

The Tangle of Marriage



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?

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The Tangle of Marriage

REV. ALBERT POWER, S.J.

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ONE reads and hears of the flippancy, the light-hearted carelessness, with which men and women enter on the solemn responsibilities of married life, and if one adds to that the terrible fact that those who take up the duties of parenthood are actually at the same time planning to evade those duties by criminal methods, then truly one can fairly speak of the tangle of marriage, one can say that the marriage question is a problem that needs to be dealt with by the firm hand of some legislator who is strong and wise and far-seeing.

Now, we assert that only One Legislator has satisfactorily dealt with this problem; and only when the principles which this Man laid down are adhered to is a solution found for this tangle of marriage.

That Man was Jesus of Nazareth; and the one religious body in the world which still loudly and insistently proclaims that the principles of Christ must be adhered to in the marriage question is the Catholic Church.

Christ came, not only to give us light and knowledge: He came also to control and direct the moral forces of the world. We know that no man has ever so influenced men's lives and destinies, no man has so revolutionized the story of the world, as Jesus of Nazareth.

How did He do this? By laying His hand upon the springs of human activity; by going down to the fundamental principles that lie at the root of all human actions, by moulding and shaping those principles He achieved His results.

Now, the most powerful of all moral forces in the world is love. It is love that is responsible for the world's great deeds, for all its noble achievements. When men have gone forth to battle, or have struggled amidst toil and drudgery to accomplish some great purpose, it is always love that has driven them on. It may be love of country or love of honor, love of wife and children or love of God; but ever at the root of human endeavor there lies this incalculable force called love. Consequently, the

great Ruler of human hearts, when He came into the world, came as an Apostle of Love: presented Himself as the world's supreme Lover, and therefore, also, He set Himself to direct, purify, elevate, sanctify, supernaturalize this supreme force, the love of man's heart. How did Christ effect this? In the first place, by teaching us to set the love of God above every other love in our lives and hearts, and in the second place by teaching us how to love one another.

Now, in the social life of mankind one of the forms of love constantly at play shaping lives and destinies is the love between man and woman, which finds its expression and consummation in married life.

This love, which is planted by God in human nature, lies at the root of family life; and consequently it lies at the root of all social and of civil society itself, which spring from and are founded on the family. This love is the force that holds society together, just as molecular attraction is the basic principle that underlies the formation and secures the permanence of material bodies.

This love, therefore, the conjugal love of man and woman, must be seized upon, directed, sanctified by Jesus of Nazareth in His great work of regenerating mankind.

CHRIST'S PLAN

And Christ's plan is this: He will teach men to make a right use of love by teaching them self-restraint.

The first condition for making profitable use of the great elemental forces of nature is to get them under control.

Fire is man's most useful ally in the development of civilization. But to use fire for his purpose man must control it.

Steam has proved a marvelously potent factor in bringing about the present highly organized and efficient state of human intercourse and human industry. But the indispensable condition for using steam effectively is to be absolutely its master. So with electricity, water power, and all other forces that man harnesses to the chariot of his progress.

So it is also in the moral order. Love is a mighty force,

and can do marvelous things for man; but it, too, must be controlled, it, too, is a fire which, if left uncontrolled, if indulged in without restraint, will work havoc in men's lives.

When Jesus of Nazareth, then, aimed at ruling the world and shaping men's lives and destinies after His own ideas, He was bound to deal with this problem of the love of man and woman. Just as He took up other factors of our existence, and by His touch elevated and transfigured them, such as labor, childhood, poverty, suffering, so also He took up marriage and transformed it by His touch.

In dealing with the principles laid down by Jesus of Nazareth, we must distinguish between Christian marriage and the marriage of unbaptized persons.

There are certain fundamental principles of the natural law which concern every marriage, whether the contracting parties are Christians or unbelievers. Whereas there are other special and positive laws which concern only the marriage of Christians or baptized persons.

