

Household Gods

by Catherine Booth

The sermon warns against the dangers of household gods, specifically the gods of fashion, ease, and gain, and calls Christians to serve God and humanity.

Scripture: Proverbs 22:6, Matthew 6:24, Mark 8:36, Romans 6:16, Ephesians 6:4, Philippians 2:3, Colossians 3:23

Topics: "Idolatry", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Catherine Booth preaches about the dangers of worshipping household gods such as the God of Fashion, the God of Ease, the God of Gain, and the God of Education. She emphasizes the importance of not letting these idols take precedence over serving God and humanity. Catherine challenges the congregation to break free from the bondage of these false gods and to prioritize living in God's likeness, serving others, and seeking the highest good for all. She warns against the detrimental effects of pursuing worldly ambitions, comfort, wealth, and intellectual knowledge at the expense of moral character, spiritual growth, and true service to God.

Transcript

Notes of three addresses, Delivered in Steinway Hall, Regent Street

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"-Romans vi. 16.

IT is assumed all through this Book that every human being has a deity. In fact, we are so made that we must have a God. Even the man who says there is no God, worships a god notwithstanding, and that god is, "to whom he yields himself a servant to obey." Now God claims to be the Deity of the soul of every human being; but Satan has supplanted God, and he has done it in many ways. He has assumed many different forms in order to suit different classes and conditions of men. For one class of persons he finds one idol, for another class another. But the principle here laid down is, that whatever the outward form may be, that which usurps in a man's affections, life, and action, the place of God, becomes his deity. He need not outwardly label it idol, or bow his knees and worship it. The supremacy which he gives to it in his affections and life is the point.

What an awful thought that in this so-called Christian England, tens of thousands of people are as truly worshipping idols as are any of the inhabitants of Africa or China.

I want this morning to confine myself more particularly to the gods of the household. Professing Christians speak about giving up the vanities of the world, and coming out from the world, when, alas! We need not go outside the four walls of their own dwellings to find their god. I am afraid there are quite as many people who go wrong with these inside idols as with the outside ones.

The first that strikes us as the most universal god of so-called religious society in this day is the

GOD OF FASHION.

Now, what is fashion? What does the term mean? It means the world's way of having things, and the world's way of doing things. When we look abroad on the great majority of men and women around us, we see that they are utterly godless, selfish, and untrue, and yet the majority always fixes the fashion. It is not the few true, real, God-fearing, earnest men and women who want to serve God and help humanity who fix the fashion; it is always the majority. Consequently, you see fashion is always diametrically opposed to God's way of having things, and God's way of doing things. Therefore, the votaries of fashion cannot possibly be the servants of God. There is no getting away from that conclusion.

Let us now inquire what is God's great end or purpose in His way of doing things, and in the way that He has prescribed in which we are to have and to do things. What is shown by the constitution of our bodies, by the laws and ordinances of the heavens, and by the laws of nature, to be God's end in everything? Utility! If you look at your eye, or study your ear or hands, or any other part of your body, you cannot find a single fibre or nerve which is not of some use in your animal economy--nothing superfluous, nothing for waste or for the mere sake of being there. A useful result is the end contemplated. Look at the heavens--it is the same; there is not a single waste star. Look at the animal creation--it is the same. Look at the vegetable creation--it is the same. The very rocks exist not for themselves. The earth ministers to the wants of man and beast. There is nothing created for mere show, no useless part of creation. The aim of God in all His modes and works is the highest good to all His creatures. Now let us inquire what is the end of fashion. When we substitute the means for the end, we lose the great result God had in store for us. This is true in everything, natural, mental, and spiritual. Now, God's order is to have everything attuned to the highest result, especially in the case of His highest creature--man. He wants us to use every power and capacity He has given us for the highest ends--to serve God and humanity! But fashion has turned God's order topsy-turvy, and set up as its end, supposed Beauty! not that beauty which is an accompaniment of utility; but fashion sets up beauty as the end, and not the accompaniment. Fashion says, "That is elegant. That looks grand, so it shall be so." So the great question comes to be in dress, in equipage, in our modes of doing business, in our furnishing arrangements, and in our institutions, What is the order of fashion? Fashion sets the law, and everybody does what everybody else does; and all who will not bow down to this idol are called puritans, fanatics, straight-laced, or by any other terms of contempt most convenient. So hot is this furnace of contempt and scorn that it is one of the highest tests of moral courage in man or woman to set fashion at naught. It is one of the grandest things to teach your children from their babyhood to say, "No, I won't do that because everybody else does it. You must give me a better reason than the fashion for what I do."

