

**PORTION OF ELLEN WHITE'S LETTER ADDRESSED TO A COLLEGE STUDENT,
WRITTEN FROM NAPIER, NEW ZEALAND, OCTOBER 2, 1893¹**

Educate men and women to bring up their children free from false, fashionable practices, to teach them to be useful. The daughters should be educated under the mothers to do useful labor, not merely indoor labor but out-of-door labor as well. Mothers could also train the sons, to a certain age, to do useful things indoors and out-of-doors.

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.

This was plainly laid out before our health institution and our college as the forcible reason why they should be established among us; but as it was in the days of Noah and Lot, so it is in our time. Men have sought out many inventions and have widely departed from God's purposes and His ways.

The Danger in Sports

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.

¹ Letter 17a, 1893

The More Excellent Way

Now 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.

There are many ways in which the youth can be putting to usury the talents entrusted to them of God, to build up the work and cause of God, not to please themselves but to glorify God. The Majesty of heaven, the King of glory, made the infinite sacrifice in coming to our world in order that He might elevate and ennoble humanity. He was a persevering, diligent worker. We read, He "went about doing good."

Is not this the work that every youth should be seeking to do, working in Christ's lines? You have Christ's help. The ideas of the students will broaden. They will be far-reaching, and the powers of usefulness, even in your student's life, will be continually growing. The arms, the hands, which God has given, are to be used in doing good which shall bear the signet of heaven, that you can at last hear the "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

I do not think, from the way the matter has been presented to me, that your ball games are so conducted that the record of the students will be of that character, in the estimation of Him who weighs actions, that will bring a reward to the actors.

Missionary Work for Students

Let there be a company formed somewhat after the plan of the Christian Endeavor order, and see what can be done by each accountable human agent, in watching and improving opportunities to do work for the Master. He has a vineyard in which everyone can perform good work. Suffering humanity needs help everywhere. The students may win their way to hearts, by speaking words in season, by doing favors for those who need even physical labor. This will not degrade any one of you, and it will bring a consciousness of the approval of God. It will be putting the talents, entrusted to you for wise improvement, to the exchangers. It will increase them by trading upon them.

Beneficial Methods of Exercise

There are healthful methods of exercise that may be planned which will be beneficial to both soul and body. There is a great work to be done and it is essential that every responsible agent shall educate himself to do this work acceptably to God. There is much for all to learn, and there cannot be invented a better use for brain, bone, and muscle than to accept the wisdom of God in doing good, and adopting some human device for remedying the existing evils of this profligate, extravagant age.

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 Dangers to Spirituality

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 purposes. 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. Keep the Word of God close by your side. Guided by it you will be wise, you will be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. We must in these last days watch unto prayer. The Lord God of heaven protests against the burning passion cultivated for supremacy in the games that are so engrossing.

In no time in your life have you been more critically placed than you are while prosecuting your medical studies in Ann Arbor. Satan is watching every avenue whereby he can take advantage to enter with his specious temptations to spoil the soul. You will meet with infidel sentiments in very intelligent men who call themselves Christians. Cling to the wisdom which is revealed to you in the Word of God, for it will bind you, if you obey its teachings, to the throne of God.

I am fearful now, more than at any other period of time, that Christians, as individuals, may separate from God because they lose sight of the Pattern Jesus Christ, and think it is safe to walk in the sparks of their own kindling, deceiving the soul with thinking it is the way of the Lord.