The main principles that affect every marriage are these:

1. First, the unity of marriage, that is, the unlawfulness of polygamy. No man may have more than one wife at the same time, no woman may have more than one husband.

2. Secondly, the indissolubility of marriage. The marriage bond cannot be broken. In other words, divorce is unlawful.

3. Thirdly, the right use of marriage. Nothing is allowed that is intended to frustrate the primary end of marriage.

But we are dealing chiefly with the teaching and precepts of Jesus with regard to the marriage of His own followers, of baptized Christians. We are asking ourselves what answer He has given to the problem of marriage in the case of His own followers.

Remark that the Catholic Church claims no jurisdiction over the marriage of those who are not her subjects. That is, if a marriage takes place between two unbaptized persons the Church has nothing to say to such a marriage; she cannot legislate about it or control it in any way. In

legal language, she has no jurisdiction, and so is powerless to act.

But when a baptized person wishes to enter into wedlock, then certain principles, in addition to the principles that rule every marriage, have to be attended to.

For what Jesus Christ did in the case of Christian marriage was this: He made it a Sacrament. He took this supremely important agreement or contract, on which so much of the welfare and happiness of human lives depends, and constituted it one of His Sacraments. And thereby the marriage of Christians becomes a sacred thing, specially blessed and cared for by God Himself, and placed in a special way under the protection of His Church.

WHAT IS A SACRAMENT?

What do we mean by saying that Christ made marriage a Sacrament? We must examine this a little, because very mistaken views are often held by non-Catholics on this subject. In reality the Christian Sacraments are simply the application to the spiritual world of a system with which all are familiar in everyday life, a system which is quite essential for social intercourse and the transacting of ordinary business. I mean the system whereby outward and sensible things are used as signs or symbols to convey certain definite meanings or ideas from man to man, whereby these symbols become capable of producing certain effects, sometimes very surprising effects, as instruments or as moral causes.

Such symbols are familiar to us all; for example, coined money, bank notes; railway tickets, written documents of all kinds, a soldier's uniform, a country's flag.

Take this example: You write a letter, place it in an envelope and affix to the envelope a small piece of stamped paper, and then commit your letter to the care of the Postal authorities. That little stamp has the power of securing that your letter be transported safely to any place in the world, and will so influence certain officials who are complete strangers to you that they will take the trouble to carry your letter to the address indicated and deliver it into the hands of the friend to whom you sent

it. Now, what gives the stamp this wonderful power of prevailing on people on the other side of the globe to act as your servant, to fulfil your wishes and deliver your letter? Well, simply for the fact that the stamp is instituted for that purpose by a competent authority. It is decreed that a stamp lawfully printed and issued shall be accepted as a token of payment made by you, in consideration of which the Post Office authorities promise to deliver your letter. In other words, the stamp is "sacramental" in its effect. It is a sensible sign instituted by lawful authority to produce certain definite results. Of course, the stamp does not produce these effects physically and directly, but it is a moral cause influencing an intellectual being to act and produce the effect.

Now, we can apply this example to the Sacraments of the Church. They also are sensible signs or tokens instituted or appointed by lawful authority to produce certain effects in the spiritual order. They do not produce those effects directly or physically, but they act as moral causes, inasmuch as at the administration of the Sacrament God produces the spiritual effect in the soul.

HOW THE SACRAMENTS ACT

Sometimes people think it strange that the pouring of water on a child's head and the uttering of certain words should have the effect of cleansing the child's soul from original sin. Yet people think it quite reasonable that the signing of one's name to a check or a will should have the effect of transferring property to a person, that the tendering of a coin or a scrap of paper should secure your being transported on train to your destination. Why? Because they see that those external signs or symbols are, by agreement or institution, the expression of the will of another, and, as such, produce their effects.

Now, the actions referred to above, pouring water, anointing with oil, laying on of hands, are in like manner, by agreement or institution, significant of the Will of Christ. He Himself has appointed these external rites as expressive of His wish, and, as such, they produce their effect. The priest who administers the Sacrament is merely the ambassador of Christ, who in Christ's name

presents those sacramental acts or symbols to God, asking Him to honor His Son's signature. And God honors them as the banker honors your check.

