

words of blame are gently uttered, such outward signs will show that it is no pleasure to the speaker to have to find fault or to punish.

I do not mean to say that all children will prove amenable to kindness, but it is consistent with the spirit that was in Christ, to follow His example and use loving methods first of all.

We must remember, dear girls, that the mere doing what is right, in the right spirit, "As unto the Lord," is for His glory whatever the result may be.

By speaking about our daily work and duties first of all, I have perhaps disappointed that one amongst you whose inquiry referred to places of amusement and gay social gatherings. I have always felt that I should like to have a talk with you about games, beginning with fireside ones, and amusements of various kinds, public and private. At the same time I cannot, and I would not if I could, lay down any hard-and-fast rule about these things.

The opinions of really good and earnest Christians differ very widely on this subject. Parents have a right to permit or forbid your joining in amusements which may be innocent in themselves, but unsuitable to your position or likely to interfere with more important occupations. No girl who desires to act in the spirit of her Divine Teacher and example, will ever act in open opposition to the wishes of her parents, or indulge by stealth, either in society, amusements, or the reading of books to which they have expressed their objection. Nay, more. The Christian girl will study the spirit of a parent's teaching as well as his direct commands. Conscience is a good guide—an infallible one when it whispers a reproof or a caution. Few will make a mistake in refraining from a thing when conscience suggests even a doubt as to its expediency, to say nothing as to the absolute right or wrong of it.

Doubtless it seems comparatively easy to work for God's glory, but very difficult to carry the Spirit of Christ into every place. To rejoice in the sense of His presence even in our hours of social gaiety, as well as in our graver pursuits. We are apt to think that we want help in our work, but not when we play.

It is many years since I came to the conclusion that we most need Divine help when we are the least conscious of the want.

I wonder how many of us, if sitting down to a game at chess, or draughts, or any other fireside game, have thought of lifting up our hearts to God in a petition for a right temper in the doing of it.

I believe we may do such a simple thing as this to the glory of God, or we may disgrace our Christian profession over the doing of it. We consider a fireside game as something outside the track of duty to God and our neighbour. But is it?

Look back for a moment, dear girls, and ask yourselves a few plain questions.

Have you never seen people get angry and show all sorts of evil tempers over a game?

To come nearer home. Have you never lost your temper when your opponent has won repeatedly?

Can you refrain, not only from showing annoyance, but from feeling it when you are on the losing side?

Or, if you are successful, can you conquer the inclination to exult in your good fortune, and by so doing take a little from the disappointment of your opponent?

It is the people who are thoroughly in earnest, in everything, who find it hardest to join in a game without showing over-anxiety about winning it, and are most trying for others to encounter.

How well I remember on many occasions watching two friends playing at bagatelle in

my own home. They were equally in earnest in doing their best, but one could lose and rejoice at his opponent's success. The other became irritable if by chance he failed repeatedly, and would throw down his cue and discontinue the game, showing anything but a Christian temper. This happened one day to the real distrest of the successful player. He looked sorrowfully after his friend who had made a too hasty departure, and said with a sigh—

"He is so fond of the game that I cannot refuse to play with him, but I always dread winning, because I know how ill-success annoys him. To-day I should have been delighted to lose every game; but I simply could not, and I must be honest and do my best even in play."

A dear old clergyman who used to drop in for a game at chess, draughts or bagatelle, after a hard day's work, used to charm us all by the sweetness of his manner and the pleasure he took in the contest. It was delightful to watch his face when his opponent made a good move or stroke, and he was ready alike to commend it, and announce his intention to beat it if possible. Whether a winner or loser, he left off the game with a smile and a word of thanks to his opponent for having given him pleasure by joining in it.

"I go back refreshed to my work after these little relaxations," he would say, "and perhaps all the more so if I carry away the memory of a reasonable share of success."

Such a spirit, and the sight of that happy old face seemed to sanctify the memory of every visit.

When I was a girl I laid down two rules with regard to fireside games. First, that I would never join in one in which money was staked, even if it were but a halfpenny; secondly, that if I lost my temper over a game I would discontinue playing it for a time, or if needful, give it up altogether.

