

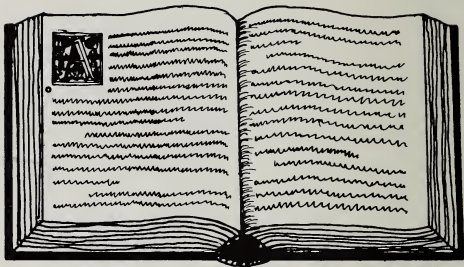
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# Let's build a home!



*A Pamphlet for the Whole Family...  
by a TRAPPIST*

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# Let's Build a home!

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• *Marriage*

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**by a Trappist**

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TO  
FATHER CARL

Our Lady's Assumption 1942

## JUST A WORD . . . . .

“To pervert, both in private and in public life, the moral sense begot and fostered by the Church, to lead human society back to the miserable conception of paganism—after having almost effaced the last vestige of Christian wisdom and decency—such is the dream which too many, alas! seek to realize today. God grant that their attempts be fruitless. In keeping with their purpose, the efforts of the wicked are primarily directed against the family, for they see clearly that the corruption they seek to bring upon society will surely be effected once they succeed in overturning the foundations upon which the family is based, since the latter is the nucleus of civil society. Hence divorce laws are introduced to put an end to the stability of marriage. Hence children are forced to follow an official teaching so often estranged from religion and ruining the authority of parents in a matter of the highest importance. Hence countenance is given to the spread of a shameful habit of selfish indulgence which contravenes the laws of nature, strikes a blow at the human race at its very source and strips the marriage tie of all its sanctity.” These words explain the purpose of our little work. They are taken from a letter of His Holiness, Pope Benedict XV, to Father Mateo rejoicing over the abundant fruit the work of the enthronement of the Sacred Heart in the homes has borne and exhorting him to persevere in an “apostolate so successfully begun.”

We must save the home; this is imperative if we wish to save society. And only a home founded upon the solid principles of Christianity will serve as a bulwark against the invading forces which threaten our very existence. To put it briefly, we must go back to Christ and, to quote again from the above-

mentioned letter, "to follow Christ is to be permeated with a lively and constant faith which not only acts upon the mind and heart, but likewise *governs and directs our conduct.*" Christ is the Way back to safety and sanity; carnality, sensuality and materialism bring us to destruction and insanity. Which do you prefer? The Eternal Wisdom willed to inaugurate the work of Redemption in the bosom of the Holy Family. Today's world needs redemption badly, but it will not be redeemed unless there are genuinely holy families modeled after the pattern, so simple yet so sublime, of Nazareth. And it is quite logical, for the family is the source of life and the first school of the child. If the fount is poisoned the nation will certainly perish!

The following considerations should rather have been entitled "Topics for discussion" since they are not at all complete and since they are only intended as starters or provocatives of thought on a subject of paramount importance: your home.

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## Let's Build A Home

### I. OPENING SCENE.

"Say, mother can I have the gang over tomorrow night?"

"Tomorrow night? Sure, Don. What's up?"

"Well, I promised to have them over sometime and I think tomorrow night would be a good night because they all seem to be so fed up on running around and not really having a good time."

"I thought you had a nice time the other night."

"We did, in a way, but it was just cruising around as one of the fellows puts it—just purposeless going from here to there."

"I think I get it. You want a safe port to cast anchor. Is that it?"

"Something like that, mom. You always seem to get the idea."

"Don't forget that I was a youngster once, and though things are a bit different today from what they were in my childhood days, human nature is very much the same."

"Say mom, that's a concession. Everybody says that our generation is on the rocks, and here you practically say that the young people in your day were about the same as they are today."

"Just a minute! Don't go too fast. I said that human nature is very much the same but you must admit that times have changed. For one thing, the speed of everything—including our lives—has picked up considerably. Back in the buggy days everything moved along with proportionate speed: slow and thoughtful; but today, everything moves along. . . ."

"Speedily and thoughtlessly, I suppose," broke in Don. "I admit that you are right in a way, mother. We do speed along and seem thoughtless and careless, but you'd be sur-

prised at some of the thinking the fellows are doing nowadays—even the girls.”

“No reflections on my sex, fellow.”

“O. K. I take it back. But seriously, the fellows and girls do get down and think every once in a while. Do you suppose they're satisfied to be drifting along aimlessly and getting nowhere? They've got dreams and ambitions just like you and dad had and they want to get somewhere. But, oh, I don't know. . . . What's wrong, mom?”

“As I see it, Don, when you go cruising around looking for a safe port to cast anchor you need a compass, a reliable one, and I'm afraid that many young people haven't got such a compass or competent guide or rule to bring them in safely to port.”

“Will you be just a bit more explicit? I know what a compass is—learned about it in the Boy Scouts; and I know what a guide is. He is used on hunting and mountain climbing expeditions and is supposed to know all the trails. And when the trail ends, it's his job to lead you over the rough and unmarked places. And rules—they have those in football. They tell you what you can do and what you can't do and the penalties for infractions.”

“Right. And just what kind of a sea voyage do you suppose you would have without a compass; or expedition without guides; or football game without rules?”

“The ship would probably never reach port, the expedition would get lost and, boy! what a mess the game would be! It would probably turn into a free-for-all, especially if the rivalry was keen.”

“Like between Notre Dame and the Army. Now life is a voyage, an expedition and a game. Take away the compass, the guide and the rules and what happens to your life?”

“I think I get it, mom. A fellow has to have a guide he can trust, one who has been tried and found trustworthy; a guide who can cope with every emergency and who will lead him on from one conquest to another until he attains his goal.”

"That's about it. You do think, don't you?"

"Now, mother, no digs—I told you we do think once in a while. Hey! look at the clock. It's time for me to get back to classes. I won't forget what you told me and I'll have some questions ready for you. Be on your guard."

"Forewarned is forearmed—I'll be on the alert. But how about the party?"

"Gosh, I almost forgot about that."

"You can take over the house and dad and I will go down to the show."

"Oh no, mom. We want you and dad to be here too. I know all the fellows think you're swell because you treat them so nice when they call for me or whenever they drop in. And dad's a pal."

"Nice of you to say that, Don. All right, we'll stay home. And I suppose you'll want lunch."

"Well, since you mention it . . . a piece of home-made pie or cake and some sandwiches wouldn't go bad."

"And do you want dad to get something to drink? Punch or highballs or something?"

"No, thanks. Let's forget the drinks. It seems that every place you go nowadays you have to take a drink, whether you want to or not. It's so senseless, especially if you have no taste for it at all. I like a drink once in a while but I can't see this idea of pouring down one drink after another just for the effect—just to get a kick out of it. And I don't think there is a more disgusting sight than to see a woman drunk. It's bad enough when a man makes an animal out of himself but when a woman does. . . . But I better rush off. Thanks, mom—don't forget the lunch!" And giving his mother a hearty filial kiss he dashed down to his convertible, which was waiting to run him over to school.

And mother stood at the window and waved to her 17 year-old son as he pulled away from the curb and sped down the street. Yes, she was proud of him. He was just beginning his senior year in the Catholic High School and was doing well. She thanked God that they

had been able to guide him safely this far and whispered a prayer that God might continue to guide them in guiding this the last of their sons to the home port, and that Mary, the Star of the Sea, might light his path over the tempestuous sea of life.

"Lunch," she mused. "Something to eat. These boys are regular beggars, always 'bumming a handout.' What will it be? pie, cake, doughnuts, sandwiches. . . .? I'd better look through my index. . . ."

"Oh hello, dad. You surprised me."

"I was just making a couple of business calls and I thought I'd drop in and see how you were getting along."

"Glad you did. I'm just trying to gather some ideas for a lunch for tomorrow night."

"What's coming off tomorrow night? Club?"

"No. Don is having his gang, as he calls them, in for the evening and he hinted that a lunch would be welcome. Any suggestions?"

"Aw, all youngsters like pie and sandwiches and maybe we could pop some corn."

"That's an idea. Remember when we were youngsters how corn-popping and taffy-pulling were favorite indoor sports?"

"I surely do, and it was real fun. I don't see why we can't have those 'good old days' today," he went on, musingly. "To many today the home is just a place to get meals and hang your hat, a wayside inn at which to stop for a rest before starting off again on the wearying search for pleasure, whereas it should be the very center of everything. In those days your whole life pivoted about the home. You received your early education there. Your first lessons about God, the Blessed Mother and the saints were learned at mother's knee and as you grew up the home and home-life had a very definite influence in the formation of character. And even entertainment. You didn't go out and buy a good time—you made it up in your own home: games, story-telling, candy-making. . . . Oh I don't have to tell you, mother. You enjoyed

those good times yourself and you know what an important part your home had in building you into a tender and devoted Christian mother and a loyal and faithful wife."

"That's a long speech for you, dad, and, thank you for the compliment. Yes, the home means everything in the raising of children and its social influence is invaluable. Remember how Father Carl spoke on that a couple of Sunday ago? and how he called our attention to the Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on Christian marriage which stresses the supreme importance of the unity and indissolubility of Christian wedlock and lays bare the forces undermining the sanctity of the home?"

"I think that was one of the best sermons he ever gave. He realizes that the home is the very foundation of human society. Undermine the home and you undermine the nation, for a nation will be very much what its homes are."

"The truth of that is very evident in our own day. Look at the number of homes broken up and then look at the wretched condition of society. God has never blessed an age with equal material benefits and yet there never was more widespread poverty, misery and distress. Take away the home and everything seems to go: God, religion, charity, morality. . . ."

"Or put it the other way: take God away or put Him out of our lives and the home goes, and everything noble and worthwhile goes with it. God must remain supreme in our homes and in our lives. If God is not the supreme Ruler and Defender of a home, no family can hold out against the fierce inroads and invasions made upon it today. And it is we parents, first of all, who must recognize that we are not masters even in our own home—we are creatures and subjects of God and it is to Him that we must render an account of those entrusted to our care."

"Yes, and I think that if parents did stop and realize their responsibility they would be more zealous to fulfil their duties towards each other and towards their children. I liked

the way Father Carl likened parents to stewards into whose hands God has committed the priceless treasures of human souls—souls He prized so highly that He came down and died for them and for which one day He will demand a strict accounting. That will be a dread day and especially for parents who have neglected their duties.”

“Well, mother, we’ve tried our best and we can only trust in the mercy and goodness of God towards poor sinners. This matter is so important that no one can afford to overlook it—neither parents nor children.”

“Yes, the children have to learn to love the home, but it is the parents’ responsibility to make the home the place it should be. Many people condemn the younger generation but are they entirely to blame? Look at the homes—if you can call them such—that some of the youngsters come from: no God, no respect for religion or law, no respect for each other, quarrels, abuse, drunkenness and all the rest. How can we expect those children to be ideal, noble and God-fearing?”