Jesus, therefore, took the marriage contract and elevated it to the dignity of a Sacrament. It is not a merely secular affair, like buying or selling land. This particular agreement is of a religious nature, is placed under the protection of religion, and is invested with special and peculiar spiritual effects and privileges which the contracting parties must attend to. And therefore, because marriage is a sacred thing, because it is a Sacrament, it is placed under the care and jurisdiction of the Church, and the Church, holding Christ's authority on earth, legislates fearlessly about it, claiming the marriage contracts of her children as her own special province.

And surely it needs no very deep thinking to see why the marriage agreement should be thus specially set apart, elevated, protected by religion; why it should have a sanction higher, holier, and more solemn than any other agreement or contract whatsoever.

Other human transactions concern the ownership or conveyance of property, lands, stocks, jewels, personal effects. But the marriage agreement is concerned with human souls. Married life constitutes a special society which has entrusted to its care the most responsible and important of all human tasks, that of bringing into existence, of providing for, watching over and educating other human beings. Parents have entrusted to their care the most precious of all God's jewels, the immortal souls He has created for Himself; they have to safeguard the most beautiful and most treasured of all earthly possessions, the *child*. There is no other responsibility in the world like that of the father and mother, since with them it rests, to a large extent, to decide what the child's future destiny shall be.

They have the duty of providing for the support and bodily welfare of the child; they have also the duty of providing for the training and development of the faculties and power of its soul.

The marriage agreement is the definite and solemn act whereby a man and woman take up this responsibility. Surely, then, we may expect that an act of such serious

moment will be spiritually safeguarded and provided with special help by Jesus Christ legislating for His flock.

But there is another reason why Christ was bound to deal in a special way with marriage.

It is this. He had to safeguard it against divorce. Christ had to lay deep and strong the foundations of this institution in order to strengthen it against the sweeping torrent of human waywardness, human fickleness and human passion, which find their expression in divorce.

And see what has happened. Christ made marriage a Sacrament. In the Catholic Church it is honored as a Sacrament. But outside the Catholic Church, where marriage is not honored as a Sacrament, the institution is gradually disappearing. Divorce is doing its deadly work. Marriage in the Christian sense of the term is threatening to become a thing of the past.

We need not here discuss the arguments from reason alone apart from Revelation, which prove that divorce is forbidden by the natural law. Suffice it to say that the sad history of civilization shows only too luridly the havoc which is wrought in family life once the door is opened to divorce.

CHRIST DENOUNCED DIVORCE

All those evils had run their full course in that Roman civilization into which Christ was born, and Jesus came to stem the tide of immorality caused by violation of the marriage tie. He came to denounce divorce, to restore marriage to its primitive purity, and to place Christian marriage on a new and firmer basis by elevating it to the dignity of a Sacrament.

When Jesus cried out in the midst of the corruption of the pagan world: "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder. Whosoever puts away his wife and marries another woman is guilty of adultery." His voice may have sounded like that of one crying in the wilderness. Yet, if Jesus was in earnest about reforming human society, He was bound to face the matter boldly and denounce fearlessly the violation of the sanctity of marriage by divorce. And His words did not fall on deaf ears. His teaching still lives in the world.

For, ask yourselves the question: Is there any body of people at present in the world which takes up this same uncompromising stand with regard to the sacredness of marriage? Is there any Church claiming to be the Church of Christ, that has the courage to face a world in arms and proclaim, in spite of every opposition, that marriage is a permanent bond which cannot be broken, and that divorce is wrong?

The answer springs to your lips at once: The Catholic Church is that body.

And I assert fearlessly that this very attitude of the steadfast assertion of principles which the world rejects, is a further and very convincing proof that she is truly the Church of Christ.

