have made a mistake the effects of which it will be hard to efface. **The Lord God of Israel is not glorified in the school. If at this time the Lord should permit your life to end, many would be lost, eternally separated from God and the righteous.**"

These things are a repetition of the course of Aaron, when at the foot of Sinai he allowed the first beginning of wrong by permitting a spirit of reveling and commonness to come into the camp of Israel. Moses was in the mount with God, and Aaron had been left in charge. He showed his weakness by not standing firmly against the propositions of the people. He could have exercised his authority to hold the congregation back from wrong-doing; but just as in his home he failed with his children, so he showed the same defective administration in his management of Israel. His weakness as a general was seen in his

desire to please the people, even at the sacrifice of principle. He lost his power of command at the very first permission that he gave which allowed them to go contrary to God's commands in the least particular. And as a result the spirit of idolatry came in, and the current set in motion could not be stayed until stern and decisive measures had been taken.

It took time and a vast amount of labor and sorrow to wipe out the influence of the proceedings at the Avondale school on that Wednesday afternoon. But the experience was a lesson that helped those in charge of the school to realize the tendency of such amusements.

What an exhibition was this to be reported by the students to their distant friends and acquaintances! **It was a witness that showed, not what God has accomplished in the school, but what Satan had accomplished.** Serious is the consequence of even one such departure from the instruction that God has given concerning our schools. Once the barriers are broken down, the advance of the enemy will be marked, unless the Lord shall humble hearts and convert minds.' CT 348-352

Leading Principles For Choosing Our Recreation

'In early ages, with the **people who were under God's direction**, life was simple. They **lived close to the heart of nature. Their children shared in the labor of the parents and studied the beauties and mysteries of nature's treasure house.** And in the quiet of field and wood they pondered those mighty truths handed down as a sacred trust from generation to generation. **Such training produced strong men.**

In this age life has become artificial, and men have degenerated. While we may not return fully to the simple habits of those early times, we may learn from them lessons that will make our seasons of recreation what the name implies--seasons of true upbuilding for body and mind and soul.' AH 501

'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?' CT 333

'**Other athletic games**, though not so brutalizing, are scarcely less objectionable because of the excess to which they are carried. **They stimulate the love of pleasure and excitement**, thus fostering a **distaste for useful labor**, a disposition to shun practical duties and responsibilities. **They tend to destroy a relish for life's sober realities** and its tranquil enjoyments. Thus the door is opened to dissipation and lawlessness with their terrible results.' AH 500

'In the place of providing diversions that merely amuse, arrangements should be made for **exercises that will be productive of good.** Students are sent to our schools to receive an education that will enable them to go forth as workers in God's cause. **Satan would lead them to believe that amusements are necessary to physical health;** but the Lord has declared that **the better way** is for them to **get physical exercise through manual training** and by letting **useful employment take the place of selfish pleasure.** The desire for amusement, if indulged, soon develops a dislike for useful, healthful exercise of body and mind such as will make students efficient in helping themselves and others.' CT 354

'Young men should remember that they are accountable for all the privileges they have enjoyed, for the improvement of their time, and for the right use of their abilities. They may inquire, Shall we have no amusement or recreation? Shall we work, work, work, without any variation?

A change from physical labor that has taxed the strength severely may be very necessary for a time, that they may again engage in labor, putting forth exertion with greater success. But **entire rest may not be necessary** or even be attended with the best results so far as their physical strength is concerned. They need not, even when weary with one kind of labor, trifle away their precious moments. They may then **seek to do something not so exhausting but which will be a blessing to their mother and sisters.** In lightening their cares by taking upon themselves the roughest burdens they have to bear, they can find that amusement which springs from principle and which will yield them true happiness, and their time will not be spent in trifling or in selfish indulgence. Their time may be ever employed to advantage, and they be **constantly refreshed with variation**, and yet be redeeming the time so that every moment will tell with good account to someone.

Many claim that it is necessary for the preservation of physical health to indulge in selfish amusement. It is true that **change is required for the best development of the body**, for mind and body are refreshed and invigorated by change; but this object is **not gained by indulgence in foolish amusements, to the neglect of daily duties which the youth should be required to do.**' AH 507-508

'While we are seeking to refresh our spirits and invigorate our bodies we are required of God to **use all our powers at all times to the best purpose.** We can, and should, conduct our recreations in such a manner that we shall be **better fitted for the more successful discharge of the duties** devolving upon us, and our influence will be more beneficial upon those with whom we associate. We can return from such occasions to our homes **improved in mind and refreshed in body**, and prepared to engage in the work anew with better hope and better courage.