“Oh, even such youngsters can turn out O. K. if they are caught up by good companions or other good influences”; said dad, “but they’ve got two strikes on them when they come to bat and it’s a tough fight. There was a young fellow in this morning. He looked so down-in-the-mouth. After he finished his business I asked him what was the matter. Well, it was a story we’ve all heard quite often lately: broken home, no religion, no aim in life—just drifting aimlessly. ‘Why work, why struggle, why be noble when all you get at the end is a nice headstone?’ he asked. ‘My grandfather was a lucky guy—he honestly believed he’d have a chance to make up for mistakes in another world after he got through with this one. He worked *for* something. But as for me, my parents broke away from all that; they didn’t take any chances on a future life, believe me. They’ve taken all they can out of this one; they don’t even bother to keep promises. They’ve been

divorced twice. It doesn't matter much, I suppose, but if I had a kid, I'd darn well see that he learned to believe that he was at least a couple steps above a horse or a cow.\* I sent him over to see Father Carl. I hate to see these youngsters, with such potentialities for the good and noble, going to rot because they were never brought up by proper parents in a proper home."

"You don't feel any worse about it than I do. Oh, if parents would only realize that the home is the first and fundamental training school for their children and that nothing can replace the home! The Sisters and Priests and teachers worthy of the name can do and are doing much, but they are only supplementary—the home is the primeval school and the parents are God-appointed teachers, especially the mother."

"This is all very interesting, and I know I could talk family with you for hours; but if we want bread on the table I'd better be getting on. If you need anything, call."

"Bye, dad. Dinner at six. Oh, and on your way, why not stop in and ask Father Carl to come over tomorrow night?"

"That's a splendid idea. He likes the young people and they all go for him. Bye."

And while dad is making his calls and mother is looking over her recipes and Don is at school let us touch upon the subject of the conversations we have just listened-in on: the home, the family and marriage.

## II. PROSPERITY, THE NATION, THE HOME.

We cannot lay too much stress on the importance of the home and the family. Nations rise and fall with their families. Our own national history bears witness to this truth. When did we enjoy the greatest prosperity? and by prosperity we do not mean material wealth. The sooner we change our standard

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\*Actual case quoted by Alice Douglas Kelley in her splendid pamphlet, "Boys, Girls, and Standards."

of values the better off we will be; and the sooner we learn that we are born to live *in* the world and not *for* the world, the more true prosperity we will enjoy. Now prosperity means successful progress and progress, in turn, means a movement forward, a gradual betterment, an advancement to a higher stage. The application becomes clear when we stop to reflect just where man is supposed to be going and what his destiny is. If I were born for this world, to live here for a short time and then go down to a grave which would mark the end of everything, I would be quite willing to agree that prosperity means the amassing of wealth, the attainment of honor and position and all the rest that the world has to offer. But man is born for higher and nobler things: "Dust thou art, to dust returnest, was not spoken of the soul." Man is born to be a son of God and to share the eternal inheritance with Christ, his elder Brother. We repeat: man lives in this world but he is bound for heaven; and any progress, to be real progress, must be a forward movement, must approach him to his goal and final end, which is God and the possession of eternal joys. Anything that takes him away from his goal or hinders that progress is definitely opposed to prosperity. We can build vast steel and oil empires, we can put every wheel in every factory in motion and we can give everyone at least \$30 a week plus ham and eggs and yet if God does not come into our considerations our country will not be truly prosperous—nor will its pseudo-prosperity last very long. What a fragile thing is material prosperity! We all heard it crash some years ago and the experts are still trying to piece it together. Might we suggest that they call in—if we may so speak—the divine Artisan who some æons back called our poor world out of nothing and handed it over to man in good order: "And God saw that all was good (Genesis 1:25), that all was the way it should be? He, and He alone, is able to restore sanity and order to our poor topsy-turvy, insane, material



and pleasure-seeking world; and He will if we only bow our proud heads and adore the one true God—if we get down on our knees and pray!

In the introduction to his excellent work, "The Holy Ghost," Father Leen sums up very compactly the basic ailment of today's world: a materialism that drags heaven-bound man down to earth and crushes him, a materialism that feeds him on bread which makes hungry where most it satisfies. He writes: "Now it looks as if there were about to sweep over all the civilized peoples of the world, a philosophy which threatens to corrupt utterly the minds, the hearts, the manners and the morals of all men. . . . It is not merely bodies but souls that risk being whelmed and drowned in the destroying waters of this 'modern deluge' that, having taken its rise in the near East, is spreading itself out on every side, East and West, and carrying disaster in its course. This evil system of thought degrades man to a degree to which he was never, hitherto, degraded, since the foundation of the world. Rejecting God, denying all religious, spiritual, moral and even intellectual values, the philosophy of the Communist menace, with a savage intensity and a diabolical energy of apostolate, proclaims that man's horizons are limited to this world and consequently that his aspirations should soar no higher than the satisfaction of his material needs. Having wherewithal to be housed and clothed and fed, having a sufficiency of bodily comforts, and being provided with the means to secure a satisfying measure of sense gratification there is nothing more to be looked for. Any ideal beyond or higher than this is folly—is more than folly, because it becomes a pernicious error militating against the well-being of the mass—Humanity. The fundamental principles of this philosophy of Communism can be figuratively and not inaptly compressed into this terse statement: 'On bread alone doth man live'—a statement which is seen to be a direct chal-

lenge to, as well as a flat contradiction of, the philosophy of Jesus Christ."

Man is hungry—very hungry. A recent writer shows us modern man under the symbol of a wolf roving hither and thither in the "endless and loveless desert that is Western Civilization . . . a howling human animal crying for eternity." Nor will Marx or Stalin or Hitler satisfy that hunger. Jesus Christ once said, and He is Truth Itself: "Not in bread alone doth man live but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4). Man can taste or he can gorge himself on the food of the flesh but it will never satisfy, for it is only the food that comes from the Spirit of God that will still the longings of his heart. Saint Augustine was most right when he wrote: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our hearts can find no rest until they rest in Thee." The only remedy for society is a RETURN TO GOD—God must again be enthroned in our hearts, in our homes, in our courts, in fine, in our private and public life. God must reign and we must serve; and those who do serve will tell you happily that to serve is to reign.

Now our forefathers founded this nation upon the solid foundation of a firm belief in God and an unshakable confidence in His divine Providence. It was with hearts full of hope and with God o'erhead that they sailed from European ports and, once landed, that they pushed on into the untamed vastness of the New World. Many of them were looking for an asylum where they could worship God in keeping with their consciences. It was God they were seeking, and each cabin that went up was a little temple in which husband and wife and children joined to praise the God of all and to call His blessings down upon the infant nation. The meeting-house was first of all a house of prayer and then matters of material welfare were discussed. Like the early Christians, they invoked the blessings of God upon their every undertaking. These men—our fathers—had a true sense of values.

They knew that God must come first and man second; that the spiritual welfare takes precedence of the material well-being. And it was in those days that our country prospered—spiritually, materially and politically. From a handful of colonists it grew into a loosely joined body that could challenge the mighty British Empire. Their strength lay in God and they were defending their God-given rights of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. We suggest a thoughtful reading of the Declaration of Independence and the memorable address of Patrick Henry, "The War Inevitable, March, 1775." It will give an insight into, and an appreciation of, the deeply religious spirit of our founders—they recognized God and did not ostracize Him from their daily lives, their struggles and successes, or their politics.

And it is this same spirit upon which the nation's homes were founded. God was the supreme Ruler of each home, over each heart and hearth—and that is as it should be; and where God reigned supreme, His Immaculate Mother was enthroned as Queen. Founded upon such an unshakable foundation, what towers of strength the pioneer homes were and what noble characters they produced! The best and greatest in our land came from homes where God's dominion was recognized and where religion was not just a Sunday morning affair but was the very life of the family. Whenever anything was to be decided, God was invoked; in times of sickness, trials and hardships, hearts and eyes were raised to the Crucifix where they found both strength and inspiration to carry on bravely and unflinchingly. We who enjoy the fruits of the pioneering hardships of our forefathers cannot realize the almost insurmountable obstacles they had to meet and hurdle. It was not the work of pigmies but of giants which carved out this our United States from the untamed, unexplored, unmapped stretches of wilderness which extended unknown miles to the west. If their homes had not been cradles of man-

hood and if they had not been inspired by noble ideals they could never have accomplished the task. They found their strength and ideal in God.

However, we do not wish to imply nor to give the impression that our nascent country had the appearance of a vast religious community where every one was a saint and where there was nothing to mar the symphony of praise being offered to God. Unhappily there were evil men. Pioneer homes were productive of villains as well as heroes, of Arnolds as well as Washingtons, of Booths as well as Lincolns. Who has not read the novels of Zane Grey whence arises the awe and fear-inspiring figure of the rustler, the stagecoach-bandit, the claim-jumper, who, shooting from the hip, could "bulls-eye" man or beast within the range of one or two miles? We may question the marksmanship of these rough characters but we cannot deny that there existed men who had dethroned God and had either placed themselves, gold, furs, cattle, or land on the pedestal. I wonder if we haven't their counterpart today in the racketeer, the hi-jacker, and in the numberless 'little Cæsars' so glorified by the films! And on the other hand there were the religious fanatics whose witch-burnings and other equally condemnable practices led to many abuses and did more to harm than to further the cause of religion and national well-being.

Between these extremes there was the good Christian home which, as we have indicated, cradled the men to whom we owe our existence as the land of the free. Free themselves from the slavery of the lower passions they could and did hand on freedom to their posterity. Look into the homes, into the lives of our nation's truly great men. There was nothing there of that selfishness, that avarice, that greed and lust for power, which characterizes the lives of many of today's demagogues. Lincoln came from a poor wilderness cabin, but it was a home; and his public life was just one noble sacrifice for his country—a sacrifice

so tragically consummated by the assassin's bullet. He was great, not in the way the world calls great, but with a greatness that comes from within—a greatness of soul. Only a truly great man could write and deliver the "Gettysburg Address" or compose the famous and well-known letter sent by the martyred President to Mrs. Bixby. Lincoln is an outstanding example, but who can number the multitude of truly great souls formed, reared and cultivated at the firesides of our truly Christian homes? Thank God there are still many such homes today in our land producing gigantic characters; but no one can deny that the home as an honored institution has suffered terrifically under the assaults of neo-paganism, godlessness and material philosophies. The home must again take its place as a venerated sanctuary, and the family, as a most forceful unit for national stability, peace, happiness and true prosperity, must be re-established on the solid foundation of religion. God must again reign over our hearts and our homes and then He will reign over our nation—and where He reigns there we find peace and prosperity and the happiness we are all striving after.

### III. A WORD ON MARRIAGE.

Now of all agencies the Catholic Church is the one which has done the most to foster, sanctify and to preserve the home and family. Recognizing the fundamental and essential need of the Christian family, Pope after Pope through the long centuries of the Christian era has from his watchtower in Rome kept watch over the home and has sounded the alarm at the approach of danger. But too often have their alarms fallen on deaf ears. Like the Divine Master whose spokesmen and vicegerent they are, the Vicars of Christ have met coldness and opposition, and have even had to undergo persecution because of their noble attempts to save society from its own folly. Men did not believe Christ, so it is

hardly surprising that they do not believe His Ambassadors; but it is to their own cost. The Son of God once said: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me" and "he that believeth not shall be condemned." (Luke 10:16; Mark 16:16). History bears out the truth of these words of the divine Master—if we need anything to substantiate the truth of His words. The tragedy of individual lives, of society, and of nations is a sad witness to man's perversity and persistent pride, for what is more prideful than to prefer our word and our way to God's?