Just as her claim to teach truth with authority because Christ so taught; just as her claim to forgive sins because Christ gave her power to do so; just as her daily offering of sacrifice because Christ offered sacrifice prove that she inherits His principles and ideas, and is faithful to His teaching, so the fact that the Catholic Church, and she alone, insists on the unity and indissolubility of marriage, just as Christ insisted upon them, is one more proof that she is His Church, that His Spirit is guiding her, and that in her are being eternally fulfilled the prophetic words of Jesus to His followers: "Behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world."

A Cure for Divorce

MYLES CONNOLLY

Editor of "Columbia"

MODERN reformers have a very interesting pastime which consists mainly of pushing man down an abyss in order to pull him out. The fact that it is far easier to shove a man over a precipice than it is to draw him back does not deter them from the pleasure of the pastime; nor does the fact that a man pushed down an abyss may break his neck or fall so far that he is beyond recovery. The Prohibitionists, for example, have substituted law-breaking drinking and delirious drinking for careless drinking. The first part of the pastime is now in full swing. The second part will begin some years from now when these reformers will endeavor to do what they should have done in the first place: teach Americans the art of drinking. The probability that America may then be so far down the abyss as to be beyond reformation, in no way interferes with their present determination. The pastime demands the creation of greater evils for the cure of lesser ones. In France, a few years ago, the reformers were fanatical in their advocacy of birth control. Today, they are becoming quite as fanatical in their advocacy of large families. But, by far, the best example of this tragic sport is given in the reformers' method with divorce.

A few years ago, these reformers were advocating divorce as a cure for unhappy marriage. Today, these same reformers are advocating marriage as a cure for unhappy divorce. Once they were trying to educate people for divorce. Now they are trying to educate them for marriage. They began by pushing man over the precipice. Now they are endeavoring to pull him up.

The modern world, it is customary to believe, suffers from materialism, but it must not be forgotten that it suffers also from a vacuous idealism. The materialist is most often obvious. The idealist is a child of the clouds, and, alas, most everybody believes that all clouds have silver linings.

To begin with, this idealism is too late. Today, for the non-Catholic world, divorce has made it so that a

man or woman needs no longer look to one marriage, but to many marriages. Each new amour can be a wedding, each new cooling of passion divorce. It was when the snobs started divorce as a luxury for the rich that reformers should have crushed it. They preached it, instead, as a universal remedy. It was then that they should have been advocating education for marriage. Now, with divorce easily possible, education for better marriages is largely vain. Men and women today can find no necessity for the path of most resistance. When the betrothal ardor is dead, there is no imperative need for smoothing off the rough edges, no need for mutual adaptation, no need for self-discipline and restraint. There is a facile solution of all difficulties; there is the easy way out by divorce.

Ignorance and levity in regard to marriage hold no serious consequences for those who believe in divorce. They become to such people little more than trivial mistakes, the penalty to which is escaped by making mistakes afresh. What especial need is there for wisdom and high seriousness in an adventure which, at the worst, can terminate only in an opportunity for another light and ignorant adventure?

With divorce, standing as a permissible easy way out of marriage and thus, with its ever-readiness, characterizing marriage as a rather transitory and trivial affair, how can any deep sense of responsibility be created? I speak, of course, of those who believe in divorce. Agitators for divorce have called marriage sanctioned lust. Marriage may have been to some men and women a career of lust. But, as far as one Church is concerned, it is not sanctioned lust. It took divorce to sanction lust. If marriage is for the raising of children and for the creation of a mutually helpful permanent companionship, then divorce is destructive of marriage. It makes children little more than burdens, strewn down the road of passion, and it makes companionship little more than one of many light and evanescent affairs of the heart. Marriage, with divorce always the possible outcome, is nothing but a momentary experiment. Divorce does not help children, it does not help in the creation of a noble comradeship.

It encourages fickleness and irresponsibility. It is nothing more than a makeshift of weak men and women to relieve them of the burden of their petty boredom, to allow them the wayward indulgence of their passions. It is divorce that sanctions lust.