Fashion prescribes the form of dress for almost the whole world. Doctors may talk, and advise, and warn against high heels, tight waists, and insufficient clothing, and all the monstrous and ridiculous appendages to dress which fashion from time to time prescribes. But it is fashion! That is enough. Never mind if tight-lacing does squeeze my lungs and prevent me getting the necessary amount of air, thus inducing premature disease and death; it is the fashion, and I must do it. Never mind if the high-heeled shoes

produce deformity of the spine and all manner of other injuries; it is the fashion, and I must have them. I must dress myself in the most ridiculous costumes which Parisian milliners can contrive, it is the fashion; if the dress is too light, or does not half cover my body, never mind; I shall wear it because it is the fashion.

So, in the furnishing of people's houses, in a great many instances, it is the same. I have been in many houses where it seems to me that almost all utility and necessary comfort for health and work is lost sight of. It is almost all show, so that you are afraid to use a table for fear you will injure it. Oh, the money and time that are squandered, and the perpetual strife that goes on to keep up this show because everybody else does it.

In their very companionships fashion has decided what should be the ground and the rule of selection, and so fashionable people have only the companions that society has settled they are to have. They do not look, as you would suppose rational beings would, for congenial society in the way of congeniality of thought, and feeling, and intelligence, that which gives vivacity and interest to communion with one another. Oh, no! If a person ever so attractive and clever, and competent to interest, or instruct, or please them, happens to be a grade lower in the social scale, fashion says, "That person is not in your circle, he is out of your sphere; you cannot associate with such a person." So they deprive their intellects and hearts of the greatest delight, because fashion has prescribed what kind of people they should associate with, and if those people be ever so hollow and empty, never mind; they must obey the behests of fashion.

Fashion has also settled that it is not the thing for people in certain positions and stations to go to such and such places, but that it is right for them to go to others, and so they go wherever fashion dictates. Fashion has even prescribed the way people shall move and the way in which they shall speak, and has got them pretty much squozen down into uniformity, so that all naturalness is lost and they are nearly all alike. It is the same kind of movement they make and the same kind of platitudes they utter, everywhere and in all circumstances. I hope there are not many of this clue here this morning; but if there are any, let me ask, How do you like the picture--the representation of the claims of this Deity?--that rational beings, intelligent creatures, some of them capable of great and glorious things, should be thus fettered and bound and squozen into one shape and reduced to nonentities and puppets?

Do you envy the fate of the devotees of fashion? Will you worship this god any longer? Thank God, He emancipated me twenty-five years ago, and I have been free ever since. If you are not yet emancipated, get emancipated this morning.

Do not consider fashion when you are settling how you ought to order your household, but plan for the highest good of your children and those around you, and for your greatest usefulness in the world. Never mind fashion.

In this day when chaplains of prisons and reformatories tell us that gaudy, flashy dressing leads as many young girls to destruction as drink, it behooves every true woman to settle before God in her closet what kind of dress she ought to wear, and to resolve to wear it in spite of fashion. If all professedly Christian ladies would do this, what a salvation this one reform alone would work in the world. You young people here resolve that you will be original natural human beings, as God would have you; resolve that you won't be squozen into this mould, or into that, to please anybody--that you will be an independent man or woman, educated and refined by intercourse with God; but be yourself, and do not aim to be anybody else. Set fashion at nought. If people would do this, what different households they would have! What different children! What different friends! What different results they would produce in the world, and how

differently they would feel when they were dying! Oh, what wasted lives! What beautiful forms, and beautiful minds, and beautiful intellects are prostrated and ruined at the shrine of the god of fashion! May God deliver us from this idol!