In view of the conditions, needs, errors and vices affecting the family and society in His day, our late Holy Father, Pope Pius XI, published His masterful Encyclical "On Christian Marriage." Grieving that a "great number of men either entirely ignore or shamelessly deny the great sanctity of Christian wedlock or even, relying on the false principles of a new and utterly perverse morality, too often trample it under foot," the Pontiff felt it his duty to raise his voice "on the nature and dignity of Christian marriage, on the advantages and benefits which accrue from it to the family and to human society itself, on the errors contrary to this most important point of the Gospel teaching, on the vices opposed to conjugal union, and lastly on the principal remedies to be applied."

The pages that follow are invaluable. It would be well for all—Christian and non-Christian, Catholic and non-Catholic—to ponder the basic truths contained therein. A return to a sane and religious outlook on marriage is imperative if we wish to save society and our civilization. One of the most disastrous scourges that ever swept our country is the vice of divorce, which destroys the home. Now the home is the base and foundation of the state. It follows that we must stop divorce or ruin the state which cannot continue to exist if its base is allowed to crumble and fall. While many people are divorced and some of them make new homes,

the inevitable trend of divorce is to break up many more homes than it builds and to reduce notably the number of children. And when a home is broken up the parents and children are separated, and the sweet ties that bind father and mother to their offspring and to each other are broken forever—and what happens to the children?

We must learn to approach marriage with a different attitude of mind—with a religious attitude, for Christian marriage is a Sacrament of the New Law. Let us repeat—man is born to live in the world and not for the world, and thus everything he does should approach him to his last end: God. Now marriage is not just an adventure of short duration—it is a state of life. It is, if we may put it this way, a vehicle by which husband and wife and the children entrusted to them go to God. Man and woman bound together in a sacred union by a generous surrender of their persons one to another for *the whole span of life* mutually aid each other in attaining to their last end and in guiding their children. In the mind of the Divine Institutor it is something permanent, something stable and not just a flash of passion. This union, thoughtfully and seriously entered into, God blesses with an abundance of grace and helps to enable the parties to fulfil their God-given duties. Too often nowadays marriage is entered into without much thought and, what is more tragic, when the parties are in such a condition that they cannot think. What can we hope for from such marriages? And then there are the marriages contracted with the thought that “if we don't agree, we can always get a divorce”—and if you have the price, a divorce is scandalously easy to obtain in our courts. With such a mind how can the parties hope for or expect the peace and happiness they are seeking? and what kind of a home will they have?

And how many marriages are not entered into under the spell of a romantic moon? The parties suddenly decide to run off to one of

our matrimonial marts and get married. Without seeking the advice of anyone, without a thought of the future, without a speck of reason they plunge into what God intended to be a permanent union. One of the most important—in fact, the most important—investments a man has to make, he makes with a fluttering heart instead of with a clear head and solid reason. The heart must play some part, we grant, but it should not supplant the reason—supplement, not supplant. Would you think of investing a fortune in a certain corporation because they send out beautiful engraved announcements or because the president of the concern has a pleasing personality? And supposing the company was sound, you would hardly invest your all without seeking the advice of friends or business associates. Why invest your life with less care and consideration? A large percentage of divorces are traceable to excessive haste. "A young man takes a sudden fancy to a girl. It is probably kindled by her complexion, her contour, or the radiance of her eyes. A whirlwind courtship ends in a sudden elopement. They awake from the honeymoon to discover that they are as different from one another as day is from night. The divorce court will not be idle long." (O'Brien, "Faith of Millions.")

If marriages were entered into with more leisure and thought there would be no need for many to lament afterwards: "If I had only stopped to think! If I had used my head instead of my heart I would have seen how blind and foolish I was! I would have realized that character, disposition, intelligence, understanding, sympathy and unselfishness are the things that count in making for the happiness of the home and the permanence of the union, and not the texture and color of skin, radiance of eyes, contours, athletic ability and other pleasing but superficial items."

No one has yet found a satisfactory substitute for prudence and common sense. In a



matter of this importance the young people should exhaust every bit they have and draw on that of their pastors, their parents, friends and associates. The words of a ditty, popular a generation ago, seem very apropos here:

"Will some one kindly tell me,  
Will some one let me know,  
How I picked a lemon in the garden of love  
Where I thought only peaches grow?"

#### IV. DON'S PARTY.

With these few thoughts in mind let us go back to dad and mother who are awaiting the arrival of Don and his friends. Placing a vase of flowers, mother looks over at dad comfortably hidden behind the evening paper.

"They ought to be coming in pretty soon."

"Oh, it's early yet. And you know how long it takes some girls to get ready. Of course, you were an exception. . . ."

"Now, dad, no remarks."

"Did you ever hear the story told about the famous American humorist, Bill Nye?"

"I don't think so."

"Well as a young man he called one Sunday afternoon upon his lady friend to take her for a buggy ride. He waited in the parlor for what seemed to him an eternity—probably a matter of an hour. At last the young lady appeared, groomed with meticulous nicety. She had just opened the door to go out to the waiting surrey when her eyes fell upon the lean and patient horse. 'What!' she exclaimed indignantly, 'do you expect me to ride behind such a skinny nag?' 'But, my dear,' replied Bill Nye, 'when I arrived here this afternoon that was a fat horse'!"

And struggling to keep a straight face, mother rose gallantly to the defence of her sex when the door broke open and the invaders invaded.

"Here we are," announced Don. "Dad and mother, meet the crowd."

There followed the usual round of introductions, hellos, pleased-to-meet-you's, pleasant-

ries, etc., and under the charge of their hostess the young ladies were led out to renew lipstick and rouge and to see to the other inevitable fixings-up that feminine vanity makes so imperative. The fellows were soon at home. Pipes and cigarettes were lit and with the host's permission, Walt, the 'professor,' invaded the library while Don and Jerry tried out a new arrangement on the fiddle and piano. Dad had the others cornered and was repeating his Bill Nye story.

"Well Don, what's the program?" asked mother as she entered with her Venuses.

"Oh, we can roll up the rug and dance. There are some good orchestras on the air tonight. Of course, that's just a suggestion. What do you say, Dick?"

"O. K. wth me. . . ."

"Hey, Don!" broke in the 'Professor,' "can we look through this family album?"

"Sure. I don't think the folks will object. Will you, dad?"

"Of course not. Go ahead."

And who does not like to look through family albums? They all made a rush for it and soon, album pedestaled on a hassock, they were in a huddle over scenes of another day. . . . It was a veritable babel of "Ohs, aws, how kuaint," etc., and each change of scene brought its need of explanation which Don did his best to supply. There was the old stuccoed homestead with its woodshed in the rear, an institution whose disappearance in favor of the garage and the oil-burner marked a sad passing, for it was in the old woodshed that many valuable lessons were impressed on the minds—and anatomies—of young America. Then there were picnic scenes, family groups, uncles and aunts, wedding pictures and, oh, how lovely the brides looked in their high-necked, hooped gowns and how gallant the grooms with their very stiff collars and flowing moustaches. And here was an old daguerreotype of grandma when she was a girl, and all the rest that a typical album should contain. . . .

Dad and mom stood and watched the group of typical young Americans. Ranging in age from 16 to 21, they represented that most important age period during which youth passes into manhood and womanhood and strikes out alone to face the world. They wondered if the youngsters before them, so engrossed in souvenirs of the past, were prepared to face the future. Like the rest of young America they danced, they smoked, kept rather late hours, drank on occasion and sought entertainment and recreation. Though young in experience they all had, like other young people of their age, tasted something of the emptiness of the philosophy which taught them to "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die"; they all recognized the senselessness of a drifting and purposeless life. They had ambitions—they wanted to get somewhere and "having fun" wasn't the goal in life. No, they were not going "sour" on life, but they were looking for something more substantial, something more permanent, something more reliable than the materialist, the neo-pagan had to offer. Even though most of them had been trained up in Christian homes and grounded in Christian principles they paused thoughtfully on the threshold of adult life. There was something more than curiosity in the "whys" they were asking. Their parents had taught them that this or that was "not nice" or positively evil. Now they wanted to know why, and it was their right to ask. Not that they had any right to question authority but they wanted a rule, a standard to go by when, after they had left their homes or their parents had died, they were faced with problems or situations to solve. Seriously religious and thoughtful Christian parents could and did give satisfactory answers; but what about the broad-minded, the enlightened, the "intelligent" parents? What can they tell their children when they ask, why? In her splendid pamphlet, Alice Kelly gives their answer to the childrens' why: "Here is the world, and here is life. Do what

you can about it. We can tell you our own experience; we can warn you that some things are 'not nice' that other things are 'wicked,' that still others will make you ill—but we can give you no good and sufficient reasons why you should be 'nice' nor why you should preserve your health, other than those fallible ones of social expediency. We have no rule of life to give you. We believe we have brought you into a world which has not much to offer you, and since we have emancipated ourselves from the 'old beliefs' we cannot hold out to you any hope of anything after this existence—so you must do the best you can. We can only scold or weep or agonize or punish, when you get lost in the fog into which we ourselves have sent you." And with that 'bon voyage' they launch their offspring on the sea of life. Can we be surprised at the number of shipwrecks? Even though they get to "know their way around" at an early age, is it fair to send them out without a compass to an unknown destination?

Did you ever watch a ship being fitted out for an expedition? Nothing is overlooked; every emergency is provided for. There are charts, compasses, sextants, sounding instruments and every other instrument of which there might be a possible need. The captain or leader of the expedition hopes for the best but prepares for the worst. Provisions of all kinds are stored on board—foods, clothing, medicines and everything that will contribute to the welfare of the crew and the success of the voyage. Now, can parents be less wise, less provident, in launching their children on the adventurous and no less dangerous expedition of life? Can they afford to overlook any possibility where the successful voyage of the child is concerned?

And the children are demanding this guidance, this direction from the parents. They want a rule of life—a rule, a standard, by which they can live happy and successful lives. When they get out on the storm-tossed sea of life, how are they going to conduct

themselves if they have no tried and dependable rule to go by? a rule that will care for every emergency and pull them through the tight places? Catholic parents have that rule and those of them who live by it themselves and hand it on to their children live happily themselves and make for the success and happiness of their children. Alice Kelly relates the following: "I had a very dear friend, mother of a large family, who lived through the adolescence of her children with undisturbed placidity. Her relation with her entire family was one of the most beautiful things I have ever known. She said: 'No, I do not worry about the children. They go to confession and Communion regularly and they all have strong Faith. They cannot be doing anything wrong'."

