



THAT'S COURTESY!

From "In Your Steps"

By Josephine Cunningham Edwards

A good look at the endangered graces and their importance in our lives!

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1. The House Was a Wreck

NEARLY everyone has a list of dreaded guests. Even an old black Persian cat that we once owned had a list. When we lived near a particularly rough group of children, poor old Blackie was once nearly pulled in two, and he became wary of this set of visitors. I heard the prattle of children approaching one day, and as a low obligato to their approach, I heard Blackie begin to growl. I saw him get up majestically and view the path down to the road. Sure enough, there came his enemies. He ran to the boys' bedroom, got into the closet, and slipped through a scuttle hole into the attic, where he remained until the children had gone home.

There are some child-guests who come in confidently, buoyantly, and even joyously—and depart in the same frame of mind, leaving the host and hostess to survey the wreckage, lick their wounds, and try to recover their equilibrium and sanity. This is a pity, for every child has a right to be liked. Every child needs approval. He needs to develop the social side of his life. But he can never be accepted in society unless he is trained to regard the belongings of others as sacred to them, not as his to unscrew, take apart, or destroy.

There are moral reasons why a child should be taught this, as well as social reasons. In the first place, destructiveness and making free with other people's possessions are a type of dishonesty. If a child is to develop into a person people will like and welcome, he must have a high regard for the "Thou shalt not steal" commandment.

Second, there is a danger in becoming impervious to the desires of others. A child who is indifferent to correction is in a dangerous condition. It is wholesome to care what others think of what you do. It is a terrible state, and fraught with grave danger, when a child comes to the place where he does not care what you or anyone else thinks, so long as he can have what he fancies for the moment.

Harold came rushing into our house right after Christmas. When he left, the children's toys were a shambles, and my wristwatch was in his pocket. I would have lost it if I had not decided to look in his pocket as he was sidling out the door. Naturally, I did not let him come again to play. He came again and again to my door, and I told him I was sorry, but he could not play with the boys, for he had not been a good boy the last time he came.

Bobby brought a little boy home from school one day. I happened to be at the store. When I got home even the curtains were torn from the windows! A vase was broken, and my children stood in the doorway watching Lee tear around. They both burst out crying when they saw me.

"What is this?" I asked in a firm voice.

"Boy, I never swung on curtains before," answered unrepentant Lee, unabashed.

"You never will again here," I said firmly. I took him by the arm and sent him home. He was old enough to know how to act, but either he had not been taught or he did not care. He saw that I was irate, but merely shrugged his shoulders. How callous and impervious! Later I saw him with his mother, and I understood. When she pleaded with him and begged him to do something, he refused. He hit her when she tried to take his hands away from a forbidden object. Is there any wonder that she weeps now as she tells everyone that her boy is worldly and never looks inside the church? When he was young and impressionable he did not learn to respect anyone, much less the dear Lord.

It is a pity for a child to be disliked, and finally banned. I love children, and I hate to forbid any child from coming to see me. When we lived in Africa my husband traveled considerably. Once when he was to be gone, the mission doctor's little girls came and told me so sweetly that they would be glad to stay with

me. They were lovely children, and a joy to have as guests. We worked it out for Nelle to come one night and Lois the next. I arranged a little program for each evening.

First they would go with me to gather the eggs and shut up the chickens. Then we would feed the monkey and the baboon and the little dog and the cat. By that time Andy, the cookboy, had supper on the table. We ate, then played hide-the-thimble in the living room.

After a while we had a story hour, and I told stories by the fire until we both got sleepy. Then we would get into the big bed, with the mosquito netting draped all around it. After we got into bed there was one more story, and a poem story. I used to amuse my own children this way, and Nelle and Lois loved it. I would tell some running story in rhyme, and the ridiculous way the rhymes came along would convulse us both with such laughter that we would be breathless by the time we were through. On the third day the girls' mother came to see me.

"Donnie is crying his eyes out," she said. "He wants to come and stay all night with you."

"Let him come," I laughed. That evening I saw a little three-year-old coming across the yard, pulling a wagon in which were his pajamas and his slippers. He came running in, and we went through the same rigmarole. He laughed all the time. Never once did I have to pry his small fingers out of some forbidden place. He had been taught at home how to behave, and was a model visitor.

Finally I lighted the candle and put the little fellow into bed. He rolled over joyously and shouted, "Ain't it nice that I'm going to hear stories and poems?" I had to agree with him that it was really very nice. And it was. It was one of the sweetest parts of my mission life to play with the little children.

Jack the Predator

But when I was just a young girl we dreaded to see Mrs. Hall come to see us. She was always smiling, and little Jack, her son, was always a few feet ahead of her, with a predatory look on his face. They no sooner got into the house than he would start running all over to investigate. His mother did not even seem to see this, and she made no effort to restrain him.

We would look out the window, and someone would say, "Oh dear, here come Mrs. Hall and Jack. Hurry and lock the pantry. Put those knickknacks away. Lock the study door. Fasten that cupboard."

I was usually detailed by my mother in a low whisper to follow and watch the child. It was not a pleasant chore. He would kick and bite if I tried to protect anything from his investigating hands. I could hardly keep up with him.

Once I ran into the kitchen after him and found he had all the gas burners turned on full, including the oven. I was kicked and bitten when I shut them off. I tried to lead him out into the yard, but he eluded me. He was into my father's desk next. In shutting a drawer, I accidentally pinched an inquisitive finger. Mrs. Hall came running to the rescue when his screams rose, far out of proportion to the small hurt.

"She hurt me; she hurt me," he screamed, pointing at me. "Oh, darling, let mamma kiss it," cooed Mrs. Hall, giving me an unpleasant look. "You just come in here with mother, where you won't be hurt."

"I don't want to," he declared. "But make her go away." My mother interposed at that. "I told her not to let anyone get into daddy's desk," she said. "You come into the living room, Jack. You can play in there."

He cried and screamed so that his mother finally went home. We all were glad to see them go, for it had been an exhausting afternoon for us. Yet, it was a pity. Little Jack would have been happier if he had been trained how a guest should act. It is part of a child's birthright to learn the grace and beauty of being a lovely guest. It is a good thing for him to learn that not everything even in his own home is for

him to handle and play with. I used to tell my small boys, "This is not yours. It is mine. You have your things, and you must not bother my things. "

A child who is permitted to rummage in any drawer, paw through mother's purse, get into auntie's or sister's things, is likely to be a nuisance guest.

How are you training your children? They have a right to be liked, to be welcomed, to be asked to come again. It is your fault and your neglect if they are dreaded. A child is happier if he has learned the lesson of self-control.

"To a very great extent, the mother holds in her own hands the destiny of her children."-Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 244. Those who overindulge their children will one day weep for the results of their misguided love.

2. When Visitors Come

EVERY time I go to the home of a friend her little boy welcomes me as warmly as she does. He smiles, runs to take my coat and purse, and does all he can to see that I am well cared for. Though he is only five, he has a rare grace for so small a child.

Only yesterday he stood in front of me, and looking up into my face, he said, "I think you would like a nice cup of Ovaltine, wouldn't you?" I could not resist that, and he ran to fix it for me—with his mother's help.

Children need to be taught to greet a guest. It is necessary for them to learn this. They are a part of the home, and any training is woefully deficient if it is lacking in this particular.

When children come in from play or from school or from an errand, it is rude and uncultured for them to dash through the house, paying no attention whatsoever to a guest in the home. Many children come in shouting, slamming doors, demanding, and never give a guest so much as a glance.

This should not be, for the child will always need the grace of meeting people. Much of his happiness and success will depend upon such small niceties. Public relations are important, and these principles cannot be learned in a minute. Beauty of behavior comes from years of careful training in the art of being gracious.

It is a pleasant and rewarding experience to meet a family of well-trained, well-mannered children. Every time I go to a certain home, even if I am unexpected, the children run to meet me almost before my car is stopped. Little Elizabeth will say, all out of breath, "You can stay for supper, can't you? And you can stay all night too, I hope."

And James's eyes will be shining when he says, "Boy, I like to see you come!" Needless to say, I love to visit in that home. The children want me to see their new books, their pets, their hobbies, and their games."

I am convinced that these lovely traits of character do not crop up by accident; they represent days and months and years of gracious counsel and training, and the product is a delight to behold.

In some homes, when a visitor is there, the children seem to think they must be seen and heard continually. They will pound on the piano and scream and run through the house to such an extent that the hostess and the guest can hardly hear themselves speak.

Christian Courtesy

This is not fair to the children, for they cannot know how to act unless the mother and father teach them.

"A well-ordered Christian household is a powerful argument in favor of the reality of the Christian religion,— an argument that the Infidel cannot gainsay."-Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 1.

"Let not a mother allow her mind to be occupied with too many things. . . . With the greatest diligence and the closest watchfulness she must care for the little ones who, if allowed, will follow every impulse springing out of the fullness of their unpracticed, ignorant hearts. In their exuberance of spirit they will give utterance to noise and turbulence in the home. This should be checked. Children will be just as happy if they are educated not to do these things. They are to be taught that when visitors come, they are to be quiet and respectful." -Child Guidance, p. 97.

Mrs. Brown went calling on a neighbor one afternoon. Just as she walked into the yard she noticed that her neighbor was coming out ready to go someplace.

"Oh, I'm sorry," said Mrs. Brown. "I just ran over for a few minutes. I'll come back later, if that will be more convenient."

"I was just going for some peaches," answered Mrs. Smith. "I tried to get mother to come and watch the children, but she's sick."

"I'll be glad to stay with your children," said Mrs. Brown. "That is, if you won't be gone too long. I have to be home at three."

"I'll be home long before that, and I do thank you. I was going to take them, but it's always harder."

The five-year-old boy was standing there scowling. "I hate you!" he said angrily. "I want to go." Mrs. Brown was not sure whom he was addressing, her or his mother.