Another of the most prominent of household gods is that of ease--comfort. In many instances the highest interests of the children and servants, the good of the bodies and souls of men, the serving and glory of God, are all made subservient to this god of comfort.

Think for a moment what God requires of every human being. First, He requires all men to be His people; and secondly, He requires of all His people that they should be absolutely His SERVANTS.

Now then, compare the duties of a servant with the idea of ease and comfort being the prevailing notion of a man's life, and you will see its absurdity. What would you think of a servant, whose prevailing idea was to make her or himself comfortable? Suppose such a one saying, "Yes, I want the situation, I should like the wages, but I want my comfort most. I do not want to get up any earlier in the morning than the mistress or the master. I am not going to do any hard or troublesome work. I don't see why I should. I should like an easy chair to sit in, and certain hours of the day to myself. I am not going to do this or the other that is disagreeable to me. I am going to be COMFORTABLE." What would you think of such a servant?

You smile; well, if we are true and real, we have given up the ownership of ourselves We have become literally the slaves of the living God, to do His bidding, to work for His interests, to look after His lost ones, to extend His kingdom, and to live for His glory! This is what we PROFESS. This is not The Salvation Army theology only. This is in all Church creeds, more or less. It was sworn over your baptismal font that you should renounce the devil and all his works, that you should give up "the world" and be a true and real servant of the Most High God. And yet I am afraid many in this congregation have taken good care never to serve God at the expense of their own comfort! If you suggest any plan of usefulness, the first thing that meets you in one form or another is, "Oh, that would be hard work; that would be a sacrifice;" or, "I should have to give up so many evenings a week;" or sometimes, alas, "that would interfere with my dinner hour."

These ease-loving Christians do not look at the object that has to be accomplished for God; but how it will effect their own ease and comfort. "I visit the poor! Oh, I could not; think of the smells I should have to encounter; look at the disagreeable sights! should have to see! My delicate nerves would not bear it. Oh, no, I could not. If the Lord has any nice comfortable work, I have no objection; but my comfort must first be considered. Your mission services are all very good, but we cannot have our household duties upset. We must have our domestic regularity-our comfort." I have wept many times as I have parted with such people, when these words forced themselves upon me: "Saul returned into his own house, but David gat him into the hold."

David must go and fight and face the perils of the wilderness, and endure all sorts of self-sacrifice, and conflict, and sorrow, but Saul goes back to his own house. He has done with it. He thinks his responsibility is at an end. When the meeting is over, these people who have heard all about the claims of God and the lost, and perhaps said a few sleepy words of sympathy, or given a five-pound note, away they go to their own houses; but the real Davids must get up into the holds, or else God's armies will be wasted, and hell will be more largely peopled than it would be otherwise. Somebody must hold the fort, somebody must fight, somebody must suffer. Nothing can be done for humanity but through suffering, and if one won't, there falls a double weight upon another. Oh, the multitudes of souls who have made shipwreck through this god of ease! It ruins the soul that worships, as well as hinders all the good that might be done for

others. It has a stupefying, paralysing, damning influence upon every soul that once gives way to it.

Once you get under the dominion of THAT GOD, you are done for. If you are under his dominion, for Christ's sake get up this morning and ask Him to snap the fetters that bind you. Jesus from the Cross cries to you. Suffering humanity is sinking at this hour by thousands into a hell on earth, and a nethermost hell hereafter. Up, Christians, arise and be doing! Put off your sleepiness, your idleness, and set to work; bend your back to the burden, stoop to pick up the lost. They are crying all around you for help.

If I understand this book, you will be called to an awful account if your opportunity, your strength of body, your capacities for blessing your follow-men are all buried and destroyed by this love of ease.

Thank God, He emancipated me from that years ago. I have had the same temptations that others have had, and perhaps sometimes even extra temptations, through excessive weariness, frequently hardly knowing how to get from my bed; but I have had such a horror of getting under the dominion of this god of ease that I have set my whole nature against it.