And the writer knows a large family of ten children. Based on the solid foundation of Faith, that home was a model to imitate. And as the children reached marriageable age they married and their homes are reproductions of the parent home. Religion, mutual respect and love of parents for each other and for the children make of these homes little heavens, little havens of happiness where God and love reign supreme. And today, the aged parents, like wise admirals, have retired to a small home where they live quietly and happily, contented that they have done their God-given duties by raising up honorable citizens for the state and for heaven. They continue to follow the affairs of their children but without anxiety or fear for they had "fitted" them out wisely for the voyage to the home port.

But to get back to our group. . . . Dad and mother are brought out of their reverie by the sound of the door bell. They start for the door but Don is ahead of them.

"I'll go; it's probably Father Carl." And opening the door he admitted the cherished friend of the family—a friend who had ever been loyal and who had given invaluable aid in guiding and directing the children. Dad and mom felt that they could never repay his

kindness. Brought up to respect the Priest and the Priesthood, they revered their visitor and had always taught their children the same respect and devotion. They were waiting for him as he entered.

"Good evening, Father Carl. Welcome to our home."

"Good evening. It's nice to see you again. Don warned me about this gang. . . ."

And by this time the gang had encircled the priest and hosts. Most of them knew Father Carl and loved him. He was soon introduced to the others.

"Don, take Father's things. And, Father, what is your pleasure?"

"Well everything was so quiet when I came in that I didn't think the youngsters had arrived as yet," answered Father as he settled himself in his favorite arm chair near the fireplace.

"Now, Father. We can settle down and be quiet once in a while," returned Larry. "We were looking through the family album and imagining just how things were back in those days."

"I imagine they must have been rather dull even in the gay nineties," broke in Mary Elizabeth. "They didn't have the radio, the talkies, the automobile, and a lot of other things that go to make life interesting."

Father Carl smiled. "That's true. They didn't have as much as we have today but I think they enjoyed life as much if not more than we do."

"That calls for an explanation," rejoined Mary Elizabeth.

"Well," started the Priest as he looked at the youthful audience literally at his feet—some on the floor, others on footstools and hassocks, "do you vivacious, peppy, full-of-life, people ever stay in one place or stick to one thing long enough to enjoy it? You're restless—always on the go from one place or thing to another. Isn't that about it?"

"You're right, Father, but it's the spirit of the age—speed, and take pleasure like everything else on the wing." This from Joe.

"Now tell me, do you find satisfaction in such a hurried, such a superficial existence?"

"Not real satisfaction," contributed Walt. "We may have some fun and get something of a kick out of it, but it really isn't satisfying."

"Aw, he's just an old kill-joy," cut in Larry good-naturedly. "He wants everybody to settle down and be real quiet and read all the time. That's why we call him the professor."

"Extremes are always bad," said the Priest. "In medio stat virtus."

"I know what that means," boasted Don. "It means that if you think about, dream about, talk about and eat cream pie all the time you get sick and tired of it."

"In other words," took up the priest, "we must practice moderation in all things. What is that saying . . . . ?"

"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," spoke up Irene.

"But that works both ways," defended Walt. "Some people want to play all the time and never get down to serious reading."

"And some people want to read all the time and never play," went on Irene. "Whoever marries you will always know where to find you. She will just have to look for a book and . . . ."

"Don't mind them, Father. It goes on like that for hours," explained Don. "They'll probably wind up by having you marry them one of these days."

"Good! What the world needs today is good Catholic marriages or, to say the same thing in another way, good Christian homes and families."

"But to get back to this question of running around and restlessness—what would you suggest?" asked Paul.

"Moderation for one thing," replied the Priest. "Do you think it is necessary to go out every evening?"

"If you had the kind of home I've got, you wouldn't care to stay around even one evening a week," answered Paul. "You see, Father, my folks have been divorced and married a couple times and, well, there's not much home left for us kids. We just come and go more or less as we please and they don't worry a whole lot about it. If I hadn't met up with Don and his gang I wonder where I would be drifting by this time."

"I'm sorry to hear that about your home. Come over and see me tomorrow and we'll have a talk about it. Maybe I can help."

"But I'm not a Catholic, Father."

"That's all right. Drop over any time."

"Thank you, Father, I will."

## V. LET'S BUILD A HOME.

Noticing that some of his disciples were getting a bit restless, Father Carl asked Don to get a large sheet of paper and a crayon.

"We're going to play a new game," he announced. "I want all of you to help me build a home. I thought of it on the way over—a conversation with a young couple about to be married gave me the idea."

"Who's going to get married?" questioned Alida with typical feminine inquisitiveness.

"Rex and Catherine," replied the Priest. "I think you all know them. They're quite a popular couple. . . . But to get back to our game—we're going to build a home and each one must contribute his part."

And spreading out the sheet of paper on the little table provided by dad, he continued:

"We've mentioned family, home, marriage, divorce, restlessness, study, play, radio, good old days. . . . Now let's all pool our ideas and see if we can put up a model home."

"First of all, before beginning the actual construction work, what do you do?"

"Get a loan from the Government," cracked Larry.



"Go to the foot of the class, young man," smiled Father Carl. "And now that we have successfully negotiated our loan, what is the next move?"

"Pick out the lot, I suppose," offered Alida. "And then what?"

"Clear away stumps, brush or whatever else may have accumulated and then start digging," this from Don.

"Didn't you forget something?" asked the Professor.

"Oh, are you here?" bantered Irene. "What did we forget?"

"How about a plan?"

"Good for you," exclaimed the Priest. "What a bunch of builders we are! We've started to dig and haven't even a plan to go by."

"I wonder, Father, if that isn't the trouble with our lives—we either haven't or don't follow a definite plan," said Jerry quite seriously and thoughtfully.

"That's just what mother and I were talking about yesterday," added Don. "Have you thought about it any more, mother?"

"Yes, Don, quite a bit and I think Father will give you your answer as the building goes on."

"Of course, we can't build or live without a plan," agreed Father Carl. "It would be as senseless as to launch a ship without rudder, compass or destination. It doesn't take much to figure out just how successful a voyage that ship would have. . . ."

"Or how fantastic some of our sky scrapers would look if they were constructed without a plan—just haphazard piles of masonry. . . ."

"Like the block houses we used to build when we were kids. . . ."

"That wasn't so long ago, the way you act! . . . ."

Remarks and "cracks" piled up and without dampening their spirit and humor, Father guided them back to their task of building.

"Now that we all recognize the need of a plan, let's get on with our building. Here,

Walt, you're an artist and an architect. Sketch the home as we proceed.

"The first thing, as was suggested, is to pick out our lot. I don't think anyone would deliberately choose the slums to locate his home—usually people look for a quiet and respectable neighborhood. How about Glen Oak Addition?"

"O. K. with me. . . ." "too far from town. . ." etc., etc.

"Aw, let's not argue about it. Glen Oak will do, Father. What's next?"

"We have to clear the ground of stumps and accumulated rubbish."

"And did you ever see an empty lot that didn't have piles of this or that or bill posters on it?" observed Joe.

"Now before a young man and maid go about getting married and forming their home, what must they get rid of?"

"Bad habits," offered Marilyn.

"Anything that may pop up later on and spoil the marriage," suggested Alida. "Just like the stumps in the empty lot—if you don't get them out, root and all, they may damage the sewers and plumbing later on."

"Good. Anything else?"

"Well I think that if you scrape away selfishness you've prepared your ground pretty well for the big step," summarized Walt.

"Splendid! Selfishness has absolutely no place in the home. Man and wife must live for each other and for the children—and the children for the parents. All must work together for the good of the home. Such self-sacrifice is the noblest and most far-reaching of all virtues. It is just another word for true love; and without love, what is a home?"

## VI. CHRIST, THE CORNERSTONE.

"If you are satisfied that the ground is cleared, we'll get down to digging and laying the foundation. Now I think you will all admit that the foundation is the most important part of the house. What do you suppose would

happen to the Empire State Building if the foundation was not deep and solid?"

"It would probably be all over Fifth Avenue by this time," came in Dick.

"It never would have gone up as high as it did if they hadn't sunk a good base in the first place," offered Jerry.

"Right. Now our lives are the same. If they are not solidly 'foundationed' they will never rise—they will be worthless."

"Didn't Our Lord say something like that—something about a house built on a rock?" asked Alida.

"Yes, He ended His beautiful sermon on the mount with that simile. Saint Matthew has recorded His words for us in the 7th Chapter of his Gospel. . . ."

"Here it is, Father," announced Walt and he proceeded to read: "Every one therefore that heareth these my words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock. And every one that heareth these my words, and doth them not, shall be like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand, and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house and it fell, and great was the fall thereof."

"There's your foundation," concluded the Priest: "And who is the rock?"

"Christ Himself," answered Irene.

"Good. Walt, there's the first, the cornerstone of our foundation."

And Walt sketched a block and inscribed it:

CHRIST
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"Now then," continued Father Carl, "Christ is the Cornerstone of our edifice: He should and must be the rock upon which our individual lives are built and upon which our

homes are founded. After the Last Supper Our Lord was addressing His Apostles for the last time and in the course of His remarks He said of Himself: 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me.' (John 14:6)."

"In other words," observed Joe, "if we want to go to heaven we must go through Christ."

"Right."

"Then He is the guide, the rule, we are looking for," declared Don.

"Right again. Take Christ out of our lives and out of our world and what would we have? Our age is living on borrowed Christianity now. The only thing noble or decent in the lives of those who have rejected Christ is what they have retained of Christianity. Take that away and what will you have?"

"The paganism towards which we are drifting at an alarming speed to-day," responded Walt.

"How are you going to stop the drift, Father?" asked Paul. "We're being pulled or carried along almost against our will. We were born into an almost de-Christianized world and almost imperceptibly we take on the character of our surroundings."

"Well now you've opened up a big topic for discussion which I think we had better leave for some other time. Right now, to answer you in a word—cling to the rock which is Christ, follow Him as your Guide and set Him up as your Model, and you can't go wrong.

If you cling to Him all the forces of Hell can not overcome you, for with Him you are a majority. One of the things that offends God the most is that we do not put enough trust in Him. You do not hesitate to trust a dear friend, a pal, with your life; why not God? He was Friend enough to die for us; He came down to save us and to bring us the force and strength to meet and overcome all the obstacles along the way of life—why not trust Him? Sometimes when faced with the trials and hardships of life we recoil, we feel how utterly powerless we are of ourselves to

fight against the overwhelming forces of sin, injustice and paganism—we feel ourselves dragged into a whirlpool. It is especially then that we must reach out and grasp His hand and we can be sure that He will guide us surely and safely. Christ came not only to pay the awful price of our redemption but also to lead us to God. He is our Model to imitate and our Guide to trust and follow.”

“Now you’re answering my question,” interrupted Don, “but could you be just a bit more practical?”

“Yes, Father. Christ lived some 2000 years ago and conditions were quite different then from what they are to-day. How is He our Model and how can we imitate Him to-day?” asked Joe.

“If you want to double for a great actor or actress, what do you do?” asked the Priest.