"You can't go today, dear," his mother said. "You help Mrs. Brown with the baby, and I'll bring you something from the store."

"You'd better!" the child replied rudely. The mother said not a word of reproof to the ill-behaved child.

As soon as his mother drove away, the little boy came and stood in front of Mrs. Brown. "I'm not going to mind one word you say," he said impudently.

"Is that so?" asked Mrs. Brown. "Well, then, I won't do what I had intended to do."

The child stood and regarded her a moment.

"What were you goin' to do?" he asked, curiosity getting the better of him.

"Well, first, I thought I would take you and your little sister for a walk, and we could play in some of the sand by the river. Then I was going to put your little sister to sleep and tell you some stories and draw some pictures for you. But I don't like to hear children talk the way you talk. I'll have to wait till the next time I come, and see whether you are doing any differently. Then we will see."

The child stood for a moment and looked long at the visitor. He had not met with this kind of talk before. He was trying to figure the matter out in his mind. Just what was involved, anyway? He had a distinct sense of loss of some kind. When he turned away he had a very unhappy look on his little face. Rude children are not happy.

When the mother returned, the child asked her abruptly, right in front of the guest, "Mamma, can Mrs. Brown tell stories?"

"I should say she can," said the mother. "You ought to hear her tell stories."

The child turned again and looked at the guest with the same bewildered look. "Would you tell me stories next time you come —if I'm good?" he asked in a subdued voice. Mrs. Brown put her arm around the little fellow. "Of course I will," she answered. "I love to tell stories to good little boys." The mother looked a little quizzical, but the child and Mrs. Brown understood each other perfectly. He wished that he had been good. But he had never been restrained and taught to choose the better part. Small as he was, he was aware that he had lost something.

Training Necessary

All children, at times, do things that parents regret, but rudeness to guests will not occur if the child has been reared to be respectful to his parents. This training is more important to the child than to the guest.

"Neglecting the work of disciplining and training until a perverse disposition has become strengthened is doing the children a most serious wrong; for they grow up selfish, exacting, and unlovable. They cannot enjoy their own company any better than can others; therefore they will ever be filled with discontent. The work of the mother must commence at an early age, giving Satan no chance to control the minds and dispositions of their little ones."-Ibid p. 230.

It takes constant work to train a child to have the grace of politeness toward visitors in the home, but the effort is worthwhile. "A child's truest graces consist in modesty and obedience—in attentive ears to hear the words of direction, in willing feet and hands to walk and work in the path of duty. And a child's true goodness will bring its own reward, even in this life."-Ibid p. 145.

3. The Family on Vacation

No CHILDREN allowed." This sign appearing occasionally in public places is an attempt to prevent destruction and loss. Because of youthful vandals and their vandal parents, many well-behaved children are thus also barred from places that would be educational and inspirational. The necessity for this sign is evident, as is also the reason for the children's poor conduct. Parents are woefully remiss in training their children how to act at home, so when they are away from home they do not know, nor do they care, how to act.

"Mothers, teach your children from their earliest years that they are not to look upon everything in the home as playthings for them. By these little things order is taught. No matter what fuss the children may make, let not the organ of destruction, which is large in babyhood and childhood, be strengthened and cultivated. 'Thou shalt,' and 'Thou shalt not,' God says. Without loss of temper, but decidedly, parents are to say to their children, No, and mean it.

"With firmness they are to refuse to allow everything in the home to be handled freely and thrown about on the floor or in the dirt. Those who allow a child to pursue such a course are doing him, a great wrong. He may not be a bad child, but his education is making him very troublesome and destructive."-Child Guidance) p. 101.

Such tendencies go with the family when they go on vacations and outings. And often the families are not aware of the fact that many people dread to see them and their children appear in the group. This ought not to be, for the child's sake, for he will develop a callous feeling toward the attitudes of others if this situation occurs very often.

A sensitive person is ever alert lest he offend or is in a place where he should not be. Christ Himself taught that His followers should be awake to this, when He told them to take a lower seat lest they be humiliated by being asked to step down from a place they had brazenly appropriated. A child who is used to offending has not the sweet grace of sensitiveness that is the characteristic of a well-trained person. And "the influence of an ill-regulated family is widespread, and disastrous to all society."-Patriarchs and Prophets) p. 579.

The Marywell family were on a vacation. They had planned just where they would go, and where they would stop, and what they expected to see. But alas, they were a poorly trained lot, and they spread dismay and desolation wherever they went.

Relatives were glad to see them go, although they seemed not to sense this. They had trouble at nearly every motel because of the noise and loud talk and running about that went on. A manager at one place came twice to ask them to be quiet.

"Of all the nerve!" the mother said angrily, when he had left. "Seven dollars for this place, and they want us to be still as the grave!" And the children were listening. The oracle had spoken.

To them, naturally, mother's utterances were exactly right, and if she said they were shoved around, the children believed it. Watch a child's face when a parent is airing some unwise views. It is a sad sight to behold. It is in public places that the child's training shows up, to his advantage or his disadvantage.

The Broken Lamp

The Marywells stopped at one motel late in their trip. They moved in and settled for the night. The children were in bed, all but little seven-year old Martin, who persisted in turning on and off a beautiful lamp on a table beside the bed. He jerked the pull chain so roughly it was a wonder he did not break it.

Mother and Father Marywell acted as though they could not see what he was doing. They sat and read and talked and looked at television, just as if everything Martin was doing was perfectly all right. Yet, a lamp is not, was not, and never will be, a plaything. He should have learned that at home.

The next morning, while the family was in a bustle getting packed up to leave, Martin got busy again on the lovely lamp. Father Marywell had gone out to a store to get some groceries, for they were planning to eat some cereal and fruit in the room before they left.

Suddenly, crash! The lovely vase-lamp lay on the floor, smashed in pieces.

Mrs. Marywell stopped her packing and shrieked at the child, "Now, just look what you've done, Martin! Just see! Now, you just march and get that big wastebasket. Clean it all up before daddy comes. He mustn't see it. And now we'll have to get right out of here or we're going to have to pay for that lamp. That'll be at least \$20, and money doesn't grow on trees!"

The children were listening, for little Jean told several people about it when they got home. "You should have seen us hurry and get out of there," she confided. "We had the car all packed by the time daddy got back, and we didn't have to pay for the lamp."

What a lesson in dishonesty those children learned that day—a lesson in conniving too; a lesson in deceit; a lesson that will make it harder in a hard world for those little children to find the path to life eternal.

"Honesty should stamp every action of our lives. Heavenly angels examine the work that is put into our hands; and where there has been a departure from the principles of truth, 'wanting', is written in the records."-Counsels on Stewardship, p. 142.

Someday the Marywells, with their children, must stand before the judgment bar of God. There will be before them the gate of heaven, with the ineffable glory of eternity shining through, beckoning with a joy unspeakable to the sweetness of an endless life with Christ and the redeemed who have washed their robes. But to allow vases, and lies, and lamps, and trivia, to bar that gate would be a frightful tragedy.

A child's character is warped by such experiences as the one just mentioned. He should be taught at home to respect the property of others. It is the duty of parents to teach him to be alert on this. He has to learn to be discerning, observant, full of grace and sweetness.

"Some parents allow their children to be destructive, to use as playthings things which they have no right to touch. Children should be taught that they must not handle the property of other people. For the comfort and happiness of the family, they must learn to observe the rules of propriety. Children are no happier when they are allowed to handle everything they see. If they are not educated to be care taking, they will grow up with unlovely, destructive traits of character." Child Guidance, pp. 101, 102.

Trips can be a blessing to families that have been in the habit of following the blessed Jesus. They can be drawn nearer to the kingdom of heaven than ever before. This sweet fellowship of leisure and rest in travel can run like a golden thread through the very fabric of their characters. Integrity, kindness, love, and togetherness will bring the family into oneness with Christ. During the long hours of travel, by loving counsel, by example, by story, and by precept the children can learn more surely the way to the kingdom.

"Let parents and children remember that day by day they are each forming a character, and that the features of this character are imprinted upon the books of heaven. God is taking pictures of His people, just as surely as an artist takes pictures of men and women, transferring the features of the face to the polished plate. What kind of picture do you wish to produce? Parents, answer the question!

What kind of picture will the great Master Artist make of you in the records of heaven?"-Ibid., p. 562.

4. A Store Is Not a Race Track

THIS lovely and careful business of getting children ready for life should include the grace of good manners in stores and places of business. Here the child, a bundle of curiosity and filled with the natural childish desire to handle everything, can become a dreaded nuisance. Here, also, children can violate the "Thou shalt not steal" commandment. If in a child's own home he is permitted to appropriate for his own use anything he can reach or touch, he is bound to consider everything "fair game" in stores and other public places. Parents who, out of a desire to solve a problem in an easier way, put out of reach or hide things they do not want their children to have, unwittingly give their children the idea that anything they can reach is theirs by way of discovery. I have met many children who had this idea; and they learned it at home.

Parents often say, "Hide this quickly, while he's not looking." It may be harder and it may involve a little difficulty at first, but if a child learns by a word that some things are just not his, he will be a happier child than if he is turned loose on everything. His restless acquisitiveness should have bounds.

One day grandmother saw little Charlie examining a pretty, expensive vase on a small table. "I'll put it up so he won't break it," she said.

"Oh, no," I told her, "please don't. Come here, Charlie," I interrupted myself to say. The baby came to me, happily, confidently.

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I took his little hand and led him to the vase. "That is Aunt Gert's pretty vase," I told him. "Baby must not touch it, for it might break."

He looked up into my face. "Charlie not touch?" he asked.

"No," I said. "Charlie must not touch."

He went away and played with something else and did not bother the vase any more. Grandma and auntie marveled at it, but it was not so wonderful. We had talked of such things in that way for a long time, and he understood me perfectly. I never had to spank his hands any more, for he knew what I meant when I said he must not touch. And he was not unhappy.