What would you think of a mother whose child was dangerously sick saying, "Really, I am so burdened with the rest of my family, I have so much to think about, that I cannot give myself up to this child. I am very sorry, of course, I feel it very deeply, but I cannot deny myself the comforts of life. I must lie on the sofa so long, and I must do this, that, or the other, or go here and there?" What would you think of such a woman? And yet there are thousands of professing Christians who lie on the sofa, I am afraid, half their time. They don't know what to do with themselves, trying to get amused and occupied, and yet they profess to be God Almighty's SERVANTS!

My friends, put this practical test to yourselves. It is of no use going to services and hearing beautiful sermons which you don't apply to yourselves. Are not these things realities? If so, I say, for Christ's sake, for your soul's sake, and humanity's sake, act accordingly. Another household god--alas! I wish it could be kept out of the household (for it is more especially the god of the world outside, yet it comes into the family and gets into the hearts of the very little ones).

THE GOD OF GAIN

Now God's order is for every man to look after his fellow man--"look not every man on his own things, but also on the things of others," but the world's order--its received maxim is--"every man for himself." God's order is, "As ye would men should do to you, do ye even so to them." That means, you know, when you are making a bargain, don't run a man down below the lawful price of his goods, any more than you would like him to run you down. Don't beat down that poor woman in her work because you know she has no one to appeal to. That is the spirit of selfishness, which is of the devil.

This god of gain, how I see its sway sometimes in houses where I stay. What a contrast I often see between the interest excited by the news of the day, and any information respecting the kingdom of God. You know how morning prayers are got over very often--how superficial it all is, how little heart there is in it. It seems quite a relief to the worshippers when it is over; then begins the real interest of the day. The gentleman seizes the newspaper, looks up and down the columns to see how the funds stand. If you keep looking at him you will tell in a minute if there is anything in the paper that touches him. If he is a merchant, the state of the market as to the things he buys or sells touches him to the quick; if he sees something affecting his interests he will perhaps tell it to the wife, and then you will see the older children looking towards him with the greatest anxiety--the god of gain has his hand even on their young hearts. They may

have some outward show of being religious, but gain is the real god. If there is anything that entails immediate action in connection with the business, you see how everything else is at once put on one side. Then the lady says, "business must be attended to." Must is a sine qua non in the matter. Would to God they would put a must in somewhere else. The children all know the importance of that must. They know, perhaps, that they have money, that they are to be rich some day, but nevertheless they want more. Their father cannot afford to lose if he has ever so much. Gain, gain--they must make gain! That man may see in another column of the paper something which affects the work of God, but he only says a few sleepy words about it, yet "very sorry, very sorry indeed." Then down goes the paper, and he gets ready to go to his office. The column touching his gains touched him to the quick, the other only touched his sentimentality; the one touched his interests, the other touched only those of Jesus Christ.

Once I was at a conference, and I shall never forget it, I saw a company of ministers deliberating on certain questions, and the questions were all on paper, so that everybody knew what was coming on. I noticed that when anything came up affecting the character, or position, or income of those individuals, every man was in his place, every man had his paper and pencil, quick as lightning, to catch every word that was said. But when it was a question that only referred to the work of God, to the interests of the Church, to the salvation of souls, a number of them were out of their places altogether. Others had got the newspapers, others were writing letters.

There was only a handful who were paying proper attention to the question. I thought, O my God, it is as it was in the days of old, "there is not one of them that will keep Thy doors for nought; they are all gone after their covetousness." Don't call that censorious. You know how true it is. I WISH IT WERE NOT. I feel as if I could give the blood out of my very heart that it might not be so, but it is so. I have no doubt the Apostle was forced much against his will to say and feel, "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." Alas! It had begun to be true then; how much more true is it now. I trust and believe that God is raising up a people who will seek His, in their very hearts' core, and who will be willing to sacrifice their own gain. "The love of money is the root of all evil." Human experience justifies the Divine word. Show me a man who loves money for its own sake, for the sake of hoarding it and leaving it to his children, and I will show you a man whom the DEVIL IS SURE OF. There is no doubt about it, unless God in His omnipotent mercy awakens him and gives him grace to turn that devil of avarice out of his soul--"Covetousness, which is idolatry"--idol worship! gold worship! wealth worship!!

