

Drama and the SDA Church:

Appendix 8

Youth Instructor

October 9, 1902

Education is but a preparation of the physical, intellectual, and spiritual powers for the best performance of all the duties of life. The powers of endurance, and the strength and activity of the brain, are lessened or increased by the way in which they are employed. The mind should be so disciplined that all its powers will be symmetrically developed.

Many youth are eager for books **[and dramas]**. They desire to read **[view]** everything that they can obtain. Let them take heed what they read **[view]** as well as what they hear. I have been instructed that they are in the greatest danger of being corrupted by improper reading **[viewing]**. Satan has a thousand ways of unsettling the minds of youth. They can not safely be off guard for a moment. They must set a watch upon their minds, that they may not be allured by the enemy's temptations.

Satan knows that to a great degree the mind is affected by that upon which it feeds. He is seeking to lead both the youth **and those of mature age** to read **[view]** story-books, tales, and other literature **[movies, movies, movies]**. The readers **[viewers]** of such literature **[drama]** become unfitted for the duties lying before them. They live an unreal life, and have no desire to search the Scriptures, to feed upon the heavenly manna. The mind that needs strengthening is enfeebled, and loses its power to study the great truths that relate to the mission and work of Christ, —truths that would fortify the mind, awaken the imagination, and kindle a strong, earnest desire to overcome as Christ overcame.

Could a large share of the books **[drama]** published **[produced]** be consumed, a plague would be stayed that is doing a fearful work upon mind and heart. Love stories, frivolous and exciting tales, and even that class of books **[movies]** called religious novels **[movies]**, —books **[movies]** in which the author **[producer]** attaches to his story **[movie]** a moral lesson, —are a curse to the readers. Religious sentiments may be woven all through a storybook **[movie]**, but, in most cases, Satan is but clothed in angel-ropes, the more effectively to deceive and allure. None are so confirmed in right principles, none so secure from temptation, that they are safe in reading **[viewing]** these stories **[movies]**.

The readers **[viewers]** of fiction **[drama]** are indulging an evil that destroys spirituality, eclipsing the beauty of the sacred page. It creates an unhealthy excitement fevers the imagination, unfits the mind for usefulness, weans the soul from prayer, and disqualifies it for any spiritual exercise. God has endowed many of our youth with superior capabilities; but too often they have enervated their powers, confused and enfeebled their minds, so that for years they have made no growth in grace or in a knowledge of the reasons of our faith, because of their unwise choice of reading. Those who are looking for the Lord soon to come, looking for that wondrous change, when "this corruptible shall put on incorruption," should in this probationary time be standing upon a higher plane of action.

My dear young friends, question your own experience as to the influence of exciting stories **[movies]**. Can you, after such reading **[viewing]**, open the Bible and read with interest the words of life? Do you not find the Book of God uninteresting? The charm of that love story **[movie]** is upon the mind, destroying its healthy tone, and making it impossible for you to fix the attention upon the

important, solemn truths that concern your eternal welfare.

The nature of one's religious experience is revealed by the character of the books **[movies]** he chooses to read **[view]** in his leisure moments. In order to have a healthy tone of mind and sound religious principles, the youth must live in communion with God through his word. Pointing out the way of salvation through Christ, the Bible is our guide to a higher, better life. It contains the most interesting and the most instructive history and biography that were ever written. Those whose imagination has not become perverted by the reading of fiction will find the Bible the most interesting of books.

Resolutely discard all trashy reading **[movie viewing]**. It will not strengthen your spirituality, but will introduce into the mind sentiments that pervert the imagination, causing you to think less of Jesus and to dwell less upon his precious lessons. Keep the mind free from everything that would lead it in a wrong direction. Do not encumber it with trashy stories **[movies]**, which impart no strength to the mental powers. The thoughts are of the same character as the food provided for the mind.

The Bible is the book of books. If you love the word of God, searching it as you have opportunity, that you may come into possession of its rich treasures, and be thoroughly furnished unto all good works, then you may be assured that Jesus is drawing you to himself. But to read the Scripture in a casual way, without seeking to comprehend Christ's lesson that you may comply with his requirements, is not enough. There are treasures in the word of God that can be discovered only by sinking the shaft deep into the mine of truth.

The carnal mind rejects the truth; but the soul that is converted undergoes a marvelous change. The book that before was unattractive because it revealed truths which testified against the sinner, now becomes the food of the soul, the joy and consolation of the life. The Sun of righteousness illuminates the sacred pages, and the Holy Spirit speaks through them to the soul. To those who love Christ the Bible is as the garden of God. Its promises are as grateful to the heart as the fragrance of flowers is to the senses.

Let all who have cultivated a love for light reading **[movie viewing]**, now turn their attention to the sure word of prophecy. Take your Bibles, and begin to study with fresh interest the sacred records of the Old and New Testaments. The oftener and more diligently you study the Bible, the more beautiful will it appear, and the less relish you will have for light reading **[movie viewing]**. Bind this precious volume to your hearts. It will be to you a friend and guide. —*Mrs. E. G. White.* (Emphasis supplied.)