I have found these rules a great safeguard, and I am sure if we find any amusement, whether at home or abroad, exercising an injurious influence over us, it is best to give it up at any cost of self-denial.

A gentleman once told me that when he was a youth and learning a mechanical trade in some large works, it was a custom with him and others of similar age to spend every spare moment in playing a card game. There was no gambling, or the semblance of it, but it became dangerously absorbing to the players. "We could think of nothing else," he said. "At the dinner-hour we could scarcely give ourselves time for the meal, and often ate and played simultaneously. Happily for me, I was brought under Christian influences and led to look upon many things in a different light from what I had done before. Amongst others, I realised the sin and folly of being in bondage to a game. I gave it up at once and never played again."

We all have to judge for ourselves to a great extent as to the expediency of joining in certain amusements, by the effect they have upon us at the time, and the way in which they influence our home-life.

My dear girl-correspondent, in alluding to two kinds of amusement which she greatly enjoys, writes, "If I could really see that they were unbecoming to a Christian, I would give them both up."

To her, and to all of you, I say, "Ask yourselves how you feel after the entertainment, or the gay, social evening is over. Has it given you a distaste for the quiet atmosphere of home? Are your plain duties more irksome to you? Do you long for frequent indulgences of the kind and feel inclined to be discontented, if your companions have a larger share than you have?"

Temperaments differ so widely. One girl can go to a place of amusement, enjoy it

thoroughly and retain a pleasant memory of all she saw and heard, yet feel perfectly contented if a long time elapses before she has a similar treat. In another, the one indulgence excites a craving for more, and she is constantly seeking excitement and longing to be anywhere rather than at home. Whatever amusement produces such an effect should be given up altogether. There will be no safety in half measures. As I said, when we were talking about the influence of books, you can soon tell whether any kind or place of amusement is likely to lead your thoughts in a right direction or otherwise. Think the matter over, ask God's guidance and act accordingly. Only you may be sure of this. If you feel that you cannot take with you to any place the spirit of the Master you profess to serve, or like to think that you are in His sight, you cannot go there either with safety or comfort to yourself. You will not be happy at the time, and your memories will yield you no satisfaction.

Do not imagine, however, that even in a gay social gathering you can have no opportunity of doing many things to the glory of God.

It is often very hard to fight against an envious spirit, if others are repeatedly preferred before you. It is not easy to be contented with and thankful for such things as you have, when conscious that your simple dress, which has often done duty before, contrasts so strongly with the fresh and costly one worn by an old schoolfellow.

It calls for much of the spirit of Christ, for you to sit in some quiet corner, apparently overlooked for the time, and yet to feel no loneliness but to set aside the thought that you are slighted, because, in your large-hearted love for your neighbour, you rejoice in witnessing her enjoyment.

If you are the girl who is receiving an extra share of attention because of your social position, your rich attire or, it may be, the God-given beauty which attracts admiration, you may win gratitude by withdrawing yourself from it a little, and taking your seat by the old schoolfellow in her well-worn dress in the quiet corner. You may show her that old friendship is not forgotten, that you know and love what that simple dress cannot conceal or a costly one enhance—the beautiful mind within. You may divert some of the attention from yourself to your friend, without patronising her, but by showing your own affection and esteem for her in the sight of all around.

In short, you may find joy in the joy of others. Link self in the effort to gladden the heart of your neighbour, and return home the happier for every effort in this direction. Even in the very matter of eating and drinking, it is not only possible but easy to bear out the spirit of our motto-text to-night.

Who has not seen the eagerness displayed at social gatherings, by guests of all ages, to secure the first places at the tables and a large share of the choicest viands?

Our Lord Himself, in speaking of invited guests, "marked how they chose out the chief or uppermost rooms at feasts." He bade His hearers learn a lesson of self-denial and humility, and practise it even at a festive gathering, adding, "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

What need be added to such plain teaching as this?

I will only say to you, my dear girl-friends, that as Christ never gave a command which it was impossible for us to obey, with the help of the Holy Spirit, the more we think of it the more fully we must be convinced that it is possible for you and me, "Whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, to do all to the glory of God."

(To be continued.)