

Harmful Popular Amusements



*“Thy Word
Is
Faith”*



The Apostolic Faith

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U.S.A.

HARMFUL POPULAR AMUSEMENTS

IN answer to many inquiries asking: What may one do for recreation and be a Christian? we are giving a short survey of facts which concern practical Christian conduct and Christian principles. That our standard of Christian conduct coincides with God's standard can be determined only by the plumb line of God's Word. God's Word is the authority to which we are held responsible.

“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” (I John 2:15). Scripture teaches us that the heart cannot be enthralled with the pleasures of the world and at the same time please God.

Does It Edify?

One should ask himself with regard to participating in any amusement: Will it destroy or in any measure weaken my character as a Christian, or place a stumbling block in the way of others? Is it edifying? Who are my associates?

Paul, the great soul-winner, said: “All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not” (I Corinthians 10:23).

The mother of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, said: “Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, increases the strength and authority of your body over your mind – that thing is wrong.”

Motion Pictures

The world today is demanding more and more thrills. And some contend that the Church should use the popular amusements to increase its appeal. But can we use Satan’s tools to build the Kingdom of God? The purpose of Satan is to seduce men into disobedience and rebellion against God’s will. And so clever are the means used that many fail to discern the spiritual danger until disaster comes.

When the motion pictures were introduced around the turn of the past century, the innovation was hailed as a boon to education and edification – as indeed it could have been. Leading educators urged the use of the motion pictures in the schools. The disappointment comes in the fact that the movies have become educators also in crime and immorality, and the effect of this wrong kind of education is where the evil lies.

Indicative that still worse is to be found on the inside, the billboards on the outside of most theaters, together with screaming headlined advertisements, display the debasing pictures of

horrible murders, illicit love scenes, indecent exposures of the body, which appeal to the sordid and base in humanity.

It is to be deplored also that many of the lowest grade of American movies are sent to other countries, giving a perverted presentation of moral standards, which must do immeasurable harm in those countries where they are accepted, oftentimes, as portraying our civilization.

Disillusionment

Lured by the bait of a fabulous salary and a glamorous career, young women by the hundreds have been led into the motion-picture industry only to suffer disillusionment, wrecked hopes, and the danger of wrecked lives. An actress, after four years of the profession, was assigned to a sanatorium on account of a mental and physical breakdown after a drunken debauch. Prior to this she made the statement: "Hollywood is a mad-house. It consumes ambitious youngsters. . . . ideas. . . . Hollywood concerns itself over two things only – clothes and make-up. It lets the real essentials go overboard." Can a Christian dare to secure his entertainment at the price of a lost soul?

Demoralizing Influence

Although the Bible forbids divorce and remarriage (Matthew 19:9; Luke 16:18), actors and

actresses seem to think nothing of having from two to five living wives or husbands – and these are the idols to whom our 100 million people are paying homage and copying in dress, manners, and morals. And the sin of divorce and remarriage is spreading as a cancer into the vitals of the nation.

Today we are seeing a large part of a movie-mad generation paying for pleasure with perverted consciences and criminal tendencies. The whole technique of the criminal world is displayed to the impressionable minds of our youth. They go forth to put it into action – and prisons are overcrowded with boys under 21. Electric chairs and lethal chambers end the young criminal's life.

A group of English schoolteachers summarized the effects of pictures on children as: "Rather lowering in moral sense"; causes them to "think less of cruelty, lying, dissipation, and theft; children who attend picture shows derive a thirst for pleasure and amusement, and some actually steal to get money for admission."

Today television is adding to the demoralization of our youth. A United States Senator stated, "Never has a generation of impressionable youngsters been instructed in the best ways to commit murder, mayhem, and bank robbery as demonstrably as this one has on television."

Evils of the Stage

It is self-evident that life represented by the stage is artificial and unnatural, and therefore gives an unhealthy view of life. A dramatic critic said, "The stage life, according to my experience, has a tendency to deaden the finer feelings, to crush the inner nature of men and women, and to substitute artificiality and hollowness for sincerity and truth, and mind you, I speak from an intimate experience of the stage extending over thirty-seven years."

An actor frankly admitted, "The immorality of the stage is appalling."

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

"Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

"Envy, 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" (Galatians 5:19-21).

Dancing

Many go into dancing with the idea that it gives them grace and charm; that it will be an asset in company; will make one popular; and so on. Well, that depends, of course, upon what kind of company one enjoys, and what are the personal

qualifications which appeal to one. The company of the worldly, the profane, the drinker, the immodest, the immoral, will doubtless be found in the dance hall.