In stores children reveal their home training. As far as possible, parents should accompany their children to stores. Children should be instructed to look—yes, look all they want to—but not to touch unless they are invited to do so by the clerk. It is a part of the training of a child in the graces of life to be well-mannered in stores. Here he may witness to the refining influence of the truth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I used to tell stories about the different things I wanted to teach my boys when they were small. Little rhymes helped too.

"The things in stores are not yet yours;

Keep hands away until you pay."

I took some children to a yard-goods store one day. They had begged me to take them with me. But as soon as they got in the door they began to chase one another all around, whirling and flying from one aisle to another. I called them to me. "You must not do that," I said. "This is a store, not a race track. You are bumping into people and making a nuisance of yourselves."

"Oh, mamma doesn't care," the oldest one assured me. "She always lets us."

I told them that if they wanted to be with me, they could not do this, for people do not like it. I pointed out that even the manager was standing up to look. I showed them that a clerk nearby was watching. "You must always watch to see whether you are doing something that is not polite," I told them. "Get the habit of watching. That is a part of growing up. You would not want to be told to get out of this store, would you?"

The children considered. "I guess not," the oldest child decided. "I might want to come back."

Last summer I was eating lunch in a large drugstore near a university. A group of teen-agers came in. They were around fourteen or fifteen years old. There were both girls and boys, and they filled about three tables. I noted that the girls who waited tables were very nervous, and one called the manager.

He came out, very angry.

"Get out of here, everyone of you," he commanded. "And you are lucky if I don't call the police and have you run in!"

They got up and left, but stood out in front and talked awhile. It was a hot day, and they seemed to want a cool drink or some ice cream, but their bad behavior had closed at least one door.

"You should have seen the mess they made of the tables yesterday when they came in," a waitress volunteered to me. "They emptied salt into the sugar, filled the salt shakers with Coca Cola, and broke nine glasses. It took a long time to clean up after them."

Such children have never been taught the first principles of courtesy and politeness.

"The essence of true politeness is consideration for others. The essential, enduring education is that which broadens the sympathies and encourages universal kindness. That so-called culture which does not make a youth deferential toward his parents, appreciative of their excellences, forbearing toward their defects, and helpful to their necessities; which does not make him considerate and tender, generous and helpful toward the young, the old, and the unfortunate, and courteous toward all is a failure."-The Adventist Home p. 423.

Let us, then, as Christians teach our children the refining nature of real religion. "One child, properly disciplined in the principles of truth, who has the love and fear of God woven through the character, will possess a power for good in the world that cannot be estimated."-ELLEN G. WHITE in Signs of the Times July 13, 1888.

5. The Table Next to Me Was a Sight

ANYONE who has served at camp meeting or at junior camp or in a cafeteria anywhere can wish fervently that some children could have a little training in unselfishness and in propriety of conduct before eating in a public dining room. There it can be seen just what kind of background children have had. And sometimes it is a sad revelation.

When children paw through the bread or the toast in search of some slice they fancy, when they reach far over other food to get the biggest piece of cake or the biggest apple or piece of fruit, one can be sure that someone has been remiss, someone has failed to teach these children the principles of gracious living.

It is a never-ending task, an exacting chore, to train children to do the lovely and the proper thing. Too often the child has been in a home where the manners of one or both of the parents have left a great deal to be desired. He has seen his father reach across the table and pick morsels from serving dishes with his fingers. He has seen the soup dish tipped up and drunk from to get the last tasty drop. He has seen food pushed onto the spoon or fork with the fingers. He has never been in company with people who have learned to do things the right way. Some children in their homes have never been curbed in heaping up their plates with food. They greedily take more than they need, pick at it, mess with it, and go away leaving more on their plates than they should have eaten in two meals. My father used to say, "Take only a little, and if you want more you can take it later. I don't want to see a lot of good food wasted and thrown out. I've seen too many people hungry." But not a word of caution is given to many children who heap their plates with impossible amounts of food.

"Oh, well, we have chickens," someone may remark. "It is not entirely wasted." Perhaps that is so, but it is expensive food, and not particularly suitable for animals or fowls. Besides, a wonderful opportunity to teach the child good judgment and life's niceties is thus missed. A child will heap a tray full of food in a cafeteria, teasing all the time for this and that, until he has more than he can possibly eat. He will then pick at it, and eat only a fraction of the good food, paid for by his mother or father, and pettishly demand to be able to eat his dessert and leave the other. He knows that before the afternoon is over he can persuade them to get him something.

Good food is thrown out by the ton, and millions of children are getting the idea that their wants are more important than anything else. They have never been told, and they would not care if they were told, of the millions whose living standards do not nearly approach ours.

Jean went through the academy cafeteria line every day and handled this and that until she found the biggest and best dish of food for herself. Her behavior was more than revealing. The self-love she had grown up with had gone along with her to the academy, to be seen by everyone.

Children's table manners often show unfavorably in public places. Food is scooped up in gigantic bites, and dropped on floor, clothing, and tablecloth. These young ones have never been taught how to manage their napkin, fork, or knife. They spread a whole slice of bread at once, and smear their greasy hands over face and tablecloth.

Their voices are heard frequently monopolizing the conversation and, of course, talking with their mouth full of food. Once a friend of mine touched my arm. "Look at that," she said in a low voice. The table next to me was a sight to behold. There was food on the floor and one boy old enough to know better was in the act of drinking from the side of his plate. Food was strewn from one end of the table to the other.

There is really no need of this. Many books have been written about manners and about neat habits of eating. There is no good reason for any family to be in gross ignorance regarding genteel behavior. In these days no one can live to himself. Children are bound to have to go out and meet a world that often is not too kind. A child needs an armor of gentle training in doing the right thing to help him get on in a world that is hard to conquer at best. In some places the whole message of the remnant church has fallen into evil repute because of the crudeness and boorishness of some people who are ignorant and uncultured and seem to be proud of it. The whole church is judged by the bad example of such.

Because we are an "epistle. . . , known and read of all men," we need to exercise great care and caution lest we take the name of the Lord in vain. "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

6. "But What Did You Do?"

THE little face was pitiful. How it tugged at my heartstrings. It brought tears to my eyes. Big tears also brimmed in the sweet brown eyes.

"But, Mamma, I am your own little boy and you love me. You won't spank me, will you?" The little voice was so sweet, and the fat little hand patted my hand in childish conciliation.

I would rather have said to him, "Well, I'll let you go, this time. But you must never do it again." But I did not dare do this. It was a building block in his little character to learn to be depended on and to learn to obey. I would have destroyed his confidence in my word.

He had been told several times to come straight home from the store. He had been told why, and had been told that at nightfall the streets are not safe for children. The traffic is heavier, and the evil in the cities is great.

But he had not heeded. He had again stopped to play, and he had played so long that we were worried as to his safety and had been out hunting for him. I had told him before, that the next time he did this he would have to be punished. For his own sake I must do what I had told him I would do. It was not easy, but it was the only right thing to do. His punishment helped him to remember, for a child must learn the "Thou shalt's" and the "Thou shalt not's" of the home. Then he will not chafe at the rules of the school and of the church and of the Lord.

"In allowing children to do as they please, parents may think themselves affectionate, but they are practicing the veriest cruelty. Children are able to reason, and their souls are hurt by inconsiderate

kindness, however proper this kindness may be in the eyes of the parents. As the children grow older, their insubordination grows. Their teachers may try to correct them, but too often the parents side with the children, and the evil continues to grow, clothed, if possible, with a still darker covering of deception than before. Other children are led astray by the wrong course of these children, and yet the parents cannot see the wrong. The words of their children are listened to before the words of teachers, who mourn over the wrong."-Child Guidance, p.326.

From the moment the child shows his small, earnest, shy, mischievous, or self-centered face in the schoolroom, he is a living display of the manners he has learned in his home. Parents would be terribly embarrassed if they could see how nearly their children carry to school the imperfections of the home.

"Let me help you," Vernon said to me shyly. I was sweeping out the entry of the school. He took the broom and carefully finished the small chore. There was real pleasure glowing on his small, earnest face.

I knew by this that Vernon was in the habit of helping his mother and his father at home. He had been taught to be alert to things to do. Later when I visited in the home, Vernon was on the job, doing his chores. He fed the cookstove, took out the peelings, and filled the woodbox.

"Anything else, Mother?" he asked, brushing the bark slivers from his sweater sleeves.

"You may go and play now," she had said gently. The boy left almost reluctantly. It was as though he would rather be indoors helping his mother than outside shouting with the other children.

Harley Was Different

But it was not the same with Harley. He was a trial everywhere. He teased the little ones, and took their things from them, and threw their small toys so he could watch them run for them. His uproarious laughter was not a lovely thing to hear. He had to be sternly dealt with, to stop him from this doubtful pleasure.

On the playground he was an especial trial. Big and overgrown, he had a perpetual, dissatisfied scowl on his face. I always played with the children, and I noticed right at the beginning that the children would not choose him for their side until the last. I was to learn why very soon.

We started a game of prisoner's base. Harley got caught early in the game, and the trouble began right then.

"No fair, no fair," he shouted. "You ganged up on me. I ain't goin' to prison. I ain't." He marched right back to the line, his lips stuck out defiantly. I had seen the whole thing. He had been honestly caught.

"Do you mean you are not going to play?" I asked. "Oh, yes, I'll play," he said. "But they're not supposed to catch me. I never take 'it.' My mother says I don't have to." "I'm sure your mother does not know how this game works," I told him. "In this game, if you are not willing to be caught and go to the prison, you cannot play. That is how the game goes. You can sit on the steps and watch us, if you don't want to play."

Harley opened his mouth to speak, a look of incredible surprise spreading over his face. Then, looking at my face, he changed his mind. He stood for a moment and looked at me, and I looked at him. "Aw right," he said in a low voice, "I'll go to the prison."