Alas, the poor reformer! Now, having educated man to divorce, he would have him educated to marriage. But he is too late. He does not know how wilful and stubborn are men's passions. He has thrown man over the precipice. Now, he would have him, at call, come soaring back. He has no conception of the ordinary man. Allow him the opportunity of divorce, but teach him not to take it!

A trouble with these reformers is that they think somehow that a perfectly ideal marriage state is permanently possible for all of us. That is a pleasant thought to think, but a difficult thought to apply. When most of us marry, our marriage, provided it has been undertaken with care and thoughtfulness, is about as perfect as anything in our lives is perfect. A constant trying over and over of various mates would leave us even farther back, as a rule, than when we started. For laxity breeds laxity. If a marriage is an extraordinary achievement, then it is because the parties to it are extraordinary, or are blessed by some special grace of God. It is best for most of us that the idea of divorce never enters our heads. The reformer weeps large tears over unhappy marriages; but the fact is, most marriages are unhappy; they can be no happier than life itself. Most men, most women, are intermittently unhappy. It would be very curious if marriages were not so.

There are some, of course, who through their mistakes, or through their undisciplined temperament and selfishness, are more than usually unhappy. Marriage for them is, as they will it, a punishment or an opportunity for reformation. Then, there are those who through no real fault of their own, at least we can assume this, are very unfortunately married. But to have special legislation for these few would be as impractical as it would be unjust. Divorce began with some such exclusive legislation as this, and behold whither it has drifted. Marriages are broken

universally now because of a disagreement on a baseball score or an argument over a necktie. Indissoluble marriage is best for the greatest number. The fabric of civilization cannot be torn down for the sake of a few. It seems strange to me that those scientific humanitarians who are devoted to bringing man, who has very curiously thwarted Evolution by going off at a crazy tangent, back into the fold of orthodox animals, and who are so passionately interested in the future of the race, are also ardent supporters of easy divorce.

I write here, as is obvious, of the necessity of indissoluble marriage apart from the definite command of Christ. Man and woman are fallen creatures and the reformer's ideal of perfection is beyond attainment for them while here on earth. As a wise critic once said: Men and women are never celestially happy when single, why should they be celestially happy when married? For a few rare spirits, though I doubt it, marriage may be a sustained and passionate poem. But for most of us, marriage must be, like life, a bit of prose, prose with its purple patches and weak spots, prose with its long periods of flatness and discord, but prose, nevertheless that can be hammered and shaped and wrought into an achievement, splendid and solid and sound. But it must be hammered and shaped and wrought. The artist in marriage, like the artist in life, succeeds only by restraint. Marriage, according to the reformer, would be a state of permanent perfection, if only the Church and State would lecture the participants on the seriousness of it. But such is not so. Allow man the opportunity of divorce and your education is practically a waste of time. Legalize man's indulgence of his weaknesses and you may be sure he will indulge them. If you are going to educate mankind for marriage, the first step is to abolish divorce. Begin at the beginning. That is the beginning.

The Catholic Family

REV. H. DAY, S.J.

Reprinted from the "Catholic Times and Catholic Opinion"

THE Catholic ideal of the family may be defined as the plan and purpose of Christ applied to the home. The original domestic relation remains, but restored and transformed. The spirit of Christ has entered into it and made it divine and eternal. According to Catholic teaching, therefore, the family is no longer a merely natural organization, endowed with religious sanction, for the preservation of the race; it is, above all, a spiritual and supernatural organization for the sanctification and salvation of mankind. Thus the family is still the primary social unit and the basis of society. But it fulfils these functions in a higher sense. The Christian family is the germ of the Christian Church and of the Christian State. It is a microcosm of the Kingdom of God.