We are of that class who believe that it is our privilege every day of our lives to glorify God upon the earth; that we are not to live in this world merely for our own amusement, merely to please ourselves. **We are here to benefit humanity** and to be a blessing to society; and if we let our minds run in that low channel that many who are seeking only vanity and folly permit their minds to run in, how can we be a benefit to our race and generation? how can we be a blessing to society around us? We cannot innocently indulge in any amusement which will unfit us for the more faithful discharge of ordinary duties.

Between the associations of the followers of Christ for Christian recreation, and worldly gatherings for pleasure and amusement, will exist a marked contrast. Instead of prayer and the mentioning of Christ and sacred things, will be heard from the lips of worldlings the silly laugh and the trifling conversation. The idea is to have a general high time. Their amusements commence in folly and end in vanity. Our gatherings should be so conducted, and we should so conduct ourselves, that when we return to our homes we can have **a conscience void of offense toward God and man**; a consciousness that we have not wounded or injured in any manner those with whom we have been associated, or had an injurious influence over them.' CT 336

'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 recreations 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.' CT 342

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Additional notes

Jerusalem or Athens?

The two famous ancient cities, **Jerusalem** and **Athens**, are a powerful symbol for two choices in the spiritual life. Most of the Jews understood that between Jerusalem and Athens, between their God and the Greek gods, there is no connection. For this reason most of them they rejected the Greek and Roman sports. There were times when they were so fascinated by these worldly attractions that even the priests lost their spiritual discernment and neglected their duties. In the following article, taken from the Jewish Encyclopedia, you can read more details about the conflict of the two philosophies: **Jerusalem**, representing God's view about life in general and recreation in particular, based on the written revelation of the Holy Scriptures, and **Athens**, representing the pagan philosophy, whose source was the human

mind with its limitations and deceptions. You can make yourselves many parallels between what happened in the history of the Jews and what happens today in the Christian churches. The conflict between the two philosophies is not only in the **recreation** field but also in other areas of the Christian life: **education, arts (music, literature, painting), dress and adornment, diet, worship, morality, job choice and business, finances, family, medical treatments.** And it represents the bigger battle between Jesus and Satan, a battle for our souls, for now and eternity.

A Gymnasium at Jerusalem. (quoted from Jewish Encyclopedia)

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/2086-athletes-athletics-and-field-sports>

The first attempt in this direction seems to have been made by Menelaus, brother of Jason, the high priest (170 B.C.), who, in order that he might ingratiate himself with the king Antiochus Epiphanes, established a gymnasium, modeled on the Greek plan, close to the Temple at Jerusalem, where men and boys might practise wrestling, boxing, ball-playing, throwing, slinging, archery, jumping, riding, swimming, diving, etc., under the supervision of a gymnasiarch.

The opposition of the conservative element among the Jews to the gymnasium became, however, so strenuous that devout Jews began to look upon the exercises with horror, especially because most of them were practised "in puris naturalibus," and the Covenant of Abraham had become an object of derision. Nevertheless, **for a time at least, the rage for Athletics spread even to the priests, who, Hamburger says ("R. B. T." ii. 436, 1220), neglected spiritual duties to take part in gymnastics.** Indeed, so far did the contestants go that it is said they wore the broad-brimmed petasus of Hermes, the pagan god of gymnastic science, as an emblem of their prowess. Much of the strength of the Hasmonean rebellion has been attributed to the bitter opposition which the introduction of the gymnasium in Jerusalem brought about. "Pugilism," says Hamburger (*l.c.*), "has perhaps never exercised a greater influence in the development of spiritual life than it did at Jerusalem."

The Hasmonean rising wiped out every vestige of Hellenism, but scarcely a century passed before the influence of the Romans was felt; instead, however, of the gymnasium, the circus was introduced, and with it the gladiatorial contests, which no doubt offended the religious feelings of the Jews, for the Rabbis prohibited attendance at both circus and theater (Targ. Yer. Deut. xxviii. 19; Pesik., ed. Buber, 119b; Lam. R. 36c; 'Ab. Zarah 18b). Indeed, a rabbi of the first century decreed that any one who attended a circus was a murderer (Yer. 'Ab. Zarah 40a).

Herod Reintroduces Olympic Games.

Herod the Great was responsible for the reintroduction of Athletics to Jewish life; "for, in the first place, he appointed solemn games to be celebrated every fifth year in honor of Cæsar, and **built a theater at Jerusalem, as also a very great amphitheater in the plain**" (Josephus, "Ant." xv. 8, § 1). These were both costly works, erected by Herod for the purpose of securing the good-will of Emperor Augustus (7 B.C.); but even though Herod strove to dazzle the Jews by the magnificence of the sports, and though he appointed every fifth year for the celebration of Olympic games, yet these **were "looked on by the sober Jews as heathenish sports, and tending not only to corrupt the manners of the Jewish nation, and to bring them in love with paganish idolatry and paganish conduct of life, but to the dissolution of the law of Moses, and accordingly were greatly and justly condemned by them"** (Josephus, *ib.*, note).