“Well,” answered Larry, “first of all you have to know him very well and then you have to learn to do everything just as he does.”

“Or, in other words,” took up Father Carl, “you have to reproduce him; you have to live him. All right. Now Christ is our Model. We must study Him and see just how He acted in the face of the vicissitudes, the trials, the joys, the disappointments and the various circumstances of life.”

“Yes, but, Father, we can’t all go out and preach the Gospel. Fathers and mothers have to care for their homes and families and we work and go to school. How can He be our Model in these things?” asked Mary Elizabeth.

“And, too, Christ never went swimming or golfing or to dances. . . .”

“And He never drove a car. . . .”

These and other remarks that followed showed that they were really thinking and that they were seeking a rule, a guide. Father Carl reached out his hand:

“Here, Walt, give me that Bible. Now let’s all page through it together. It’s the most interesting and valuable book we possess and it contains the answers to all the possible

'whys' of our earthly existence. It is a most consoling friend and, in addition, it is the greatest love-story ever written, for it is the story of the love of a merciful and forgiving God for His fickle people. The Book of Genesis—the first Book of the Bible—begins with our coming out from God and the Apocalypse—the last Book—ends with the coming of Christ who is to gather us back to God. . . . .”

Answering questions and giving a running commentary on the early Books, the Psalms and the Book of Wisdom he came to the Gospels. They were very interested to find that the first and second Chapters of the Book of Wisdom, written some thousands of years ago, contained an explanation of the world events of our own time: in the first Chapter is set forth God's benevolence towards man and in the second there is an analysis of the philosophy of life which man will frame when he revolts from God. (We suggest a careful study of these two Chapters.)

“Gosh, I didn't know the Bible contained so many interesting things,” confessed Jerry.

“Sure, you can learn a lot and spend many an enjoyable evening reading the Bible. Not so long ago it was the custom for the whole family to gather together each evening to read the Bible. It had a definite influence on their lives and made them great men. . . . .”

“Good for you, 'Professor,'” approved Father Carl. “Yes, the Bible and Religion had a very definite influence on the homes and families of our ancestors. We should return to the custom. But to get back to Christ as our Model. The Gospels contain not only a life of Our Lord but a picture of Him. If you want to learn to know Him, just look at His portrait in the accounts of the sacred writers. Someone mentioned dances. Well, it doesn't mention that Christ ever attended any but He did go to the wedding feast of Cana. . . . .”

“And that's where He worked His first miracle,” put in Larry.

"Yes," took up the Priest, "at the request of His thoughtful Mother who sought to save her hosts from embarrassment He changed water into wine to add to the cheerfulness of the feast. Christ was not gloomy. He was very cheerful, friendly and obliging and we can suppose that He attended other social gatherings where by the charm, the dignity and nobility of His manners, the kindness and thoughtfulness of His disposition He exemplified all that a Christian gentleman should be—and what a lady should be, too, for the virtues and nobility of Christ's character were shared by the most charming of all women, His own Immaculate Mother Mary. Now you can attend your social affairs with this picture of Christ before your minds. It will inspire you to act as gentlemen and ladies should and your activities will take on a new character and give much greater enjoyment. Not long ago I was deeply moved at a public dance given by a Catholic young people's club. The dance was about to begin when the president of the club held up his hand for silence and going on his knees led the Hail Mary which the other Catholics present and kneeling answered, unashamed and unembarrassed, though there were quite a number of non-Catholics present.\* Of course, you can't do that at every social affair but it will illustrate what I mean. Take Jesus and Mary with you when you go out and you can't go wrong."

"Gosh, that's ideal, Father, and the idea is swell; but what about all the temptations that come up when we go out?—and there are many . . ." asked Don.

"Yes, the temptations are many and violent and it is easy to fall—and you would fall if Christ didn't help you. But here again He is not only our unfailing help but also our Model, for Christ Himself was tempted in the desert. Read Chapter 4 of Saint Matthew and learn from Christ Himself how to battle and

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\*This actually happened in the ballroom of a large hotel in one of our large midwestern cities.

conquer temptations. And always remember: you are not alone in the fight: Christ is always there and with Him you can do and overcome all."

And in answer to the many questions, the Priest proceeded to show how Christ is the Model for all in every age and condition of life, whether hardware merchant, insurance broker, woodworker, student, factory laborer or professional man, married or single. All classes can find their inspiration in Him who is truly all to all. As a child and growing boy He is the perfect example of obedience to parents and lawful superiors. And as a young man we see Him working in Joseph's carpenter shop. At the end of the long and hard day's work He finishes His simple meal, helps Mother Mary and then occasionally seeks the companionship of some of the other young men of the village. He did not live an isolated life but took part in the social affairs, the recreations and the gatherings of the villagers. To them, He was the son of Mary and the carpenter, Joseph, and as such He attended the Synagogue and associated with those around Him. He was perfectly human and humanly perfect. God and Man, He adapted Himself perfectly to the life conditions surrounding Him and filled perfectly His role of Son of man. And in all these circumstances He is a model for us—parents and children alike. He did not rebel at the injustice of His fellow men, at the evils of the day, but accepted them as dispositions of His Father's will and with indomitable courage he carried on. When later on in His public life He is insulted, outraged, and made to undergo terrific sufferings, He bears all patiently and resignedly. He thunders and drives the money changers out of the Temple when it is a question of His Father's honor; and He is moved—even to tears—when it is a matter of human misery and suffering. Yes, Jesus is our Model, our Life. He is the Rock upon which we must build our lives. Father, mother and child can all find their guide in Him and a home "foun-



dated" on the solid and deeply sunk rock of Christ, will raise high—even to the highest heavens; and like the Church which is founded on Christ, the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.

#### VII. RELIGION AND THE HOME.

"Now I think we are ready for our second stone," continued Father Carl. "Any suggestions?"

"Well Christ is the Cornerstone and we must base our lives on Him so I suppose His doctrine would be our second stone," reasoned Walt.

"Yes, but give us one word that takes in all our relation with God and man."

"Morality," offered Anne.

"Dogma," this from Theresa.

"Philosophy," suggested Don.

"How about calling it religion?" demanded Joe.

"That's it—religion," took up Father Carl. "We'll call that our second stone, Walt."

And Walt added it to the first. . . .

CHRIST	RELIGION
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"Now, what is religion?" asked Father Carl.

"A system of faith and worship," answered Irene.

"Belief in God," contributed Jerry laconically.

"Here's a definition I ran across the other day," offered Walt. "It's the complexus of our duties and relations to God and to man."

"That sums it up pretty well; but, strictly speaking, religion has God for its object."

"I know, Father, but if you adore God on Sunday and treat your fellows unjustly the rest of the week, I don't think you have much religion," commented Dick.

"In other words, religion consists in a belief in and a worship of God and fair treatment of your fellow men. Is that it?"

"Well, when we were going through the Bible I read that Christ said that the whole Law and Prophets were included in a double command to love God and neighbor. That would be my idea of religion," said Paul.

From the general discussion that followed we glean that religion is not only something to be believed but something to be lived; not only a code of dry beliefs to be taken out on Sunday morning and put away nicely for the rest of the week but a definite way of living, of dealing with God and man. Essentially, religion is the complexus of our relations and duties to God, but practically it also includes or comprises our contacts with our fellow men. It is, in a word, a composite of faith or belief and practice.

Man must worship. There is in him an imperious necessity of worship—a necessity to practice some religion. Do away with the true God and man must replace Him with one of his own invention. Man realizes—and rightly—that he is insufficient in himself; he must have a god: either recognize the true God or make one. Man is looking for communion with something beyond and above his individual self, and this search cannot end nor the longings be satisfied in anything created. Nothing in nature can or will satisfy the soul which hungers for God who alone can fill it—for God is the food of the soul. We have all experienced this insufficiency of nature and the need for God. And when faced with the towering adversities of life, to whom can we turn? We can only cry out with the Psalmist: "Take hold of arms and shield: rise up to help me. Bring out the sword and shut up the way against them that persecute me: say to my soul: I am thy salvation." (Psalm 34:2-3).

We can be as bold and brazen as we will in denying His existence—insane, the Psalmist calls it (Psalm 13)—but we need God and we cannot do without religion, which is the way to God, unless we wish to be miserable here and hereafter. And unless the home is sustained by a love of and belief in the one true

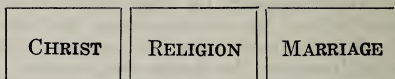
God, the least wind of adversity, the "huff and puff" of Satan, will infallibly blow it down. At best, married life has its many problems and difficulties; devoid of God and religion, parents cannot hope to meet and solve them satisfactorily. And very often, homes, threatened with wreckage due to some misunderstanding or some real problem, have been spared such tragedy by the helps which religion affords. No one can deny the salutary effect of religion on the individual with its logical effects on the home and society. Let us return to sanity by a return to God and the faithful practice of religion.

In his pleasing manner, Father Carl had supplemented the more serious remarks with stories, relations of experiences, and thus had aroused and sustained their interest, even calling from them accounts of experiences, anecdotes, conversions, etc. However, they were not a quiet group. They were up and down, moving about and munching on the fruit and candies so thoughtfully set about the room by the hostess. Dad and mother took part in the discussions but they preferred to remain in the background and leave the direction in the capable hands of their revered friend.

The old question of one religion being as good as another was brought up and discussed. It was dismissed as being absurd, insane and illogical. A little thoughtful and sane reasoning will demonstrate that. And someone brought up the accusation that the Catholic Church is old-fashioned and behind the times. An accusation which is equally ridiculous for the Catholic Church is the only social body that has been able to live through the changing ages since its divine foundation and to meet the varying demands of each period. She alone holds the solution for today's ills, and after today's governments, man-made religions and other human societies have gone back to the dust, she will still be solving tomorrow's problems, for she is not teaching man-made doctrine but, with Saint Paul she can say, "Not I but the Lord. . . ." (1 Cor. 7:10).

## VIII. MORE ABOUT MARRIAGE.

These discussions on belief in God and religion as fundamental led quite naturally into a discussion of one of the basic and crying problems of our age: marriage, which Father Carl proposed as the third stone in the foundation.



Marriage can be and is one of man's greatest blessings and joys and yet so terribly often it turns into tragedy. And why? Because it is not looked at in the light of the God who instituted it. It goes without saying that you cannot have a happy home without a happy marriage, and you will never have a happy marriage unless it is approached and gone into with the proper attitude of mind—and the *modern attitude is not the proper attitude!* Let me suggest again a thorough and thoughtful reading of the invaluable Encyclical of Pope Pius XI on the subject where he points out what marriage is and should be and the modern evils opposed to it.\*

Before the enlightened moderns formulated their very convenient theories, Christian marriage was looked upon as something sacred—as a holy union which bound the parties to each other “until death do us part.” The words still find place in the ceremony but do the bride and bridegroom realize what they are promising? And too: “for better or for worse.” How bad is “worse?” And how “worse” does it have to become to serve as an excuse for severing relations? The writer knows of a case where the husband was granted a divorce because his quite-a-bit-smaller wife kicked his shins. The judge suggested boxing gloves but, nevertheless,

\*The America Press, 53 Park Place, New York, published a splendid translation in 1936 with questions and references.

granted the divorce. Everything was legal but we wonder just how the divine Judge would decide such a case; or rather, how will He decide it on the last day?

