

the Lord's interests and the highest interests of man, which are the Lord's interests. But we may not innocently use either for our own pleasure and gratification. Expensive journeys for our own pleasure and amusement, and not indulged in with a single eye to the glory of God, are not innocent amusements, but sinful. Again, in the light of the above rule of judgment, we see that no form of amusement is lawful for an unconverted sinner. Nothing in him is innocent. While he remains impenitent and unbelieving, does not love God and his neighbor according to God's command, there is for him no innocent employment or amusement; all is sin. And right here I fear that many are acting under a great delusion.

To teach, either directly or by implication, that any amusement of an impenitent sinner or of a backslider is innocent, is to teach a gross and ruinous heresy. Parents should remember this in regard to the amusements of their unconverted children. Sabbath school teachers and superintendents who are planning amusements for their Sabbath schools, preachers who spend their time in planning amusements for the young, who lead their flocks to picnics, in pleasure excursions, and justify various games, should certainly remember that, unless they are in a holy state of heart, and do all this from supreme love to God and a design in the highest degree to glorify God thereby, these ways of spending time are by no means innocent, but highly criminal, and those who teach people to walk in these ways are simply directing the channels in which their depravity shall run. For be it ever remembered that, unless these things are indulged in from supreme love to God and designed to glorify Him; unless they are, in fact, engaged in with a single eye to the glory of God, they are not innocent, but sinful amusements. I must say, again, and, if possible, still more emphatically, that it is not enough that they might be engaged in the best way, for the time being, to honor and please God; but they must be actually engaged in from supreme love to God and with the ultimate design to glorify him. If such, then, is the true doctrine of innocent amusements, let no impenitent sinner and no backslidden Christian suppose for a moment that it is possible for him to engage in any innocent amusement. If it were true that impenitent sinners or backsliders can and do engage in innocent amusements, the very engaging in such amusements, being lawfully right and innocent in them, would involve a change of heart in the unconverted and a return to God in the backslider. For no amusement is lawful unless it be engaged in as a love service rendered to God and with design to please and glorify him. It must not only be a love service; but, in the judgment of the one who renders it, it must be the best service that for the time being he can render to God; a service that will be more pleasing to him and more useful to his kingdom than any other that can be engaged in at the time. Let these facts be borne in mind when the question of engaging in amusements come up for decision. And remember, the question in all such cases is not, "What harm is there in this proposed amusement?" but, "What good can it do?" "Is it the best way in which I can spend my time?" "Will it be more pleasing to God and more to the interest of his kingdom than anything else at present possible to me?" "If not, it is not an innocent amusement, and I cannot engage in it without sin."—*Pres. Finney in Independent.*