Then the game became gay and uproarious. I was the one to tap him and get him out of prison. Later, when I got in prison, he sneaked around and got me out. When we ran back to the line together, he said, "Boy, I like to get caught; I didn't know it was so much fun."

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"Mrs. Edwards, you're in for it," an eighth grader told me. "He'll go home and tell his mother, and she'll call you up and tell you off tonight. She always tells the teachers off if they do, anything to Harley."

I decided to talk to the children awhile after the recess about the value of playing the game. I told them that games are for recreation, for exercise. As we play them we must not care whether we win or lose, but have a good time. Someone must lose or the whole pattern of the game is lost. Life is like a game, I told them. Sometimes we lose, sometimes we win, but we can play the game and be happy in it all.

I told them about the One who lived to bless others, and how as a child He was full of grace and truth. We can make our lives so sweet that we can be like Him. "The aged, the sorrowing, and the sin-burdened, the children at play in their innocent joy, the little creatures of the groves, the patient beasts of burden,—all were happier for His presence. He whose word of power upheld the worlds would stoop to relieve a wounded bird."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 74.

Then I told the children that much depends on how lives are built every day. If we are spoiled and hateful when we are children, it is likely that we will be spoiled and hateful when we are grown. I told them of hateful and mean old women and men I had known, and how unhappy they were because they had never learned how sweet it is to get along with other people. We must strive to overcome the ugly things in our lives while we are young, or they will set like varnish, or cement, and it will be next to impossible to change when we are older. That is the reason that being converted is a miracle. The Lord does something that is really impossible. He takes an ugly, hateful life and makes it into something lovely and beautiful.

I felt sorry at the significant glances the children cast in Harley's direction; this was a cruelty his parents had inflicted upon him. He had a right to the pleasure of popularity and amiable association and fellowship. But he had never tasted that joy. Selfishness and unwise love had set him apart as an oddity, and not a pleasant one at that. He could only look on sadly, for he honestly did not know how to get along with the other children.

Slanted Reporting

Many a teacher's life is made wretched and miserable by children who have never learned grace and truth. Tales are carried home from school so slyly twisted that the parents accept them as truth. Then the parents arraign themselves against the teacher. The child sees what a stir he has caused, and it gratifies his ego to see how worked up he can get his parents, with a bit of slanted reporting.

Then begins the journey of the child toward an unlovely life. His critical and untruthful reporting goes on, for he sees what excitement he can cause. It gives him a sense of power to get revenge on a teacher who may be, and usually is, trying her best to help him. He is encouraged by those who should be with the teacher wholeheartedly in the business of helping the child.

His sweet innocence gives way to faultfinding and downright lying. The slightest occurrence is reported with a twisted significance. Hearts have been broken and lives have been saddened by the actions and attitudes of parents with children like this. "Do not allow your children to see that you take their word before the statements of older Christians. You cannot do them a greater injury. By saying, I believe my children before I believe those whom I have evidence are children of God, you encourage in them the habit of falsifying."—*Child Guidance*, pp. 273, 274.

When a child comes home with a tale from school, do not for a moment let him see that it is of any particular significance to you. Do not do your child this injury. He is watching you closely, more closely than you realize. Do not let him think that you are pleased with this way of doing.

"All right, but what did you do?" I used to ask, when some kind of plaintive tale was brought home to me, calculated to arouse my sympathy toward my poor wronged child.

"Why I—"

"Come now," I encouraged, "I want to hear what you did to provoke this. I know you quite well, you know, and I know that at home you do not always act like a nice boy. And I want the teacher to see to it that you are a good boy at school. Now, what did you do?"

I tried to be very careful to help my children to see the other person's side of any difficulty, and never to forget that they themselves had faults too. I usually ferreted out the full story, and made plain that the small punishment they received was merited. They were happier than they would have been with an injured-innocence role.

Criticizing the Teacher

I never criticized a teacher in their presence. I have gone and talked to a teacher, if I was puzzled about some small happenstance, but I have never yet, never even once, found that my child had been wronged, or discriminated against in any way. "Nothing should be said or done to weaken the children's respect for the one upon whom their wellbeing in so great degree depends."-Ibid p. 326.

"The neglect of parents to train their children makes the work of the teacher doubly hard. The children bear the stamp of the unruly, unamiable traits revealed by their parents. Neglected at home, they regard the discipline of the school as oppressive and severe. . . . The good that children might receive in school to counteract their defective home training is undermined by the sympathy which their parents show for them in their wrongdoing. . . . Fathers and mothers professing the truth for this time might better come to their senses and no longer . . . carry out Satan's devices by accepting the false testimony of their unconverted children. It is enough for teachers to have the children's influence to contend with, without having the parents' influence also."-Ibid, pp. 326, 327.

Some parents who read this will say that their case is different, that these statements from the inspired pen are not applicable in their case; but they are applicable wherever there are children and church schools and parents. There are in every center unwise people who believe strongly that their children are always in the right. They are due for a rude awakening, if they do not see their error, for the stakes are great. Their children's eternal welfare is at stake. They hold their children's destinies, to a great degree, in their hands. They need not make mistakes, for the Lord has given us a blueprint and careful directions which, if we heed them, will mean life eternal for us and for our children.

7. The Home, Producer of Saints or of Sinners

AT NIGHT in cities all across America, boys and girls are abroad, alone, idle, undisciplined. One god they have and one only, and that is self. Along dark streets they come, in knots, in gangs, filthy words on lips stained by tobacco.

These youngsters should be at home. Being at home should be more fun than being in gangs on dark streets. But where are the big kitchens where someone sits and cracks nuts and tells stories and asks riddles while another is popping corn? Someone is at the kitchen table with schoolbooks, and a little girl has her doll. A baby boy has his blocks in one corner of the room, sitting on the bright linoleum, building towers with uncertain little fingers. A home like this can keep a child. He would rather be there, if it is attractive enough; if it is clean, and spicy with the smells of good cooking. I remember running, running,

so I could get home from school. I ran through rain and snow and slush to get home to dear mother, who kept her eye on the door, watching for us to come.

At chore time Chester and Willie would get the milk pails and head for the barn, and we girls would set the table and do little chores around the house. We knew that in the cookie jar were several kinds of delicious treats, for mother remembered the lunches we had to carry and had surprises for us all the time. There would be thin sugar cookies, glistening with sugar, or scalloped-edged gingersnaps, and fat molasses cookies, spicy and crumbling tender.

Supper was always a wonderful experience. Mother's cooking was both healthful and delicious. There was always plenty of fresh milk, or a cup of sassafras tea and a plate of buttered homemade bread, and a dish of applesauce.

We would gather around the long table, tastefully set. And we were very happy, although mother had never heard of an electric stove or the marvel of a porcelain-surfaced refrigerator. There are other sources of happiness, besides those with things as the prime object. I loved home. It was clean and comfortable. I felt safe and secure and loved there.

Poor Raymond

Raymond did not have such a home. I used to hear footsteps along the sidewalk, when we lived in town, and would hear father say, "There goes poor little Raymond Schaffer. He hadn't ought to be out like this at night." Ten years old, and coming home at one and two in the morning. No, he had nothing very appetizing to hold him. Dirt and squalor and uncertain meals and unsavory beds made up his environment. And whisky. Yes, whisky was there, and his mother, as well as his father, was fond of it. No wonder he is behind bars today. He had no anchor, nothing of depth and goodness to hold him.

Perhaps we nod our heads piously and say it is terrible for children to be reared in such circumstances. Yet there are homes so disorderly and in such mad confusion that it is a wonder that children ever learn the holy lessons of purity, goodness, and love of truth. An orderly home is a constant lesson in neatness and purity. Even a small child takes pride in beauty.

"Order is heaven's first law, and the Lord desires His people to give in their homes a representation of the order and harmony that pervade the heavenly courts. Truth never places her delicate feet in a path of uncleanness or impurity. Truth does not make men and women coarse or rough and untidy. It raises all who accept it to a high level."-Counsels on Health} p. 101.

"From their infancy, children should be taught lessons of purity. Mothers cannot too early begin to fill the minds of their children with pure, holy thoughts. And one way of doing this is to keep everything about them clean and pure."-Ibid.} p. 103.

"There is a sense of fitness, an idea of the appropriateness of things, in the minds of even very young children; and how can they be impressed with the desirability of purity and holiness when their eyes daily rest on untidy dresses and disorderly rooms? How can the heavenly guests, whose home is where all is pure and holy, be invited into such a dwelling?"-Christian Temperance and Bible Hygiene, p. 144.

In the homes of believers in the second coming of the Lord, it is urgently necessary to be an example in all things. "The influence of an ill-regulated family is widespread, and disastrous to all society" (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 579), while "a well ordered Christian household is a powerful argument in favor of the reality of the Christian religion, –an argument that the infidel cannot gainsay" (ibid., p. 144).

The environment of the child is so important that a parent should create this with fear and trembling. In his home the child learns the philosophies that will carry him through life.

Home does not need to mean luxury, nor all the child thinks he needs. Indeed, a child loses all value of things, and time, and money, if he does not want for something once in a while, and if he does not learn that hard work is the price of getting things. Softness and protection and saccharin tenderness are poor ways to put mettle in a child. A boy or girl who has known only hovering and protection and lavish profusion of gifts to satisfy his slightest wish, spoken or anticipated, is an unhappy child. If he has never learned to get out and dig, to long for something, and to work for it; if he has never learned the fun of sharing, to give and to take, he is sadly defrauded.

Children Need Tasks

Home should be made attractive, and full of security, yes, but it should be a school, also, teaching children the beauty of living a holy, happy life. They need to learn the important place they hold in the plan of things, and that their small contribution to the comfort of the family is important. It is a sin to allow a child to be on the receiving end all the time. He must have tasks to do daily, and with regularity. If this is enforced there need be no scenes.