Like many other things that are sacred in character and should demand reverence, marriage is considered by many merely as a means to satisfy the animal in man. Must everything be sacrificed to the all-devouring passions? Love, home, family, children, religion—and yes, even God—must either be crushed underneath or pushed aside when the passions demand satisfaction. Poor man! And when will he be satisfied? When will his passions be appeased? One, two, three . . . how many “marriages”? Saint Jerome, writing on the divorce evil in his day, stated that there was living in Rome a woman who had married her twenty-third husband, she herself being his twenty-first wife. Conditions, thank God, have not become quite so bad to-day, but, will we soon have to lament with Tertullian that “divorce is the fruit of marriage?” We know what happened to the powerful Roman Empire. As a logical consequence of the riot of divorce and immorality, of infanticide and childlessness, which followed the stripping of marriage of its sacred character, Rome had no Romans to fight for her and she went down to her destruction. In an address to the members of a graduating class at Notre Dame University, the Honorable Joseph Ransdell urged that we “take this lesson to heart and apply it to our own times. Simultaneous with the change in the sacred character of the Roman marriage came the belief that the marriage tie could be broken; and once this idea was prevalent, frequent divorce became only a matter of time. As soon as the seal of religion was removed from marriage, it became a mere transient union. . . . The same is true of modern times. As long as the Catholic view of marriage was accepted throughout Christian countries, and its sacramental character acknowledged, divorce was unknown. But when the specious doctrine that marriage was a civil contract, or

civil status, in which the Church had no concern, was promulgated by the early reformers, the sanctity and indissolubility of that relation was denied. . . .”

The Church has ever considered and will ever consider marriage as something sacred—something beyond the power of any human law or human perversity. She teaches to-day as she has always taught, that marriage is a sacred and permanent union; and in this she is only respecting and repeating the words of the divine Master who, replying to the question of the Pharisees, “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?”, said: “Have ye not read that he who made man from the beginning made them male and female? And he said: For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife and they shall be two in one flesh. Therefore now they are not two but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.” (Matt. 19:4-6).

In every marriage there are two elements: the divine and the human. God instituted it as a Sacrament and formulated the laws governing it; and man enters into the contract by a surrender, or rather, by a union of wills and bodies. Now, on His part, the divine Lawgiver does not force the wills of the parties—they are free to enter into the union or not—but once they have entered into it they must abide by His all-wise rulings. Man cannot without dire and tragic results attempt to legislate for Almighty God or turn the sacred bond into a vehicle to serve his perverse purposes.

Listing the blessings of matrimony as offspring, conjugal fidelity and the Sacrament, Saint Augustine summarizes very succinctly the purpose and the whole doctrine of Christian marriage. He is quoted by Pope Pius in his Encyclical:

“By *conjugal fidelity* it is provided that that there should be no carnal intercourse

outside the marriage bond with another man or woman; with regard to *offspring*, that children should be begotten of love, tenderly cared for and educated in a religious atmosphere; finally, in its *sacramental aspect*, that the marriage bond should not be broken and that a husband or wife, if separated, should not be joined to another even for the sake of offspring. This we regard as the law of marriage by which the fruitfulness of nature is adorned and the evil of incontinence is restrained."

A thoughtful reading and re-reading of these words of the holy Doctor will shed a brilliant light on today's attitude towards marriage and will serve as a guide or standard for those either interested in the problems of marriage or contemplating the step. Based upon such a doctrine, the home will rest securely; but, robbed of its sacred character and considered only as a means of gratifying the animal or serving selfish ends, marriage will serve as a very unstable foundation and the home, tottering from the very beginning, will soon crash.

#### IX. PARENTHOOD, PARENTS AND THE HOME.

"Christ, religion, marriage," read Father Carl as he surveyed Walter's plan. "I think we should have another stone in the foundation before proceeding to the superstructure. What will it be?"

"Love," suggested Irene.

"Yes," replied the Priest, "but love is really the basis of marriage, for it is only true love that will unite the parties, heart and mind, and inspire each to sacrifice all for the other. Let us recall that we have our Guide in Christ, our fundamental base and code of living in religion and we have the true doctrine on marriage, now . . ."

"Father and mother," broke in Larry. "Someone must get married and establish a home and unless a home has a good father and mother it just isn't a home."

"Quite logical, young man," smiled Father Carl. "All right, Professor, we'll call that our last stone."

And the Professor obediently drew his last block. . . .

CHRIST	RELIGION	MARRIAGE	PARENTS
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"Now," took up Father Carl, "if you had the privilege of choosing your father and mother, what kind would you select? Or, to put it in another way, what qualities would you wish them to possess?"

He was flooded with answers. For the most part they were fully satisfied with the parents God had given them and they did not hesitate to say what they thought of these ultra-modern parents who were setting the pace for the youngsters. Their vehement condemnation of such parents was inspiring and their comments showed that parents who had "gone modern" either to suit their own whims or in an attempt to gain the "admiration" of the young, were not only not admired but were definitely not wanted. Thoughtful Walter insisted on the duty of the parents to realize the dignity of parenthood and the destiny of those whom God places in their care.

We cannot insist too much on the importance of good parents. Some years ago the writer attended a lecture by a well-known sociologist. In the course of his address, the speaker stated that more than 85% of the cases of child delinquency were traceable to bad homes and negligent parents. We wonder what the percentage is today. Just a moment's reflection will convince anyone that if parents neglect their God-given duties and let the children grow up "wild," without any moral training, we cannot hope for much from them in the future. And what about society? The mosaic is only worth its component fragments!

Homes do produce noble characters, but, alas! they also produce criminals. In an ad-



dress to college graduates, Bishop Sheil of Chicago stressed the importance of the home as a training school. To illustrate the tragic consequences of parental neglect, he narrated the following incident:

"When I was a young priest," he said, "I ministered to the religious needs of the prisoners at the county jail in Chicago. Early one wintry morning I was called to accompany a young prisoner, twenty-three years of age, on his death march to the gallows. He had committed a number of robberies that culminated in the murder of a policeman who sought to apprehend him. Just before the noose was to be placed around his neck, he was asked if he had any final word to say. Looking around the death chamber, he spied a little group of relatives who had come to witness the execution. Pointing his finger at his father, he cried out: 'I am about to hang because that man, my own father, failed to do his duty. He allowed me to run with hoodlums and gangsters all hours of the day and night. He never warned me against their ways, never told me where it would lead to. Now I die in disgrace on these gallows because my father neglected to do his duty. He, rather than I, should have this noose around his neck. He is the criminal'." The story needs no comment. Where is your son going?

As we have indicated on another page, a right attitude on marriage is indispensable. Equally indispensable is a realization of the dignity of parenthood. The primary end of marriage is the procreation of children: parents become for the moment co-sharers with Almighty God in bringing a human being into existence. Now, a consideration of man's dignity and his destiny should convince parents of the nobility of their office of parenthood. Pope Pius XI, speaking of the child as the first fruit of marriage, goes on to point out the sublime destiny of man: "How great a boon of God this is and what a blessing of matrimony is clear from a consideration of man's dignity and of his sublime end, for man

surpasses all other visible creatures by the superiority of his rational nature alone. Besides, God wishes men to be born not only that they should live and fill the earth, but much more that they may be worshippers of God, that they may know Him and love Him and finally enjoy Him forever in Heaven; and this end, by reason of man being raised by God in a marvelous way to the supernatural order, surpasses all that eye hath seen, and ear heard, and all that hath entered into the heart of man. . . . But Christian parents must also understand that they are destined not only to propagate and preserve the human race on earth, indeed not only to educate any kind of worshipers of the true God, but children who are to become members of the Church of Christ, to raise up fellow-citizens of the saints, and members of God's household, that the worshipers of God and Our Saviour may daily increase."

And besides begetting children, there is entrusted to the parents a mission hardly less honorable than that assigned to Joseph and Mary at Nazareth: the mission of fashioning youthful hearts and minds according to the divine Model. Their children, made to the image and likeness of God and redeemed by the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, must be guided and led, their feet must be safely placed in the paths of virtue and nobility. Whether their offspring will reach eternal life or be plunged into eternal damnation is for the parents to decide! We say this with reservation, of course, for the parents cannot be made responsible for every reprobate—people do go wrong in spite of splendid parents and faultless home training—but the child is father of the man and unless the parents see to his early formation, they cannot expect to dodge the responsibility for subsequent failure.

The dignity of parenthood is sublime but the responsibility is immense. Let the parents weigh it well for one day the Father of all will ask them how they acquitted themselves of their God-like duties. Parents may hand

over their task to others—to sisters, priests and teachers—but nothing can ever substitute for the home-training a child should receive. The mother's knee must be—and so it was intended by God—the first school. There the child must learn the noble art of loving God and man; there he must receive his first lessons in respect for God, his fellow men and himself; there must the plastic mind of the child receive the noble impressions which only mother-love, mother-instinct and mother-character can stamp on it. If a child is robbed of this early training there will be a void in his life, in his character, that nothing will ever be able to fill. Father and mother begot the child—it is their duty to finish the work of nature by training the young plant that it may grow into a towering oak and reach even to the highest heavens.

But in order to fulfil their sublime office worthily the parents must be what God intends them to be. There is a saying in Philosophy which applies very well here: "Nemo dat quod non habet: you cannot give what you haven't got." It is but good common sense. How can parents impart character, virtue, nobility, and the other qualities that go to make genuine men and women if they lack these virtues themselves? If father and mother have no respect for God and His religion, if they have no respect for each other, how can they expect their children to love and respect God and themselves? If they do not respect the laws of God and the commonwealth, should they be surprised if their children turn out anarchists, with no respect whatsoever for law and order? or if the children refuse them the respect and obedience that is due them as parents? And if the parents fail in their duties towards their children, have they a right to complain if the offspring fail in their duties towards them? If the parents are unruly, harsh, selfish and immoral, can they hope that the children will be noble, generous and virtuous?

It is only when parents are deeply convinced of the sublimity and responsibility of their

office that they will be the right kind of parents—and that conviction must come *before* and not after the marriage, for the foundation of the home is laid on the day of the marriage and not after the children arrive. The time to safeguard the home begins on the very first day. Even before God blesses the union with a child, the home has been prepared and if its first development is not right it can only with difficulty, as it enlarges, grow into the right kind of a home. And how is the right start to be made? Simply by parents supernaturalizing their lives, by directing all their energies to attaining the goal of our earthly existence: eternal life, and by letting the thought that we are born to live in the world and not for the world color all their activities. In a word, let parents base their lives on a firm belief in God and on the realization that our only reason for existing is to glorify God and to save our souls and those He has placed in our care. Christ once promised—and His promises are never broken—that if we seek first the kingdom of God all things would be given us: peace, happiness, true joy and eternal life. And experience shows that it is the parents who are conscientiously seeking the Kingdom of God that have true peace and happiness in spite of trials and hardships and who reign as king and queen over noble households.