The supernatural character of the Christian family is best revealed in the Sacrament of Marriage. Through the consecration of this Sacrament monogamy is made absolute, love rendered permanent and divine, and all the relations between husband and wife and parents and children are sanctified in the grace and holiness of Christ. All this is contained in the sacred sign of the contract of marriage, which is at once a cause of grace and an image of the mystic nuptials of Christ with His Church. "Husbands, love your wives as Christ also loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it" (Eph. v, 24). The love required is not merely the selfish love of the senses, nor is it necessarily the romantic love of sentiment. It is essentially the divine and disinterested love of charity which impels each to make sacrifice for the welfare of the other, and for that of the children for God's sake, and because of His ordinance. In the same way the figure of Christ united with His Church indicates the supernatural purpose of marriage. For why was Christ united to the Church? It was for the single purpose that men might be born again into the new life of grace and the adoption of sons, and perfected therein by the joint action of the one supernatural principle. In this also is seen the

need for the absolute unity and permanence of husband and wife as a single principle of generation and education of children for the Kingdom of God.

The particular functions of husband and wife are likewise revealed in the symbolism of marriage. As Christ by His Incarnation was one in the bond of nature with the members of His Church, so husband and wife united in one flesh are equal in dignity as human beings and as members of the conjugal society. Therefore should they show each other respect and sympathy. But this equality does not imply equal authority in the government of the home. As Christ is the head of the mystical body, so in married life precedence belongs to the husband over his wife, and the husband is the head of the family. Hence in matters concerning the family as a whole the wife owes conjugal obedience to her husband. In matters of detail of management of the household, on the other hand, the wife is independent of her husband. Of the nature of conjugal obedience it is only necessary to say that it is as much raised above the filial obedience of sons as the filial obedience of sons is raised above the servile obedience of slaves. The children, as subordinate members of the same body, have corresponding duties of reverence, obedience and love.

This is the ideal of the Catholic family, and, however difficult of attainment, it must be admitted that it stands for the highest conjugal union, and for the best possible method of securing the welfare of the members of the family and of society. That this ideal, though often approached, has generally failed, and only been perfectly realized in one family—the Holy Family of Nazareth—is due to the inherent weakness of our fallen nature, and to the disturbing influences from without which invariably beset the highest human ideals. These external dangers are no less today than in the past, and are probably more insidious. Many of them are embodied in modern conditions of life and modes of thought. I can only indicate these dangers briefly. Amongst them is the tendency to individualism which arose out of the Protestant doctrine of private judgment. The excess of this tendency led to many abuses. In regard to the domestic

relation it produced a preference on the part of the State for the liberty and happiness of the individual above the liberty and happiness of the family. This preference has continued since the time of the Reformation, and has led to the enactment of divorce and other laws adverse to the family. The modern propaganda for easy divorce and "birth control" owes something to this sentiment.

Akin to the evils of divorce and birth-control is the general laxity of opinion with regard to sexual immorality, and the breaking down of chastity by the assertion of the doctrines of free love and free union. The root of all theories of sexual immorality is the assumption that marriage is merely a matter of personal convenience or pleasure. Hence the advocates of these false theories ignore the truth that marriage of its nature implies the ordering and controlling of individual instinct for a social purpose, and the enforcing of rational restraints. Still more do they ignore the spiritual law of Christ which places the sexual instinct under a complete restraint, and only permits its gratification for the purpose of creating a Christian home. The deliberate exclusion of this end is the heinous sin of unchastity. The loss of this idea of the obligation of chastity is bound up with the loss of the other Catholic idea of the sanctity of Christian marriage, and its sacramental value. Both these losses were incurred through the secularization of marriage at the Reformation.

Another danger to the family consists in the decline of parental authority, due to the diminished influence of religion. Until recently the system of society in England may be said to have rested on religion. In the nurseries, in the schools, and the churches, the principles of the Christian religion were constantly instilled into the people, who came to accept them—at least, in theory—as a matter of custom. But much of this, unhappily, is now changed, and the country has already gone a long way on the path of transition from a religious to a non-religious phase. Supernatural and dogmatic religion, which alone count in the long run, are being relegated by an increasing majority to the scrap-heap of worn-out superstition. Parents do not accept, and will not impose religion on their children.