"I have been shown that much sin has resulted from idleness. Active hands and minds do not find time to heed every temptation which the enemy suggests, but idle hands and brains are all ready for Satan to control. . . . Parents should teach their children that idleness is sin."-Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 395.

"Train up a child in the way he should go." Training involves a steady daily grind, every day of the young child's life. It means managing, but not overmanaging. It means love, but not indulgence and coddling and blind adoration in which even the hateful faults are excused. It means companionship and understanding; also words of severe counsel sometimes, even indignation. For children are people, who are interested in themselves, and who do not like criticism or censure. It is so much more comfortable to let someone else take the hard part. The child thinks it is more fun for mother to clean up the boot tracks, and pick up the toys, and mop up the spilled water. And it is easier for the mother who is blindly adoring and who coddles unwisely to do it, now. But later, when the clouds gather and the storm is imminent and parents see the monster they have created, they lift up their voices and weep.

"My wife is fasting and praying for our boy," a distracted father told me once. "He curses his mother to her face, and orders her to get him this and get him that."

"And does she?" I asked artlessly.

"Why, yes," the father answered me bewilderedly. "She loves him most tenderly, and she loves to do for him better than she likes even her life." "My children demand meat when they come home," a mother with a grown family sighed, when I saw some red meat in her refrigerator. "They were reared in the truth, but. . . oh, dear. . . they have forgotten all we ever did at home."

"And do you give it to them?" I asked. "I would not," I added. "They should think of home as a bulwark of truth. They should not have any conception of you in any act of compromise. You have too much delightful food to compromise for them."

"The curse of God will surely rest upon unfaithful parents. Not only are they planting thorns which will wound them here, but they must meet their own unfaithfulness when the judgment shall sit. Many children will rise up in judgment and condemn their parents for not restraining them, and charge upon them their destruction. The false sympathy and blind love of parents causes them to excuse the faults of their children and pass them by without correction, and their children are lost in consequence, and the blood of their souls will rest upon the unfaithful parents."-Ibid., p. 219.

8. "I Don't Like To . . ."

SOME people like to keep house, and they make this necessary and important task an experience of pleasure and of beauty. Their homes are little heavens of joy and delight.

"I don't like to keep house," Mrs. Vinco said often. "I'd much rather work in the yard and the garden and give Bible studies and do church work." One might ask her, "Then why, pray tell, did you take that duty upon you? Why did you get married and surround yourself with a home and with children if the task of homemaking is so distasteful? You bargained for a job you are not willing to do now."

Mrs. Vinco would be aghast if Mr. Vinco would ever say, "I don't like to go out into the harsh world and make a living for my family. I'd much rather take hikes and mow the yard and read in the quiet of the shady porch."

Homemaking is a serious work, and much depends upon cleanliness and decency in one's surroundings. Eternal destinies are influenced by such things. So, Mother, whether you like it or not, it is your Christian duty to keep a neat and orderly home.

Walking into some homes where there is an unpleasant odor, dust on the furniture, and dirty dishes, one wonders at the spiritual condition of the family who lives there, for "the true child of God will be neat and clean" (ibid.) p. 102). If the housewife does not know how to order her household she should learn to do so. The home environment has a telling effect on the minds and hearts of little children.

"Mothers, if you desire your children's thoughts to be pure, let their surroundings be pure. Let their sleeping rooms be scrupulously neat and clean." Ibid.) p. 103.

"God is displeased with disorder, slackness, and a lack of thoroughness, in anyone. These deficiencies are serious evils, and tend to wean the affections of the husband from the wife, when the husband loves order, well-disciplined children, and a well-regulated house. A wife and mother cannot make home agreeable and happy unless she possesses a love for order, preserves her dignity, and has good government; therefore all who fail on these points should begin at once to educate themselves in this direction, and cultivate the very things wherein is their greatest lack."-Testimonies) vol. 2, pp. 298, 299.

Homes have been broken just because wives have neglected to do their work faithfully.

The whole village knows about how dirty and disorderly and untidy Meg is. When she goes to town her hair is bushy, her dress soiled and wrinkled, and her children go hither, thither, and yon, as they please. If they stay away at night she does not show concern.

"They'll get along," she remarks with a shrug.

Her dishes are surrealists' dreams of smeared egg and dried gravy, and the floors are strewn and filthy, while junk fills every corner. Her husband talks about her, and tells intimate details of their home life to whoever will listen. One wonders where their "heaven to go to heaven in" has gone.

And yet they claim to be Sabbathkeepers. A great change must take place if these two are to get into the kingdom of God.

"One well-ordered, well-disciplined family tells more in behalf of Christianity than all the sermons that can be preached."-The Adventist Home) p.32.

Many a child has lost all taste for spiritual things and for the beauty of holiness from being reared in unsavory surroundings. And the Lord will lay the blame in the last great day just where it belongs-on

homemakers who did not consider their humble duties to be important enough to do them thoroughly and well, as unto the Lord.

9. Teaching Evil by Example

All right, just let them do me dirty like that! Just let them! I'll show them! It'll sure cost this church plenty. And the conference too, for that matter. I'll fix them. I'll send my Tithe elsewhere. "

Walter Binnell, a businessman, made this statement when he came home from a church business meeting at which some pet scheme of his that he had counted on strongly was not given precedence. He was so angry that he pouted like a spoiled child. He shouted and he called names-and the children were listening.

They heard the minister called an old dictator, the elder was said to be a fool; and plans for revenge were made right there in a place where the children should have been learning the things the Lord requires of them if they are to enjoy the society of holy, saved beings and angels.

It was inevitable that the tithe was interpreted in their young and plastic minds as money that can be paid or withheld, just as one pleases. If you pay it, it is an advantage to someone, who will suffer some kind of inconvenience if it is not paid. The prerogative of paying or withholding tithe becomes an instrument of personal power in the children's minds, and this is a far cry from the way the Lord would have it to be.

The children heard their father declare that he would put the tithe where he wanted to, in some good place where he was sure it would be handled the way he thought it ought to be.

They were made to think that it really did not matter if it was not brought into the storehouse, even though God specifically commands this. So the will of the Lord, minimized as of little importance, lost some of its influence in their lives. By the training of the home the children thought less of the express commands of the Lord.

The children learned too that it is legitimate to get revenge on people who oppose you in the church, and one of the ways to do it is to withhold the tithe. So the windows of heaven are sealed tight shut, and no one is there to rebuke the devourer, for he is invited into the family circle.

Satan is there to teach the children to be infidels. He is teaching them that they can lay aside one of the Lord's commandments through malice. And this evil seed will carryover so that they can easily make light of other things as holy and as good. Instead of being taught how to be saved, they are given definite instructions in the dark and devious ways of iniquity. And they will follow –yes, they will, for children listen, and they hear, and they do as they hear.

"The divine eye is ever upon us. We cannot cover one act of unjust deal from God. The witness of God to our every action is a truth which but few realize."-Child Guidance, p. 152. "Remember that your children will speak as they hear you speaking. By your example you are educating them." Ibid. p. 551.

"To many parents the Judge will say in that day, 'You had My Word, plainly setting forth your duty. Why have you not obeyed its teachings? Knew ye not that it was the voice of God? Did I not bid you search the Scriptures, that you might not go astray? You have not only ruined your own souls, but by your pretensions to godliness you have misled many others. You have no part with Me. Depart; depart.' "-Ibid. p. 569.

10. Parents Need to Pull Together

"YOUR son looks like his father," my sister said politely to a visiting neighbor. The woman looked angry. Her eyes snapped. She clenched her fist. "Yes, and he acts like him too. But I'm trying to beat it out of him every day of his life."

We laughed a little at that, later, but it was really very sad. There were two people who once were in love with each other. At one time there were whispered love words and clasped hands. There were mutual pledges, too, holy and sacred. Marriage came because these two wanted to spend the rest of their lives together.

But something went wrong-radically wrongsomewhere. Resentment, even smoldering hate and revulsion, had come to take the place of tenderness and devotion. And what should have been, and was, dreamed of as being a little bit of heaven on earth is now unpleasant with hostility and resentment. The children feel it and want to get away from home as soon as they can.

She has long since ceased to wait eagerly for her husband to come home from work. Neither does he feel any need to hasten, for her face no longer is loved or sweet to him. He has ceased bringing her little gifts as he used to do, and birthdays and anniversaries go by unnoticed.

"What's the use?" he confides to anyone who will take the time to listen. "She's just an old nagger. Nothing I do ever pleases her. She gets onto me for everything. I can't win for losin'."

"Why should I try to please the old stuffed shirt?" she asks plaintively. "He never notices anything I do. He never has a good word to say to me. But you ought to see how nice he can be to everyone else. Ha! Butter wouldn't melt in his mouth."

The children are listening to the continual fight, no holds barred. And since they only have one life, that life is checkered and marred by the unhappiness that surrounds them and threatens to engulf them, when they should be seeing a foretaste of the glory ahead. They are eager to find happiness—who isn't?—but how can they learn to order their lives if they do not learn it in the home?

They hear their father making belittling remarks about their mother. And they hear their mother doing the same to their father. Children learn to order their lives from what they see and hear day by day. What a poor preparation for happiness many children have!

"When fathers and mothers are converted, there will be a thorough conversion of their principles of management. Their thoughts will be converted; their tongues will be converted. . . . There will be no loud, angry talking in the home. The words will be of a character to soothe and bless the hearer. . . . Take all the ugly features out of the voice."—The Adventist Home, p. 436.