With a view to producing the right kind of homes, the Church (in her old-fashioned way) has always insisted on the importance of a serious and thoughtful courtship. We say serious and thoughtful to distinguish it from the modern idea of courtship which is considered as a time for levity and amusement. Certainly, the young people should have a "good time" but that is not the principal purpose of courtship which is the most important period in a young person's life. It is while "going together" that each must find out whether the other has the qualities needed to be a good husband or wife. As we have indicated on an earlier page, good looks, athletic ability, etc., are pleasing but:

not essential. Character is what is needed in a good husband and wife, in the future father and mother. Has he the character, the qualities needed to father my children and to build up a happy home? Would I choose her to mother my children, to train and develop them? He's an excellent golf player, but what kind of a father and husband would he make? What about his religion? Marriage won't change the character of the parties suddenly! You will be quite the same—the same qualities, defects, weaknesses, tendencies—after you say "I will" as before. Don't think that the boy friend who has no respect for you during courtship will enthrone you as queen in his home after marriage. And if she is fickle and scatter-brained now, and thinks only of running around, she will be the same after the ceremony. Don't look for miraculous changes—in spite of ardent promises! Living together may and very often does erase some defects but generally you remain fundamentally the same after marriage as before. The time to decide is before the marriage, not after. And the thoughtful young people during courtship will be the happy parents after marriage.

Now what qualities should we demand in the good father and mother? What qualifies would you require? Make your own list. It is not our purpose to detail them in full but merely to give an indication.

First of all, as we have insisted throughout, the parents should be deeply religious, and by that we do not mean that they should make a parade of their piety or that they should be continually preaching to their children. This is not at all necessary and is often very harmful. Let their religion be so much a part of their character and so influence their actions that there will be no need of preaching. If the children see that their parents have a love and respect for God and practice their religion faithfully, they will be inspired to love and obey them. If father and mother have a deep respect for one another, the children will not

fail to reverence them. If every phase of the home life is penetrated with a truly Christian spirit, the children cannot but take on a nobility of character. Today's parents must return to some of the good old-fashioned practices which had such a definite influence in the formation of men and women in past decades—practices simple in themselves but rich in fruit. For example, there is grace before and after meals. One of the greatest sins of our age is ingratitude—ingratitude towards God, parents and benefactors. Parents themselves will testify to this. Many children take all they can from home and fail,—or should we say, forget—to say “thank you.” And how many are there who think of thanking God for health, sunshine, liberty, friends, success? The little practice of grace—which means thank you—before and after meals would do much to train us in the habit of saying thanks to God and man. And then there is the Bible reading we mentioned before. Families used to gather—some still do,—and the father would read a chapter or maybe a few verses and give an explanation which very often would give rise to very profitable discussions. Not only did they acquire true knowledge and wisdom and the answer to the day's problems by this practice but they were blessed with an increased love for and closeness to the Author of those chapters: God Himself. It is said that we take on the character of the books we read. If we read trash, our minds will soon resemble a trash heap. While on the other hand, if we read books with character, our minds are definitely influenced and ennobled. And can we find a book with more character than the Bible? And we might also recall the happy practice of night prayers in common, still found but, alas! only too rare. Immediately after the evening meal the family joined voices and hearts in thanking God for the blessings of another day and begging His continued protection over their lives and their homes. How could men help being noble and

virtuous when these and many other little practices formed a part of their daily lives?

And then, parents should be such as to attract and enjoy the most intimate confidence of their children. If they take a sympathetic interest in their plans and projects and problems, the children's hearts will always be open to them. Parents should play and plan with their offspring. Many parents are too grown-up. The happiest parents are those who get down on the floor with junior or Mary and play train or dolls. And as these youngsters grow up dad and mother will not be excluded from their plans, as many parents complain that they are. Can we blame the children for seeking recreation and counsel elsewhere if dad hides grouchy behind the evening paper and mother, tired from gadding about all day, has no time to plan and dream with Mary who is passing through her first stage of romance? To sum up, parents must be pals to their children. It is quite natural that children should turn to their parents when anything is to be done or decided but if they meet only a half-hearted or even cold response they will go elsewhere. It spells tragedy in many cases when the parents lose the confidence of their children.

If we compare the home to a human body we can liken the father to the head and the mother to the heart; and the analogy is quite fitting. Not that dad had no heart or that mother has no head, but each fulfils in a peculiar way the role symbolized by the heart or head. God's way is the best and He made the father to be the head of the family. The head is not directed by the members of the body but guides and directs them. But strength and rule must be tempered with gentleness: this is the mother's role as the heart. The strength of man is required for the protection and upbuilding of the family but the gentleness of woman is just as necessary to restrain that strength and to sustain it.

Commenting on the words of the Apostle St. Paul: "Let women be subject to their

husbands. . . .” Pope Pius XI brings out beautifully the relationship that should exist between the head and heart of the family:

“This subjection, however, does not deny or take away the liberty which fully belongs to the woman both in view of her dignity as a human person, and in view of her most noble office as wife and mother and companion; nor does it bid her obey her husband’s request even if not in harmony with right reason or with the dignity due a wife; nor, in fine, does it imply that the wife should be put on a level with those persons who in law are called minors, to whom it is not customary to allow free exercise of their rights on account of their lack of mature judgment, or of their ignorance of human affairs. But it forbids that exaggerated license which cares not for the good of the family; it forbids that in this body which is the family, the heart be separated from the head to the great detriment of the whole body and the proximate danger of ruin. For if the man is the head, the woman is the heart, and as he occupies the chief place in ruling, so she may and ought to claim for herself the chief place in love.

Again, this subjection of wife to husband in its degree and manner may vary according to the different conditions of persons, place and time; in fact, if the husband neglects his duty, it falls to the wife to take his place in directing the family. But the structure of the family and its fundamental law established and confirmed by God, must always and everywhere be maintained intact.

With great wisdom Our predecessor Leo XIII, of happy memory, in the Encyclical which we have already mentioned on Christian marriages, teaches with regard to this order to be maintained between man and wife: “The man is ruler



of the family, and the head of the woman, but because she is flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, let her be subject and obedient to the man not as a servant but as a companion, so that nothing be lacking of honor or of dignity in the obedience she pays. Both in him who rules and in her who obeys, since each bears the image, the one of Christ, the other of the Church, let Divine charity be the constant guide of their mutual relations."

Further comment would be superfluous. If the relationship described above exists between the parents, the home will be "Home sweet home."

Do not think that it is the indulgent parents who are most loved by their children. The greatest affection of children goes out to parents who were loving but firm and who worked for their welfare regardless of their whims and caprices. And by firmness is not meant severity. A father or mother can be very firm in saying "no" to a son or daughter, or in disciplining them in this way or that, and at the same time be very loving and kind. Children do not respect weakling parents who give in, who prefer passing peace to the lasting good of their offspring. Children are like men: they hate to submit to others but when they find someone who is really their master, and especially when it is for their own well-being, they admire him. Let father and mother be firm but loving masters in their home and the children will be happy and loving subjects.

Did we go on, our list would be interminable. I feel sure that the reader will be able to complete it for himself. There is self-sacrifice, the basis of true love; consideration for others; a love of the home and home-life; an unshakable belief in the supernatural and in the sublime dignity and destiny of man; and an intense love of God, and the things of God. We cannot repeat too often that religion must be the solid ground upon which we found our lives and homes. We are destined to go to God and religion is the way, the only way.

Riches, honors, position, your success and that of your children will all vanish one day. If God and religion were not a part of your life here below, you will face eternity with empty hands. And parents, what will the divine Judge say? What will your children say?

Under the able guidance of Father Carl the discussion went on with much life and interest—Don is telling how when his older brothers were just kids dad used to take them out to the end of 7th Street in the winter time and go sledding:

“He ‘belly-flopped,’ rode end on the toboggan and did just like all the kids. I think you had more fun than all the youngsters put together, didn’t you, dad?”

“I don’t know about that, but we surely had great fun. And I wasn’t the only dad there: many other fathers took their youngsters out. And, to get back to our subject, I think that is a great need today: joint recreation: parents and children together, sledding, golfing, swimming, camping, studying, planning. Let them do things together. In that way they will share happiness as well as ups and downs and each will benefit by the company of the other.”

“That’s a splendid idea, but,” protested someone, “aren’t children or parents to do anything or to go anywhere without the others?”

“Don’t take our host too literally,” pleaded Father Carl. “It is quite natural that each has favorite activities, recreations, etc., in which the other does not take part. Because dad bowls it does not follow that the whole family should bowl. But there should be a community of interests in the family—each should work for the welfare of the whole and when anything of serious nature is to be decided which affects the whole, why not hold a family council? Too often nowadays young people get themselves, and very often the whole family, involved in some legal affair, some business deal, without so much as consulting the

others. I suppose it is the independent spirit of the age but prudence dictates otherwise.

"And too, there is this question of marriage. Many enter it without even a thought of consulting parents or brothers and sisters or someone older than themselves—and very often with tragic results. Someone has said that love can be a mild form of insanity. Oftentimes I have heard young married people say that they must have been crazy to marry such a person. . . . Perhaps they were. When young people are enamored of each other, they are in a trance—delightful, maybe, but there must be an awakening. And then! They say love is blind. At least it is not always clear-sighted. That is why consultation will do the young lover no harm. . . ."

## X. LUNCH TIME.

"Come and get it?" broke in Don from the doorway in spite of his mother's injunction to announce lunch like a gentleman. Then catching himself, he begged in his most polite way, "Would they please come in to lunch?" Catching Marilyn by the arm he intoned, "Here comes the bride" and led the party to the buffet which mother had literally loaded with home-made delicacies.

Making sure that Father Carl and dad were served first—dad protesting that he should wait for her—mother turned the buffet over to the youngsters. Hungry hands reached out and soon the buffet looked like the South after Sherman had passed through. Noticing that there were no napkins—it was really Don's fault, for mother had told him to put them out—Larry villainously repeated a story he had read in the "Reader's Digest" some months before.

"It seems," he narrated, "that at a buffet supper at Harpo Marx's home in Hollywood, guests were inconvenienced to find no napkins. Noticing it, Oscar Levant 'covered up' for his friend. 'Due to the high cost of living,' he announced, 'there are no napkins—but

from time to time a woolly dog will pass among you'."

The story met with mock disgust, boos, and other acclamations of appreciation. "Truly a prophet is not without honor except in his own country," thought Larry. However, Don caught the hint—could he miss it?—and soon the guests were supplied with napkins and apologies.