Are you worshipping this god? My friend, make haste for your life. You can no more be the Lord's servant and worship wealth, than the Jews were who crucified the Lord Jesus.

Friends, go to your closets; see whether you are in any measure under the dominion of this idol of gain. See why you value your money; see what you purpose to do with it; reckon, if you had a husband, a wife, or child in slavery, and you could buy them out, how much of the money you would keep. Reckon what you ought to keep while thousands of your brethren are the slaves of sin and the devil, when your money would help to deliver them. Reckon this matter as you would reckon with your steward.

You give your steward possession of certain property to manage for you; you know that he must eat and drink, and have a place to rest in; if he is a good servant, you say, "Here, John, I want you to accomplish that work for me in so many months, and I place at your disposal these resources. Get in these debts, see these creditors, receive such and such moneys, do such and such things. You may take out all that is necessary to keep you in comfort and health (and if he has a family), as much as your family requires, not for extravagance, but for your necessary comfort, while you are doing my business." Would you reckon

that such a steward had a right to spend your money in extravagant living, or hoard it up for his own personal ends? Are you a steward of God? And do you expect to give an account to Him who shall judge both quick and dead? If so, what will you say when He demands an account of your stewardship?

The household god next in importance, and which is perhaps the most popular both of the household and the nation, is the

GOD OF EDUCATION.

Everything must bow to the scholastic education of the children. Their very health is sacrificed in hundreds of instances; the whole of the domestic arrangements, the convenience of father and mother and visitors must bow down to this god. The children must be educated, whatever else becomes of them. I touched very briefly on this subject in my address at Exeter Hall on "Family Religion," and some friends seemed to infer that I was against education, whereas I have seldom talked with any one on the subject more profoundly impressed with its importance. I adopted, many years ago, the sentiment of the philosopher Locke, who said that "in nine cases out of ten all the men we meet are what they are for good or for evil, for usefulness or otherwise, by their education." I say I fully believe that, and have acted upon it in training my own family; so you see my quarrel is not with education, but with a certain kind of education.

I believe that a child ought to be educated every half-hour of its life--never ought to be left to itself in the sense of not having a recognised influence exerted over its mind. The question is then, What kind of education is the right kind to bestow upon children? How ought you to educate them? The same idea which helped us on the question of fashion may help us again here. What should be the great purpose of education? Surely right education must be that which is calculated to help the child to attain the highest type of its kind, and to fit it for its highest destiny. You train your horse on that principle. You develop and strengthen it that it may be a perfect creature, having capacity developed for the highest service of which its nature is capable. I say that all right training ought to contemplate this end, and especially with respect to man, God's highest creature. Next comes the question, What is the highest type of a man? and the highest destiny of a man? What ought we to aim at? For if the aim is wrong, all our training will be wrong. I say that the highest type of a man is that in which the soul rules over the body, in which a purified, ennobled soul rules through an enlightened intelligence, and makes every faculty of the being subservient to the highest purpose, the service of humanity and the service of God. If I understand it, that is the highest type of man and his highest destiny. And it seems to me that all education that falls short of this is a curse rather than a blessing.

The aim of all rightly directed education is to make such men and women, and to fit them for such work, and if it fails of this, I say it is one-sided, unphilosophical, and irreligious, and THAT IS MY QUARREL WITH MODERN EDUCATION. I charge it with being all this, and that is the reason I did not educate my children after its theories; I did not believe in them, and the results so far prove that I was right.

Then first let me look at what ought to be the purpose of education. Most of you, nearly all, I presume, agree as to what I have stated. But the purpose of modern education is anything but this. It is for the most part planned and executed with a view to the aggrandisement or well-being of the individual, looked at in a worldly point of view. Parents look at their boy and say, "Now, what can we do with him?" They have all sorts of aspirations and ambitions for the boy, and they say, "Well, we must educate him, develop his intellect"--what for? That he may use it for the service of humanity and the glory of God? Oh no, that never enters their minds. They say,

"We will have him educated in order that he may shine in the world, or get up in the world. We will have a son who will be able to go to the bar, the senate house, or do anything else that their ambition fixes on." The AGGRANDISEMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL is the end, not the universal good, and out of this wrong aim arises the undue estimate of mere scholastic education. What would you say of the training of an animal, if it were possible for the trainer to select one or two faculties, and develop and strengthen them to the exclusion, neglect, or extinction of other faculties? Would you say that was right training?