There are many who admit frankly that they have a fiery temper. And they are willing to go on and tell you from whom they inherited it, as if that excuses it. These things must be subdued and conquered if we expect to live with Jesus forevermore. The promises of God's Word are only to overcomers. Unless we control our words and our tempers we are virtual slaves of the evil one. "We are in subjection to him. He leads us captive. All jangling and unpleasant, impatient, fretful words are an offering presented to his satanic majesty. And it is a costly offering, more costly than any sacrifice we can make for God, for it destroys the peace and happiness of whole families, destroys health, and is eventually the cause of forfeiting an eternal life of happiness."—Testimonies, vol. 1, p. 310.

Chris was reared in just such a home. He told someone that he had to dodge every day to keep from being hit with dishes or pots and kettles. He was glad enough to get away when they sent him to the

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academy. But, alas, he had not learned the first principle of getting along with people. He was the bane of nearly every teacher's life. He was always up for some kind of discipline. Finally he was expelled, and he joined the Army and got married the same day.

Poor Audrey. She should have known better. I met her not long ago. Chris had left her.

"I did all I could," she sobbed, "but he just doesn't seem to know how a home ought to be run. He doesn't seem to have any idea as to what his responsibilities are, or how he should act. I guess he just doesn't know."

How could he know, Audrey? He saw nothing that would teach him while he was growing up! "What're you going to do with a wife who just can't seem to get ready for Sabbath school on time?" asked a loud-mouthed man at a Sabbath school workshop. "I just sit there in our living room and holler my head off. The way she drags her feet, we just barely make it in time for Sabbath school. I like to be there in time to choose my seat at least."

I cringed at this critical statement, for I knew that more than likely, somewhere in the audience, his wife was hearing these unkind words with painful embarrassment.

Since I was one of the counselors, I spoke up quickly. "How many children do you have?" I asked innocently.

"Five. The smallest one is five months old."

"Did you say you sat and hollered?" I asked incredulously. "You ought to go and help her. With five children to get ready, and the house to leave in order, and the kitchen to straighten up, she has a load almost too heavy for one person."

I saw him gasp at the boldness of my suggestion. "You see," I added as kindly as I could, "you will have the blessing of togetherness if you do this. We had two little boys in our home. My husband and I did the dishes together, and then my husband took one boy and I took the other. That way neither of us was tired or vexed or overwrought. We could enjoy the blessings of the Sabbath together."

From the nudges and significant smiles, I saw I had caught a tartar and silenced him. The man reddened, started to say something, thought better of it, then subsided.

"Let the wife feel that she can lean upon the large affections of her husband-that his arms will strengthen and uphold her through all her toils and cares, that his influence will sustain hers-and her burden will lose half its weight. Are the children not his as well as hers? . . . There is a tendency for the husband to feel free to go out and come into his home more as a boarder than a husband of the family circle."-The Adventist Home, pp. 216, 217.

"Let the husband aid his wife by his sympathy and unfailing affection. If he wishes to keep her fresh and gladsome, so that she will be as sunshine in the home, let him help her bear her burdens." Ibid., p. 218.

The battle to overcome hateful traits of character, the selfishness and meanness that so often show in all their unloveliness, is a challenging one even in the most auspicious surroundings. The enemy of souls is continually seeking to destroy us and our children. He knows exactly how to do it, for he has had a great deal of experience in dragging down millions to their destruction.

Stamina, fortitude, and integrity of character can be stored up in the happy environment of a good home just as oil is stored in a lamp. It will be there to draw on, to light the life when the night is dark.

"One well-ordered, well-disciplined family tells more in behalf of Christianity than all the sermons that can be preached. Such a family gives evidence that the parents have been successful in following God's directions, and that their children will serve Him in the church. Their influence grows; for as they impart,

they receive to impart again. The father and mother find helpers in their children, who give to others the instruction received in the home. The neighborhood in which they live is helped, for in it they have become enriched for time and for eternity. The whole family is engaged in the service of the Master; and by their godly example, others are inspired to be faithful and true to God in dealing with His flock, His beautiful flock." -Ibid., p. 32.

The biggest thing in life, then, is to prepare the whole of our household for the better land; to train our children in all the Christian graces. This is a tremendous work, and it will be well-nigh impossible if the husband and the wife do not love and honor one another, and pull together in dedication to their common task.

There is not time for selfishness and hatefulness, for blame and dissension. The stakes are high and the hour is late. The sun is setting in the blood-red of the western skies. But beyond the sunset lies the day-God's tomorrow.

11. A Platter of Criticism

IT WAS Sabbath. The whole family had come home from church and were just sitting down to a most attractive meal. Sister Filley was a good cook. But served up, too, with the meal was the minister, in a platter of faultfinding and carping criticism. "I really believe they sent us the poorest stick in the whole conference," Jack Filley remarked as he filled his plate with the good things his wife had prepared. "Take that sermon today. If you got anything out of it you've got more sense than I have."

Marta Filley smiled a little disdainfully. She got up to fill the salad dish. "It was pretty poor," she admitted, "but don't mention it. There's a whole clique in that church that thinks the sun rises and sets in him. Why, Granny James told him he cleared up a lot of things for her today, and so did Brother Pierce. I wonder what the conference office has against this church?"

The children were listening, and because of their parents' comments they too thought it was a terrible sermon, and not worth listening to. They wondered just what the folks at the conference office meant for sending them such a tiresome "old goat," as father had called Elder Smith on several occasions.

That very week Pastor Smith went to the church school to hold the meetings of the Week of Prayer. He smiled at the children when he drove up in front of the schoolhouse. "I just love to hear Brother Smith talk," said Benny Barth. "He tells so many stories and makes it so real."

"So do I," said little Ellen Breen. "My mother said—" "Well, I sure don't," Jackie Filley said, airily tossing his head, his black eyes snapping. "My pop says he's an old goat and he ain't worth listenin' to. I ain't gonna listen, either. You just see!"

And so, into the schoolhouse on Monday morning came the evil influence of the Sabbath noon dissection at the Filley home.

"You just see," little Melba Filley whispered as she sat down. "He'll try every way to make us cry. Mother says he's a poor stick. I ain't going to cry. He can't make me." And so little Melba and Jackie had learned at home to harden their young hearts to the pleadings of the Holy Spirit. They learned the lesson well, through the years.

Both Melba and Jackie are dead now. And the kind of lives they were living when they died make any hope of seeing them again exceedingly slim. And poor Brother and Sister Filley grieve and wonder why their children were so worldly and had so little taste for spiritual things.

Christian Courtesy

We could tell you, Brother and Sister Filley. With your criticism and undermining, you ushered in the agony of your children's ruin.

"The spirit of gossip and talebearing is one of Satan's special agencies to sow discord and strife, to separate friends, and to undermine the faith of many. . . .

"The names of God's chosen servants have been handled with disrespect, and in some cases with absolute contempt, by certain persons whose duty it is to uphold them. The children have not failed to hear the disrespectful remarks of their parents in reference to the solemn reproofs and warnings of God's servants. They have understood the scornful jests and depreciatory speeches that from time to time have met their ears, and the tendency has been to bring sacred and eternal interests, in their minds, on a level with the common affairs of the world. What a work are these parents doing in making infidels of their children even in their childhood!" Testimonies, vol. 4, p. 195.

"Satan has many helpers. Many who profess to be Christians are aiding the tempter to catch away the seeds of truth from other hearts. Many who listen to the preaching of the word of God make it the subject of criticism at home. They sit in judgment on the sermon as they would on the words of a lecturer or a political speaker. The message that should be regarded as the word of the Lord to them is dwelt upon with trifling or sarcastic comment. The minister's character, motives, and actions, and the conduct of fellow members of the church, are freely discussed. Severe judgment is pronounced, gossip or slander repeated, and this in the hearing of the unconverted. Often these things are spoken by parents in the hearing of their own children. Thus are destroyed respect for God's messengers, and reverence for their message. And many are taught to regard lightly God's word itself. " –Christ's Object Lessons} pp. 45, 46.

You could always expect some kind of clash whenever Brother H went to church board meeting. He went all abristle, ready to contradict, to surmise evil, ready to suspect. He had his whole armor on, but sad to say it was not the armor of God. He was without the breastplate of righteousness.

They were remodeling the church, and Brother H's criticisms were hard on those who were working so well to make the house of the Lord a place of beauty. He was against everything. Nothing was being done right.

"Now, I don't like that church tower," he said loudly, settling down in an easy chair in Sister A's pleasant living room. Since she was the church treasurer, he had come over to see whether he could get her to side with him.

"It looks just like a doghouse or a hen roost. But they're just bound to spoil the whole thing by building it that way. I'm going to fight that if it takes the last breath in my body. There's a gang here in the church that's trying to run everything to suit themselves, Sister A, and I want you to line up with me and Brother D. We'll fix 'em."

I was sitting there, an interested visitor, wondering what Sister A would say. She was a delightfully frank person at times, and joyfully and pleasantly subtle. Besides that she was astute enough to discomfit troublemakers without their realizing just what was happening. I blessed her inwardly, for I knew she could get people so caught in a crack, they would be glad to get out. She could do this most innocently. She turned her sweet blue eyes on Brother H.

"What do you mean—a chicken coop, or roost?" she asked in surprise. "Why, we've all seen the drawing of that part of the church. Our local board passed on it, and so did the conference. Where were you? I think it's beautiful."

Brother H squirmed and turned a little red. "They must've passed on it that time when I went up to Aunt Hep's funeral," he said lamely. "I'd never have voted for it if I'd been here. And I think we could stop it even yet if we got right after it." "I'm not going to do that," Sister A said. "And even if you weren't here, we had a majority, and we passed on it."

Silence greeted these words.

"By the way, Brother H," Sister A continued, "how much did you pay into the building fund? I agree with you that all of us contributors should stick together and pass on everything. There's nothing like perfect agreement. I'm sure no one meant to slight your judgment, Brother H."

But it was strange. Brother H was in a great hurry to get away. I was suddenly curious.

"What was wrong with that man?" I asked. "As soon as you mentioned contributors he seemed in a great hurry to get away. How much did he give to the building fund?"