In the schools, instead of Christian moral and religious teaching, children are receiving secular education, while in the homes parents are content to impress a few general admonitions to secure external obedience and outward domestic peace. For the rest, the child, often pampered, is left to choose for itself later on what, if any, religion it will adopt. In these circumstances it is not surprising that parents are beginning to lose their authority, and that indiscipline is becoming increasingly common in the case of the young.

Finally there is the danger threatening the family owing to the growing demand for the cooperation of women in industry. The absence from the home for long hours of the day of married women must react unfavorably on the comfort and welfare of the inmates, and the health of young children is bound to suffer, as also is their moral training.

The dangers cited so far may be said to threaten the Catholic ideal of the family, more especially in its internal relations. We have next to consider the external relations of the Catholic home, and the modern conditions affecting it.

Catholic sociology recognizes three principal associations of mankind—the Church, the State, and the Family. These three societies are complete in themselves, and within their own spheres sovereignly independent. These spheres or regions of direct action are clearly defined for them by their proper objects. The immediate object of the State is to help man to obtain happiness in this life. But since man's complete end in the Christian economy is supernatural as well as natural, the duty of the Christian State is to endeavor to meet both, directly prosecuting the natural, and indirectly facilitating the supernatural. Between these two sovereignties is the family, whose object is to rear and train children as worthy citizens of this world and also as "the heirs of Christ and co-heirs of Heaven."

For the better understanding of the autonomy of the family and its relations to the State, it is necessary to remember that, in the words of Pope Leo XIII, "The domestic association is antecedent, as well in idea as in fact,

and must, therefore, have rights and duties which are prior to those of the community, and founded more immediately on nature."

Also it should be noted that a main source of difficulty in adjusting the claims of the three sovereignties in question consists in the identity of the subjects of their authority, and in the occasional overlapping of the objects coming under their jurisdiction. The single example of education will serve as an illustration. In this matter the State rightly claims to supervise the education of the child in so far as to see that it shall be properly fitted to exercise the duties of citizenship. The Church, likewise, has the right to supervise the child's education in order that it may fit him not only to be a good citizen, but also to be a worthy member of the Church. At the same time the right to educate the child belongs primarily to the parent, and as long as the parent satisfies the rightful demands of the Church and of the State he has the right to educate the child as he deems best for the child's welfare.

From the foregoing it will be seen that Catholic teaching strictly limits the rights of the community and strikes at the root of State Absolutism as taught by extreme Liberals and Socialists. The dangers arising from this source have proved to be very real in history and exist in certain countries today. But in England, where personal liberty is a secure possession, State Absolutism is not a direct or urgent danger. At the same time we are faced with the political evil which has already been referred to, of the exaggerated preference by the State of the liberty of the individual to that of the family. In practice this preference of ignoring the claim of the family to be the social unit infringes its independence. For the meaning of the claim is that the first concern of society, organized as the State, is rather with the family than with the individual, and that in all legislation for the benefit of the individual it must not regard him merely as an individual, but must above all keep in view his social character and his responsibilities as a member of the family. The claim is founded on the assumption that the family is the necessary basis of society, in the sense that the individual, for whom, of course, society exists, can only be reared and trained to

be a good man and a good citizen in the family. Legislation for the welfare of the individual apart from the home is therefore a virtual or indirect attack on the integrity of the family. In the direction of such legislation are discoverable the worst political dangers to the home in our country. These dangers are actual, increasing, and inevitable. In the artificial conditions of modern industrial society the individual is becoming more and more helpless, and the existence of the State daily more imperative. Children, for instance, are seen to require food and education. Their health is also seen to be threatened. What is the State doing? It is educating and feeding the children, and directly assuming the care of their health. There is much to be said for such action from the point of view of immediate necessity; but it cannot be accepted as a permanent solution of the problems. Instead of dealing with the individual children, the State should deal with the parents as representing and being responsible for the home. The same holds of other social problems connected with work and wages. All these should be regarded from the viewpoint of the family rather than from that of the individual. But the contrary method is pursued, and we are witnessing the results. By the loss of parental responsibility the family is grievously weakened; the State also is impoverished by excessive taxation. These evil results are inconsistent with national security and greatness, and threaten calamity.