But this was not the universal opinion. Some rabbis, who considered Athletics as a part of "Greek wisdom," learned to appreciate the value of gymnastic exercises for the physical development of Jewish youth; and among them was Gamaliel II., the patriarch, who favored the introduction of the gymnasium as a means of preparing the Jews for their intercourse with the Roman rulers (Soṭah 49b; B. Ḳ. 83a). Notwithstanding the fact that some looked on Athletics with favor, and that amphitheaters had been built at Jericho, Tiberias, and Taricheæ, shortly **after the Roman wars the sports became repugnant to the Jews, and ultimately they were no longer followed.**

Olympic Games (info from wikipedia)

The ancient Olympic Games (Ancient Greek: τὰ Ὀλύμπια – ta Olympia) were a series of athletic competitions among representatives of various city-states of Ancient Greece. They were **held in honor of Zeus**, and the Greeks gave them a mythological origin. Historical records indicate that they began in 776 BC in Olympia. They continued to be celebrated when Greece came under Roman rule, until **the emperor Theodosius I suppressed them in 394 AD as part of the campaign to impose Christianity as the state**

religion of Rome. The games were usually held every four years, or olympiad, which became a unit of time in historical chronologies.

The games were held to be one of the two central rituals in Ancient Greece, the other being the much older religious festival, the Eleusinian Mysteries.

The games started in Olympia, Greece, in a sanctuary site for the Greek deities near the towns of Elis and Pisa (both in Elis on the peninsula of Peloponnesos). **The first games began as an annual foot race of young women in competition for the position of the priestess for the goddess, Hera** and a second race was instituted for a consort for the priestess who would participate in the religious traditions at the temple.

The Heraea Games, the first recorded competition for women in the Olympic Stadium, were held as early as the sixth century BC. It originally consisted of foot races only, as did the competition for males. Some texts, including Pausanias's Description of Greece, c. AD 175, state that Hippodameia gathered a group known as the "Sixteen Women" and made them administrators of the Heraea Games, out of gratitude for her marriage to Pelops. Other texts related to the Elis and Pisa conflict indicate that the "Sixteen Women" were peacemakers from Pisa and Elis and, because of their political competence, became administrators of the Heraea. **Being the consort of Hera in Classical Greek mythology, Zeus was the father of the deities in the pantheon of that era.** The Sanctuary of Zeus in Olympia housed a 13-metre-high (43 ft) statue in ivory and gold of Zeus that had been sculpted by Phidias circa 445 BC. This statue was one of the ancient Seven Wonders of the World. **By the time of the Classical Greek culture, in the fifth and fourth centuries BC, the games were restricted to male participants.**

The Greek tradition of **athletic nudity** was introduced in 720 BC, either by the Spartans or by the Megarian Orsippus, and this was adopted early in the Olympics as well.

Several groups fought over control of the sanctuary at Olympia, and hence the games, for prestige and political advantage. Pausanias later writes that in 668 BC, Pheidon of Argos was commissioned by the town of Pisa to capture the sanctuary from the town of Elis, which he did and then personally controlled the games for that year. The next year, Elis regained control.

The Olympic Games were part of the Panhellenic Games, four separate games held at two- or four-year intervals, but arranged so that there was at least one set of games every year. The Olympic Games were more important and more prestigious than the Pythian, Nemean, and Isthmian Games.

Finally, the Olympic Games were suppressed, either by Theodosius I in AD 393 or his grandson Theodosius II in AD 435,[18] as part of the campaign to impose Christianity as a state religion.

Conclusion

„While I was praying at the family altar, the Holy Ghost fell upon me, and I seemed to be rising higher and higher, **far above the dark world.** *I turned to look for the Advent people in the world, but could not find them,* when a voice said to me, "Look again, and look a little higher." At this I raised my eyes, and saw **a straight and narrow path, cast up high above the world.** On this path the Advent people were traveling to the city, which was at the farther end of the path." EW 14

Those who really want to arrive in the heavenly city, in the New Jerusalem, have to place their feet on that straight and narrow path, which is not in the world, but **high above the world.** What do you want to choose: Jerusalem or Athens?

„I call heaven and earth to record this day against you,
that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing:
therefore **choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.**" Deuteronomy 30:19