Sister A giggled delightedly.

"Not a red cent," she declared. "Not a farthing. He was in a hurry because he didn't want you to know he hadn't paid a thing. To hear him, you'd think he and his wife were footing the whole bill." Brother and Sister H were the champion faultfinders of that small church. Every minister, every elder, and every church school teacher felt and suffered under the acid of their unjust criticism, and the lash of their cruel tongues.

It would be nothing short of a miracle if even one of their children rejoiced in truth, for they never knew truth in its beauty. They only saw, and had pointed out to them continually, the magnified and fancied faults of those who had been sent to help them.

"Oh, why. . . why. . . why has this happened to us?" moaned Sister H one day. "We sent our children to our schools. Jeanie trained at ___ Sanitarium. Rhoda went to ___ College. Why? Why?"

We could tell you why, Sister H. The peace of your home was continually marred by the evil spirit of criticism and slander. "To accuse and criticize those whom God is using is to accuse and criticize the Lord who has sent them."-Testimonies to Ministers, p. 466.

12. Her Blameless, Faultless Benjie

I WOULD have thought that his mother would have become tired of "going to bat" all the time for her darling, petted, and pampered treasure, her sweet, blameless, and faultless Benjie. I can see him now, standing and watching his mother as she flew fiercely to his defense, like a little banty hen on the alert, with feathers ruffled at anything that threatened—the wind bending the grass, a sailing leaf, a hawk, or a thunderclap.

A satisfied, smug look appeared in his left eye, his right one, too, for that matter. The king can do no wrong. Long live the king!

"I know that teacher just has it in for Benjie. He studies all the time, poor dear, till his eyes are injured—don't you, dear? —and what does he get?" Anger leaped to her eyes, and a white line of fury showed along her jawbone.

"An F!" she hissed in my ear, so angrily that I involuntarily jumped—as if I were partly to blame for this situation. Well, I learned I was not, but she had come to solicit my aid.

"Benjie and I figured out last night just what we would do." She smiled benignly on me then, and I had a distinct feeling of relief. "We would like you to help Benjie. And that teacher won't dare fail him then. Everyone knows you have had a lot more experience than she has, and she wouldn't dare fail him if you tutor him."

Benjie's eyes gleamed. Here was revenge. Mother had it all "cooked up," with meringue on top.

But I disappointed them. I did not have time to tutor Benjie. I could not work both night and day. I had to have a little time to rest and relax and do my housework.

They left, disappointed, but undaunted. Benjie lounged along grandly beside his mother, eager for laurels, for success without paying the necessary price. I had the vague feeling he was not yet weaned from his silly mother, from her hovering and clucking care.

He was convinced, to the core, of his importance. He knew he had been wronged. What if he hadn't studied? Wasn't he brighter, and didn't he show a lot more promise than the rest of his classmates? The king can do no wrong. Long live the king!

"You Need Pull"

And so into college Benjie carried his self-importance. And when his ability and importance were not recognized by the undiscerning set who ran the college, his amazement and anger knew no bounds. Benjie did what he knew well how to do. He flunked out. He left college in high dudgeon.

"You need pull, up there," he declared, in his own defense. "I haven't got it. Boy, you sure have to be a close relative of the General Conference men to get anywhere around that college. That's as plain as the nose on your face."

His doting parents got Benjie a car, and tried to find him a job. He was very particular, for he did not feel he should injure his health with jobs too confining. His father worked early and late to do all for Benjie he could. And Benjie felt it was his just due.

Benjie has long ago quit going to church. He smokes and he drinks, and he has been in and out of matrimony four times. But, of course, it isn't his fault. He tried, poor dear. You just wouldn't believe what he went through trying to make things go. How blind can a person be?

The mother still slaves for Benjie, and flies to his defense, while he still paddles about lazily in a kind of immature and worthless existence. He is sullen, hateful, restless, unhappy, and utterly useless.

The workaday world buzzes about him, but it speaks a language he does not understand. He has been indulged and overindulged, until that is the only life he enjoys, the only kind of life he does not fiercely resent. He has become a great hunk of nerves from over solicitude. And such a hunk as can never fit into the straight structure of life, it is so oddly shaped.

Since the whole plan of salvation and the whole pattern of Christian living since the beginning have been based on unselfishness and upon the principle of giving, Benjie has been badly cheated. It will take great hardships, great agony of soul, and the miracle of actual re-creation to fit him into the land the Saviour has gone to prepare.

"To indulge a child when young and erring is a sin. . . . If children are allowed to have their own way, they receive the idea that they must be waited upon, cared for, indulged, and amused. They think that their wishes and their will must be gratified." -Child Guidance, p. 272.

Need to Deny Self

In every school there are some students who have too-exalted opinions of themselves. This inflated sense of their worth has usually been instilled by the "banty hens" that still flutter and cluck and protect, and deplore the discipline that hinders and irritates their "chicks." And ministers pray, and teachers reason and work—but all too often to no effect, for "banty hens" just will fly to the defense. Such overprotected students have never known what it is to deny self, so how can they understand that to be saved they must make a covenant with God through sacrifice?

How can they understand taking up the cross, when all the hardnenses have been borne by someone else, in the mistaken idea that they were building security for the child?

"It is impossible to depict the evil that results from leaving a child to its own will. . . . The child who is spoiled has a heavy burden to carry throughout his life. In trial, in disappointment, in temptation, he will follow his undisciplined, misdirected will. Children who have never learned to obey will have weak, impulsive characters. They seek to rule, but have not learned to submit. They are without moral strength to restrain their wayward tempers, to correct their wrong habits, or to subdue their uncontrolled wills. The blunders of untrained, undisciplined childhood become the inheritance of manhood and womanhood. The perverted intellect can scarcely discern between the true and the false."-Counsels to Parents and Teachers, pp. 112, 113.

Parents who take this course are literally barring the way to the tree of life for their children. It is not love; it is not kindness. It is cruelty, it is selfishness, it is ignorance of the deepest dye.

"The Bible is a guide in the management of children. Here, if parents desire, they may find a course marked out for the education and training of their children, that they may make no blunders. . . . When this Guidebook is followed, parents, instead of giving unlimited indulgence to their children, will use more often the chastening rod; instead of being blind to their faults, their perverse tempers, and alive only to their virtues, they will have clear discernment and will look upon these things in the light of the Bible. They will know that they must command their children in the right way.

"God cannot take rebels into His kingdom; therefore He makes obedience to His commands a special requirement. Parents should diligently teach their children what saith the Lord. Then God will show to angels and to men that He will build a safeguard round about His people."-Child Guidance, p. 256.

It is the veriest cruelty, then, to prevent children from learning to endure hardness, from learning to do for others, from learning to pity and think of others. If when young they have never learned to bear pain and disappointment, and if they have never learned to give, or concede, or to act independently, they can almost never learn to do so. There is a tragic finality the Lord would have us side-step, by following the blueprint. And this is the way to life eternal for us and for our children.

13. Does Your Child Believe in Your Religion?

I think I hate my father," a sweet-faced girl once said to me, when she had stayed after school to talk with me. I must have looked shocked, for she went on to explain and qualify her statement.

"Please don't tell anyone I told you, for even mother feels bad about the way things go in our home. But sometimes I feel that I'll go crazy if I don't tell someone. I know it's a sin to feel as I do, but I don't know what to do about it."

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We talked a little while that lovely fall afternoon, and she wept and we prayed together. She said later, "You know, father is a deacon in the church. And I read this week in Bible class that deacons should not be doubled-tongued. That's what hurts me. Father's tongue says one thing at church, but at home it says something else."

I knew more about Elsa's father than I let on that I knew. The whole church knew about his almost insane fits of temper. One of the neighbor men called the police once when he saw him beat a horse while he was plowing. And it was common knowledge that the oldest son who ran away had done so because of his father's temper.

Elsa told me about that to unburden her heart. Her face was wet with tears as she told me of the terrible scene.

"My father beat him once too often. My brother grabbed the whip and broke it in two, then yelled that he hoped he would die before he ever went into a church again. We have never seen him since. Mother cries sometimes in the night. I have heard her."

I pondered this awful situation, this terrible sin; this father, so unkind, with a temper so unbridled as to spoil his son's life for time and perhaps eternity.

"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (James 1:26).

Too many men and women have a religion that shows up beautifully at church, but which wears thin at home. They depend on the ones at home to forgive them continually, and to get used to the ugliness they show so often toward those they love. The servant of the Lord has written:

"Treat your family in a manner that Heaven can approve, and so that peace may be in your dwelling. . . . Your children have had your bad example before them; you have blamed, and censured, and manifested a passionate spirit at home, while you would, at the same time, address the throne of grace, attend meeting, and bear testimony in favor of the truth. These exhibitions have led your children to despise you and the truth you profess. They have no confidence in your Christianity." -Testimonies, vol. 2, p. 86.

Reaction on Children

There are in every place people who have not overcome the wickedness in their own lives, and whose families see all too much of their temper fits and tantrums. The children of these poorly regulated homes are listening and learning, and the leaven of this terrible influence will spread to all bounds. We are told that the very expression on the countenance has an influence for good or for evil.

There are children everywhere who grow discouraged from the harsh and hateful words of those who have them in charge, and their destinies will be for good or evil as they have been taught and led. "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." Under a hateful atmosphere of perpetual blaming and harsh criticism, it is natural for children to seek the society of those who will be kind to them and give them the approval their hearts are hungry to receive.

One father had fanatical ideas about women's dress, and he rode his hobbyhorse continually. You could not talk to him for five minutes without his beginning to recite the failings of all the church members, proclaiming with authority the destination of those who did not line up with what he felt was the proper mode of dress. His wife and daughters were miserably ashamed of this activity. They were always modestly dressed and in good taste. But, of course, even they did not in any way please this man. He thought cotton stockings were the only kind a Christian should wear; and as for the vulgarity of displaying the elbows-well, a person who did that was headed for perdition!