The main idea of modern education is that of the imparting of knowledge. Knowledge is the idol which both the household and the nation to-day are worshipping more largely perhaps than any other, as if progress in knowledge constituted the true progress of man. Oh, if it were so, what a different world we should have to-day; but we know it is quite the contrary. We know that the more knowledge you give to an individual, without giving him a corresponding disposition to use it for good, the more you increase his capacity for mischief. Very often the most learned men live for the worst purposes. But, alas! The very flower of the youth of our nation are sacrificed to this modern deity. The notion is that our youth must be educated in this mischievous sense; they must be crammed with knowledge; whether it be a curse or a blessing to them is not the question, but they must have it. They must learn the dead languages, and read bad literature, in order to make them like the rest of the world around them, no matter what becomes of their morals; they must be crammed with science, much of it falsely so called; much of it in embryo, crude and shallow-the shallow theories of minds trying to grasp profound thoughts, and getting lost in the fogs of their own folly, landing the poor pupils on the strand of infidelity and atheism. The intellect, the one faculty of the man, must be strained, and stretched, and crammed to the utter neglect, and often destruction, of the moral faculties. And when you have done, what have you produced? An enlightened animal, an intellectual monster, who walks abroad, treading under his feet all the tender instincts and most sacred feelings and aspirations of humanity. That is all you have produced; there are thousands such to be seen to-day. Alas! My heart bleeds over the stories I hear all over the land, which I could give you as illustrations of this fact. All this mischief comes of upsetting God's order-cultivating the intellect at the expense of the heart; being at more pains to make our youth clever than to make them GOOD!

This false theory leads to false methods, and hence the deplorable condition of our nation to-day. It leads to the separating from home life our little boys of ten and twelve years of age, and our girls too, alas! Sending them away from the tender influences, and what ought to be the grand and noble inspirations of their mothers, to herd with boys of their own age and class, to have their moral nature manipulated by masters, often sceptical or immoral. Now I say and will maintain that the chief end of education is not mere teaching, but INSPIRATION; and if you fail to inspire your pupil with nobleness, disinterested goodness, truth, morality, and religion, not only are all the glorious ends of education lost, but you damn your pupil more deeply than he might have been damned without your education. I ask, Is it not so? Take some of your own sons (alas! I could point to numbers round about) as illustrations of this fact. God has given every child a tutor in his mother, and she is the best and only right tutor for the heart.

I defy you to fill a proper mother's place for influence over the heart. If God were to depute the angel Gabriel, he could not do it. God has tied the child to its mother by such peculiar moral and mental links that no other being could possibly possess. I tell you mothers here, that if you are good mothers, you are committing the greatest wrong to send away your child from your homes, and I believe this wretched practice is ruining half our nation to-day. God committed the child to its parents to be educated, not to the schoolmaster. You can employ the schoolmaster to teach his head, and even then you must be very careful of what sort he is, or he will ruin the child; but God committed the child to the parents to be

educated, trained--that is, taught how to feel, think, and act. And it is to the mother especially belongs the art and the capacity to inspire her boy to love all that is noble and good, and disinterested, and grand in humanity, and to keep on inspiring him until he is strong enough in moral excellence; in other words, strong enough in God's likeness and grace to walk alone. Just as you tend him when he is a baby, and will not leave him to strangers, so, while he is a moral infant, you are to watch and keep and train him until he is able to walk alone. I set my soul on this with regard to my own children, and God has enabled me to do it. I had a great fight over it in many ways, but I said, "I am determined to keep my children for God and goodness. They shall have the education that I think likely to help them to be useful to their generation, as far as possible; but I will never sacrifice purity to polish, I will never sacrifice the heart to the head." That was my resolve, and I see no cause to regret it.