If charm will compensate one for having lost the grace of God, if the grace and glamor of the flesh mean more to one than the simplicity and serenity of Christian qualities, perhaps one can find fleeting satisfaction in the atmosphere and environment of the dance hall. Much of the delinquency of youth takes place after dancing or attendance at the movies.

Some will say, "I would not think of attending a public dance, but I see no harm in the home dance and the select crowd." And this brings us to the scrutiny of the dance in itself. The fact is that dancing gives postures that ordinarily would not be considered proper. Even in the so-called select parties, dancing permits a familiarity which would not be allowed in society elsewhere. Dancers pictured in newspapers and magazines are almost always shown in immodest dress. And today drinking and dancing go hand in hand in the home, and schools are giving dancing much time in their curriculum.

And there is also a much darker picture that could be truthfully painted of the dance evil. Young people by the thousands have attributed their

downfall to the dance. It has been the testimony of hundreds in houses of correction that the dance was the beginning of their forsaking the path of virtuous living. Physicians have found that dancing has harmful moral effects.

Wherever indulged in, the dance is dangerous and takes one past the "stoplight" into the wrong lane, where can be found the ghosts of those who were once the "pure and undefiled." That path has nothing in common with the "straight and narrow" way. And the end thereof "are the ways of death."

Drinking

At least 6,500,000 Americans are excessive drinkers. Probably most of them started by drinking a "social beer" or two that they said "would not hurt anybody," and said that they "could stop" if they wanted to. But most of them apparently never wanted to stop, and very likely could not have stopped even if they wanted to.

Night clubs and cocktails lounges, with drinking and dancing, have become the degrading haunts of pleasure for young and old. As a result of the great increase in an indulgence in liquor, alcoholism is spreading until it is developing into a "Number One" menace to health and character.

A hospital doctor in Washington, D. C., states: "We now have alcoholism as the greatest public-

health problem of the present time which is not being systematically attacked.”

The national president of the W.C.T.U. asserts that drink “disrupts the family life, . . . causes neglect, poverty, and unhealthy living conditions – and yet we continue to legalize a traffic that costs so much in human, social, and financial values. Without alcohol there could be no alcoholism.”

A nationally known expert says that more than 50 per cent of the nation’s crime may be traced to alcohol. Interviews with 200 inmates admitted to a state penitentiary revealed the following facts: Of the 200 inmates interviewed, 189 acknowledged they drank alcoholic beverages; 95 of them claimed to have been under the influence of liquor when they committed their offenses; 25 said they had been drinking just prior to the offenses; 41 definitely blamed drink for their troubles; and others admitted that alcohol was somehow involved in the crimes of which they had been convicted.

Skating Rinks

Skating, in itself an innocent recreation, is now carried on under influences that are so detrimental to morality that the skating rink is now classed on a par with the dance hall. Many skaters now perform and dress most immodestly and entirely out of

keeping with Christian standards. The whole atmosphere is contaminated with the same harmful influence that accompanies the public dance.

Billiards and Bowling

The billiard table and the bowling alley have contributed a large share to the lust for drinking and for gambling. The company and the language of those who spend most of their time and money at the billiard table and in the bowling alley are not likely to be desirable or uplifting. Men rescued from lives of depravity testify to the lure and enslavement of those places.

Harmful amusements include the game of cards, the movies, television, the dancing parties, the pool halls, the cocktail parties, public skating rinks, and the night clubs – these are used of Satan to ruin souls.

Juvenile Delinquency

Our FBI Director has clearly broadcast the statement that the major evil which faces our nation today is juvenile delinquency. He called on everybody to make it his business to help save the youth of our country from becoming criminals and moral delinquents. Whatever amusements contribute to the increase of juvenile delinquency can be nothing less than criminal.

Return to God Our Greatest Need

The FBI Director, speaking of the appalling increase in juvenile delinquency, said: **“What we need is a return to God.”** He told his hearers: “We must clean up democracy at home while watching for threats to it from abroad. If every home awakened to its responsibilities overnight, there would be a renaissance of that virile, indomitable spirit which is found in free, God-loving peoples.”

A famous surgeon and biologist of this day stated: “Occupation of leisure time with interminable talk, card-playing, dancing, movie-going, stupefies the intelligence. How are we to escape the harmful influences of the world today?”

The answer to the scientist’s question is found in the FBI Director’s statement: “What we need is a return to God, more specifically, a return to the practice of religion.” Without doubt, America’s greatest need is faith in God and obedience to His Word.