By asserting the Catholic doctrine of the family we can help to prevent present dangers and to promote the future prosperity and happiness of our country.

Look to Nazareth

JOSEPH HUSSLEIN, S.J.

MARRIAGE finds its ideal in the Home of Nazareth. Among the many reasons for which God called that home into being, not the least was His purpose to make of it the model of Christian family life for all future generations.

When the Israelites built their Tabernacle to the Lord, God showed the plan to Moses on the mount, and He put wisdom into the heart of every skilful worker to make all things as He commanded them. So when today a man and maid have joined their hands within the Church of God to build unto the Lord a home where Christ shall dwell with them through all their future years, God shows to them a model of what that home should be according to the wishes of His heart. That model is the Home of Nazareth.

Under the Old Law, when man and woman plighted troth, they looked for guidance and inspiration to the homes of the ancient Patriarchs whom God had blessed for their fidelity to Him. They looked to Abraham himself from whom they were descended and to Sara, the beautiful, whom he had for wife, whose name God gave her as a token of the blessing that should come through her, as in Abraham himself all the kindred of the earth were to be blessed. Yet in the Home of Nazareth there was present more than Abraham. There was God in human form; God made man for love of us, God become a babe that childhood might be precious and most sacred evermore.

Man and maid! You who clasp your hands together at the altar of the Lord and join your lives that, like two rivers, they may run together into one, for better, for worse, until death shall you part, look to the plans that God has shown you on His Holy Mount, the Church. Look to the Home of Nazareth. Look to Mary and to Joseph. Model your lives upon theirs. So will you sanctify your future habitation. So will the children playing around your knees show the likeness of Christ in them. So will Heaven's blessing rest like sunlight on your path, whatever be its course.

There is quite another model, well I know, that the world will show to you. Listen not to its siren-song. It will bring destruction to your love and happiness. That world is the world for which Christ refused to pray. It is the embodiment of all that St. John beheld as the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eye, and the pride of life. Its expression in our time is found in those constant and seductive appeals of birth-control, divorce courts, and general emancipation from the laws of God. To it nothing is sacred, nothing is holy—neither life, nor love, nor religion. The slime of the serpent is over it all. Close your ears to its singing; shut your eyes to its delusions; look to the model God has shown you on His Mount; look to the Home of Nazareth.

Joseph is the head of that household. To him all God's commandments are given regarding the safety of the Holy Family. But what tender love, respect and reverence he bestows in all things on Mary, his wedded wife! To her and the Child his life is dedicated.

Joseph is first in authority within that little home. Yet Mary stands in dignity far higher than he, while obedient to both and subject to them is Christ, the Incarnate God. Happiness, harmony, tenderest affection fill the days within that humble home. The heart that throbs within it ceaselessly is Divinest Charity. God rules over all.

There, then, is the model shown you on the Mount. According to the plans unfolded to you build the temple of your home. Sprinkle it sweetly with the perfume of the love of God. Invite Jesus, Mary, Joseph to come and make of it their own. Then be sure that God's blessing will forever rest upon your wedded life.

A blessing of God are the children that He gives. They are both a care and a joy; a duty and a pleasure. Place them beneath St. Joseph's guardianship, where the Child Jesus stood; make them Mary's own, as Jesus was. So, by the hands of Mary and of Joseph, present them to your God. Bring them up for Him—in a Christian home, a Christian school, amid Christian surroundings, that Christ in turn may dwell in them. Out of such homes will go forth the men and women who alone, by the grace of **God**, can save the world.

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