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One day he sighed in my presence and said loudly that he could hardly hope to do a thing with his own household when the minister's wife wore such vulgar attire. The minister's wife was a friend of mine, and no one could dress more modestly than she, and she would have been crushed if she had heard his unkind remarks so entirely unwarranted.

Everyone felt sorry for the girls, but you can be sure they escaped from home as soon as they could by way of worldly marriage. Both have been gone for years now; gone from a religion they never saw lived out in their home and that was never made attractive.

"Pray for my boy, please," said a father to me one day. "He tells lies; he lies when the truth would serve his purpose even better. He'll lie when he can't help knowing that I know he's lying; he'll brazen it out no matter what I do or say."

I might have replied:

"I could tell you, brother. The whole church knows about your temper fits. You may think your outbursts are not known, but they are. Your wife leaves the house and goes out into the garden to weep and sob because of your hateful words and outbursts. Your boy hides from you when your brow clouds over.

"Your combativeness is large, and you stand braced, prepared to rebut everything where you have a chance. You. . . stand all ready to differ if there is a possible chance for you to do so. . . . You possess a hasty temper, which grieves your friends and the holy angels, and wounds your own soul." Ibid., p. 163.

"Your boy has learned to lie to save himself from you and your violent fits of anger, which will mean your eternal destruction unless you overcome by the grace of God. If you do not overcome, all your piety in the church and on weekends will not save you, and you may drag your whole family down with you.

"You will have such a reward as you little dream possible if you make it your business to redeem the time. It will take some doing, for you are set in your habits; but you had better hurry. One of these days it will be too late."

14. Send Them to Christian Schools

THE third angel's message has in it the compulsive thought "Come out. . . , and be ye separate." It has in it the idea "Be not a partaker of her sins." This concept of "separateness" is a protection against the almost overpowering influences of the world at this stage of the world's history.

"If ever we are to work in earnest, it is now. The enemy is pressing in on all sides, like a flood. Only the power of God can save our children from being swept away by the tide of evil. The responsibility resting upon parents, teachers, and church members, to do their part in co-operation with God, is greater than words can express.

"To train the young to become true soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ is the most noble work ever given to man."-Counsels to Parents and Teachers, p.166.

We worship on the seventh-day Sabbath, the day when there is the biggest buzz of work, of going and coming, of buying and selling and pleasure seeking of the whole week. If we keep this memorial of our Creator as we should we are a people apart, no matter where we are.

Our health-reform message has in it the seeds of separation from the world, with its eating, drinking, and ways of recreation, given to us from heaven itself as a gift precious beyond measure. I used to teach in a public high school, but I knew that the cafeteria lunches, though inexpensive and attractive, were

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not for me. From the United States farm surplus the school obtained gratis many things in which, since I regard my body as the temple of the Holy Spirit, I could not indulge. They got great buckets of "pure leaf lard" for shortening, and slabs of fat back, which was favored for seasoning beans, greens, and other vegetables. Bacon, crisped, was often used even in mashed potatoes and in corn as a prime flavor. I could not accept an invitation to a school supper unless I was willing to risk embarrassment by eating only a salad, and even that might have slivers of boiled ham all through it to make it "better." The coke machines were a favorite rendezvous, and around the hot-dog and hamburger stands swarm the teen-age crowd.

Their conversation is spiced with slang so near to swearing that there is little difference. But often, in the midst of such, you see some special boy or girl and you feel sad that they, with their higher principles, do not know the truth.

Two years ago two fine young men graduated from the high school. Both had been in my classes. Their parents owned a store in the city. On the last day of school I got a letter from one of the boys. He wrote, "You have no idea how you have inspired me to live right. I do not want to be like the other fellows here. I want to make something of myself." In the school, in accordance with our belief in separation of church and state, I had said nothing of my religion as such. But, of course, they knew. They all knew I did not go to the theater, and that I did not approve the dances they held, though I said little about it.

The letter gave me an idea. I went down to the store and had a talk with the father. I asked him whether he was going to send his boys to college, adding that I hoped he would, as they were certainly college material.

"Why, yes," he said. "I thought I would. They both want to go to college."

In the ensuing conversation I reminded the father that neither of his boys smoked. I told him that I wished he would send them to our Adventist college near Chattanooga. I told him that none of the teachers there smoke or drink. I described how even the recreation is carefully planned, and that he would need have no fears that his fine boys would be led astray as they might in some of the other schools and colleges.

"Do you allow people who do not go to your church to attend your schools?" he asked.

"Of course," I said. "They would have to refrain from work on the Sabbath, and would have to comply with the rules; but that should not be hard. I would be glad to take you and your wife to see our college. We are very proud of it."

John and Jim went to Southern Missionary College. Yesterday, at a beautiful baptism, John and Jim were baptized. My heart was so full of joy that I could hardly go to sleep last night. Two years in an Adventist school showed these earnest young men the real beauty of truth and holiness.

And yet, in an ugly world filled with illicit sex, sensuality, and vulgarity, many Adventists allow their children to spend six and more hours a day with people who do not know that the Lord is coming, and who care even less. They have as their classmates and close companions children to whom a curse word is commonplace, a vulgar word is funny, and cheating is routine. They rub their shoulders daily with those to whom shows, gory TV serials, and dances are regular themes of conversation.

Outside the back door the girls and boys alike have their smokes between classes, and coarse as that is, the conversation is even more coarse.

If I had a pure white robe and I wanted to wear it to see the King, I would not carry it daily to a gutter and hope and pray that God would keep it unwrinkled and unspotted.

Christian Courtesy

The children, with bright eyes that see, and with avid ears that hear, with ready minds and sensitive hearts, are more precious than a robe.

"I cannot bear to have her leave! She is all we have!" cried a mother out of the depths of her selfishness. "After all, she has her home, and I am sure we can counteract any evil she might meet in the public school. And it is close enough for her to come home to dinner."

But were you able to counteract the evil, Mrs. D? Do you remember how Teena began to go to parties and to the rinks, and you still said that you took her to church and things would right themselves? But she was married at fifteen, Mrs. D, to a boy who did not even pretend to be a Christian, much less a church member. And now when they come to visit you, your house is filled with cigarette smoke, and wreaths of it circle the baby's little head as the father holds him. And you grieve because Teena watches TV on the Sabbath and does not go to church very often.

Do you remember, Mrs. D, how Teena wanted to take the nurse's course, but you cried out in your agony, "I can't give her up. She is all I have"? You may have to give her up someday, Mrs. D, and the picture would have been very different if you had followed the blueprint.

"Upon fathers and mothers devolves the responsibility of giving a Christian education to the children entrusted to them. . . . They are not to allow their children to slip out of their grasp into the hands of unbelievers. They are to do all in their power to keep them from imbibing the spirit of the world."-Child Guidance, pp. 297, 298.

"In planning for the education of their children outside the home, parents should realize that it is no longer safe to send them to the public school, and should endeavor to send them to schools where they will obtain an education based on a Scriptural foundation."-Ibid., p. 304.

When the people of all ages stand before the judgment bar of the God of all the earth, some of the reasons parents have used to justify their wrong courses will seem so trivial: "My child has her friends here. She hates to leave them." "I wonder if it is as fully accredited as the fine school we have here in town." "If my child stays at home I am sure I can counteract any evil influence he might meet."

"It is so hard to part with them."

I once knew a woman who laughed at the missionary out in Africa who advised her to iron all her baby's clothes with a hot iron. "I like the softness of their blowing in the fresh air and sun," she said. "I cannot see what can hurt my baby from that."

What she did not know was that the vicious little mputzi fly laid many eggs on the fluffy flannels as they blew in the wind. The eggs penetrated the baby's tender skin, and a few days later the child looked as if she had smallpox. Each of the little burning pustules contained a fully developed mputzi worm that had to be removed. The mother ironed the clothes after that.

The devil has his traps everywhere, to trip the unwary and unwise feet of our children; and the Lord in His wisdom has warned us of the peril in which we place our children.

Getting used to things is a gradual process, a hardening process. We can become hardened to slang, to lying, to cheating, to cursing. Lipstick does not look so bad when it is viewed every day on everyone, and it is hard for a young person continually to be on the "off side." Soon there is a little yielding here and a little there, until the child we love and want to be saved is on enemy ground.

Celia's Experience

I feel sure that Celia, who wanted to go to the academy so badly that she wept the whole first week of September, would have had a different life if she had gone. But mother said it was too expensive, and father did not press the point. And grandpa said he could not see what good an education did a girl anyway, since she would soon be getting married.

Letitia and Ada and Edna (Celia's friends) went to the academy, and when they came home on holidays Celia asked them pathetically about all that went on at school, and whether they liked it. "Oh, it's wonderful," Letitia told her. "They have marches and games every Saturday night, and the vespers on Friday nights are so wonderful. We get out and play on the campus, and the teachers are so friendly."

Father and mother were angry when Celia began going with non-Adventist boys in town, and when she became engaged to Rob Lorry, they forbade her to see him any more. But she saw him anyway, and later ran away and married him. If anyone can be happy with a man who has no idea what it means to be true to his wife, perhaps Celia is happy. She has known what it is to see her husband come in drunk many, many times. She has long ago left the church. Her clubs mean more to her than Sabbath school. And not one of her children knows or cares about the Sabbath of the Lord. They are not getting ready for the Lord to come. No doubt the picture would have been different if Celia had been allowed to go to the academy. And the cost would have been nothing compared to the loss sustained in the weary years since she begged so piteously to attend.

"And the angel of mercy flew over the Church
And whispered, 'I know thy sin,'
And the Church looked back with a sigh, and longed
To gather her children in.
But some were off to the midnight ball,
And some were off to the play,
And some were drinking in gay saloons,
So she pensively went her way."