I think it was Fenelon who said that "the service of my family is more important than the service of myself, and the service of my nation is more important than the service of my family, and the service of humanity is more important than the service of my nation." That is my opinion. This is God's idea of man's highest vocation: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." If God's type of manhood had been a being crammed with knowledge to the exclusion of the moral and religious sentiments, Jesus Christ would have been such a man, whereas He was the opposite. He combined all the tenderness, sublime devotion, and self-sacrifice of the woman with the intellect and strength of the man. He was God's model man. That is the type for us. Therefore, for the sake of your children and your own grey hairs, I beseech you to see to it that you train and educate them in His likeness. Alas! I know many parents in this land to-day, who are wringing their hands in anguish for the consequences of a false notion of education, and yet there are tens of thousands more who are making the same experiment, to have the same results.

I was staying in a mansion some time ago, where there was everything that wealth and refinement could procure to make the parents happy. But I thought as I looked at the dear old gentleman--one of the kindly type of man, at whose table you like to sit down because of the genial intercourse and the generous sympathies of his soul towards all humanity--but I thought there seemed to be a gloom over the household. I felt as if he had a sorrowful spirit, though I knew not why. After dinner, when we got into the library, he said, with trembling lips, "I wish you could get a word with E-." I said, "Who is that? " "My eldest son, do try to get a minute to speak with him."

"Why, what is the matter?" I said.

"I am afraid he has embraced sceptical opinions. I sent him to a professedly Christian school (ah, I thought, the old story!) and then to college, and now I am afraid he is nearly an infidel."

And when I got hold of the young gentleman I saw that he was just of the type our modern schools produce--self-conceited, self-indulged, proud, vain; a young man who looked down on his father much as an antiquated picture or piece of furniture. Oh, these stories, they break my heart! I felt that this dear old man spent his money on the education of his son, and thought he was doing the best he could for him, to send him to a so-called Christian school and then to a so-called Christian college, and here is the result; and there are thousands of such results!

Yet people send their sons over and over again to these schools and colleges, commit them knowingly to sceptical and infidel teachers--give them over, body, mind, and soul to them, to go through a process of education which necessitates the putting into their hands of text books containing all manner of idolatrous legends and impure and immoral histories, bringing into their imaginations all manner of profanities and

impurities just at the most critical period of their history. And this is all done under the name of "CHRISTIAN EDUCATION!"

I could tell you stories that would make you weep almost tears of blood at the consequences of these associations. Don't I know mothers to-day who are wringing their hands in agony, and fathers who are bowed down almost to the grave, broken-hearted, because of them? Add to this education association with troops of godless, lawless, and frequently immoral youths, whom they are sure to have for their companions, and then wonder that youths isolated from their mothers, sisters, and all the refining and religious influences of home life--put into these schools and colleges, and kept there frequently for seven or eight years, and I ask, Can parents be surprised that they receive them back without any principles, without any love for their parents, without any religion, and without any respect for humanity? to walk about and trample under foot the most sacred instincts, and feelings, and aspirations of true manhood and womanhood, and to march over the nation to spread desolation and ruin wherever they go--moral waifs and strays--drifting down the current of humanity, down, down to everlasting shame?

This is the result of modern education falsely so called. I challenge anybody to disprove it. Now then, I say, let every Christian parent in his closet settle before God this matter. What will you make your child? Will you say, "I will be more concerned that he shall be a good, benevolent, holy man, working for the good of his race, than that he shall be one of those intellectual monsters, all head and no heart? Will rather that he should be poor and good than that he should be rich and wicked?" When you come to that, you will save your children. But you say, "Well, I must have this position and that position for him, not because of the use he will be to humanity and the glory he will bring to God, but because he will be a bigger man, having social position and influence." Ah, thousands have said that, and their sons have ended in being nobodies--idle, extravagant, spendthrifts, taking all the patrimony of their brothers and sisters to keep them going in their evil courses. Truly "God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/catherine-booth/household-gods/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net