The conversation became quite general. Don was telling of the boxing matches he had attended some evenings before. The main bout of the evening was between an Italian and, well, he didn't know about the other. There were the usual announcements, instructions to the fighters and, as the newspapers put it, "8,000 spectators were on edge." "And just as the gong sounded," went on Don, "the Italian made a big sign of the Cross and sprang from his corner. I tell you I was impressed and from the remarks I heard I know a lot of other people were too."\*

"Blood will tell every time," came in Jerry. "It tells in cattle, in horses and in dogs; and it tells in people too. If you have been brought up in the right kind of a home it will show through your actions. That Italian probably has a good old pious mother who taught him to say his prayers and to begin everything, even a fight, with a sign of the Cross."

"The early Christians never began anything without a prayer or the sign of the Cross," added Walt. "What Latin words did they use, Father?"

"The usual form was 'adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini—our help is in the name of the Lord,' but there were others. Many people keep up the custom today."

"I know dad never starts out with the car without a sign of the Cross and some little ejaculation," offered Joe.

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\*This actually happened in a small city of Kentucky.

"Yes, and it has brought us to our destination and back safely many times, I am sure," finished dad.

"That's something like 'blessing the hour'," said Irene. "I know a little old French lady who says a Hail Mary when the clock strikes the hour. She calls it 'blessing the hour' and so dedicates each waking hour to the Queen of Heaven."

"That surely is a beautiful custom," commented mother.

Then everybody began to remember this little incident or that: how mother pinned miraculous medals on their swimming suits before they went out, or made sure they had their scapulars of Our Lady; how the kids always made a sign of the Cross before plunging into the "old swimming hole," etc., etc.

"I admire these customs," spoke up Paul. "Why don't you Catholics keep them up? or, to be frank, why are you Catholics ashamed of your religion out in public? You have, to my mind, the only true faith, a faith that meets every exigency of life and a faith that fits in everywhere and,—well, I don't know, you seem to back up when it comes to 'practically' practicing your faith. I don't mean to be offensive, Father, but I feel I can be frank here."

"You are quite right, Paul. Many of our people do just that. They believe firmly but hesitate when it comes to the every day practice of those things distinctly Christian. They take on the ways of the world readily enough but. . . ."

"They just don't live up to their blood," finished Alida. "I was out to dinner the other day with a Catholic young man and before beginning to eat I signed myself and said grace, quietly and reservedly. He protested, saying that you were not supposed to do that in public. Well, I don't believe in making a big show of it, but why should I be ashamed of my religion? Christ isn't ashamed of me, why should I be ashamed of Him? And I told him too. . . ."

"Good for you!" applauded Dick. "My mother is the same way. She says that people who know you are Catholic and who see that you don't live up to your faith don't think much of you as a man and, quite naturally, look down upon your religion. And on the other hand, they respect your religion and you if you are a man of conviction and practice your faith."

"And your mother is right," agreed the Priest. "Very often just a sign of the Cross in public is enough to attract a soul to the Church. A Christian, and more particularly, a Catholic, is a marked man in his community and if he is brave in conquering human respect and even fear, he will do much for the good of religion. He bears the mark of Christ on his soul and if he is a real man, all his acts will bear the same stamp. Paul Claudel has some beautiful words on this in his meditation on the sixth station where Veronica wipes the face of Jesus. It goes something like this:

'Teach us, O woman brave, to conquer human  
fear.

To whom Christ is not an image but the truth,  
Will come the questioning glance of other men.  
He dwells on higher plane; he thinks apart.  
Some strange love holds him distant; he is  
not the same.

An adult man, he says his beads; he tells his  
sins;

Friday he fasts; and with the women goes to  
Mass.

Of course, he rouses laughter, yet he irritates.  
Let him beware, for on him rests the eye of all.  
Let him beware each step. He, sign and  
symbol is.

Each Christian, though unfit, is likeness true  
of Christ.

The face his soul doth show is reflex small  
Of that true Face of God, debased yet glori-  
ous.'

And Saint Paul, too, urges the Christians to live up to the high vocation to which they are called.

"It all goes back to the home and the training received there. If the children are trained

up in a good atmosphere where God and His religion are respected and practiced and where these little observances are a part of the daily life, they will develop into men and women of character and conviction and will bear worthily the stamp of Christ."

"You know, Father," observed Joe, "many people really shudder when the word religion is mentioned, but you make it so sane and logical. As I get it, it just means living a good, clean, common-sense life in keeping with God's laws. Is that it?"

"Very good," praised Father. "Yes, it is just leading our normal life, enjoying the normal recreations, carrying on our legitimate business, according to the wishes of God and for God;—and always with this thought in mind: I am made for God and Heaven and not for this earth and hell. A little thinking will show you how logical Christ is, how safe it is to follow His way and how much happiness is to be found in loyalty to the King of kings."

"It all comes back to Christ, then," summed up Don. "He is our Model to imitate, our Way to follow, and our trusty Guide over the paths of life."

"Yes, He is the Rule of life you are looking for. Follow Him and you will never go wrong. When you come to a crossroad, when you are faced with a temptation, a trial, ask Christ: He will tell you the way. He is a trusty Guide, having been over the road before. In His 33 years on earth He faced all the ups and downs we have to face and He knows how to meet them. Ask Him. He will not only tell you but He will help you—if you let Him—over the rough places. . . . And that brings us back to the house. . . ."

## XI. YOUR HOME AND THE COMMANDMENTS.

They had all finished lunch by this time and the girls had helped mother take the things back to the kitchen. Meanwhile Walter

had finished his sketch. It looked something like this. . . .



Father Carl eyed it with good-natured criticism, picking out flaws in size proportion, styling, etc. The rest examined it with even more "venom." Poor Walt was crushed. It was Don who staved off further persecution by bring the conversation back to Christ as the Guide of our lives.

"How about finishing our house, Father?"

"All right. Let's see . . . we have our foundation—a very solid one—but it is useless unless we build upon it, unless we practice what we believe. Now the framework of our little house represents our lives, or rather, those means intended to direct our lives in accordance with our beliefs. And here is where we come back to Christ, our Guide. Jesus not only taught a doctrine, He lived it. His whole life can be summed up in one word, obedience—obedience to the will of His Heavenly Father. And that is just another way of saying obedience to the laws of God.

"Now the law of God under the Old Testament can be summed up in the Ten Commandments which, in spite of the remark I heard the other day: that the 20th century had made a joke of them, retain their full force to-day as



ever. When Christ came and set up the new dispensation, He summed up the law and the prophets in a two-fold command of love: love of God and neighbor. Why not label the up-rights, in fact, the whole framework of our little house, the Commandments of God and of the Church for they regulate our conduct in accordance with our belief while at the same time they save and protect us from moral invasion and ruin? Let them act as a protecting wall against the spirit of atheism, anarchy and so-called liberty so prevalent today. In a word, let the foundation represent our Dogma, what we believe, and the framework, our moral code: what we are to do.

"People protest that the law of God restrains them and takes away their liberty. How about the guard-rails along the highway? Shall we have them removed since they prevent me from plunging off into the ditch? Laws are beneficial guides, not harmful restrictives. The divine Lawgiver expresses His will in His commands which He intends as guides to lead us to Him. All He asks is obedience, and obedience we owe Him since He is God and we are men, He the Creator and we the creatures.

"It's getting rather late to go into details on all the Commandments, so let's single out one which has a close relation to our little discussion. What is the fourth Commandment, Joe?"

"That's easy, Father. Honor thy father and thy mother."

"In other words, obedience, and that seems to be an extremely difficult assignment for the 20th century. We have heard so much and have been taught so much about 'rugged individualism,' freedom to develop, no restrictions, etc., etc., that our age seems to have forgotten the meaning of the word obedience."

"Well, Father, you must admit that it is hard at times to submit your will and judgment to others, even if they are your parents or legitimate superiors," defended Anne.

"Oh, granted. Obedience is very hard and irksome at times but if we have the proper respect for our parents and superiors and realize that they command us in the name of God, the command will take on an entirely different appearance. And as a rule the commands given are not so terrible. In fact, if we would only stop to think for a minute we would see that parents have only the welfare of their children at heart. I know that when dad or mother says that you cannot go out with so and so or that you must do this or that, or that your dress is too short, you know better, but, as I say, just stop to think for a minute and you will realize that dad and mother have been through it all and that they know pretty well what they are talking about. Would you rather have them be indifferent and let you come and go just as you please, as many parents do to-day?"

"Gosh, no, Father," came in Anne again. "We do think we are pretty big sometimes and that we know it all, but I guess you are right. In the long run the folks know what is best. I know myself that if I had listened to them I would have been spared some heart-breaks."

Everyone had something to say on this question of obedience. In the exchange, Father brought out that the Church always insisted on respectful submission of children to their parents and to the lawful ecclesiastical and civil authorities. He also showed that the Fourth Commandment has another side: the duties of parents towards each other and to their children. The parents must first of all love and obey God and lawful authority and have a mutual respect for each other before they can expect loving obedience from their offspring. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church (Ephesians 5:25) and wives are to be subject to their husbands (Coloss. 3:18) and together they are to bring up their children in the discipline and correction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). Parents direct their children in the name of God. Let them so live and be such that the children

can look up to and respect them as their God-given guides to eternal happiness.

In this matter, as in all things, Christ is our Model of obedience. His life at Nazareth is summed up by Saint Luke in the following verse: "And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them." (2:51). When Mary and Joseph asked Him to do something, He saw the will of His Father in their requests and when they advised or counseled anything, He, the Angel of the Great Council, submitted His judgment to that of His own creatures. What a sublime example for us!

And to parents in particular do Mary and Joseph give a splendid example. To cite but one instance in each of their lives: When the Angel Gabriel announced the stupendous fact that God wished to become incarnate in her womb, Mary, with incomparable humility, bowed before the divine will and spoke her "fiat," "May it be done unto me according to thy word." And when some months later God sent a messenger to Joseph and told him to take the Child and His Mother and to flee into Egypt, the foster-parent of the God-Man did not speak a word but rising in the middle of the night left all things and fled with his precious Charges. Both Mary and Joseph obeyed because they saw an expression of the will of God in the words of the Angel. Today, God speaks to parents by means of the Ten Commandments, the Commandments of the Church and her ministers, through legitimate authority and superiors. Can they claim an exemption which the Son of God Himself did not claim? Can they refuse obedience when Joseph and Mary submitted so humbly and readily?

Though sublime, the little home of Nazareth must be reproduced in today's world by basing our lives and families upon Christ and imitating His example. When writing to his beloved Philippians, the Apostle urged them to "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus . . . (who) emptied Himself

taking the form of a servant . . . . humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto . . . . the death of the Cross." (2:5-8). And exhorting them to like humility and obedience he continues: "Wherefore, dearly beloved, (as you have always obeyed) . . . . with fear and trembling work out your salvation, for it is God who worketh in you both to will and accomplish according to HIS good will. And do ye all things without murmurings and hesitations; That you may be blameless and sincere children of God without reproof, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation; among whom you shine as lights in the world." (12-15). And who can deny that our generation is "perverse and crooked?" And it is so precisely because of pride and disobedience. With Lucifer, the world cries to God: "Nom serviam—I will not serve!" A reversal is imperative! Obedience is the only thing that will save the world to-day and that obedience must begin right in the home. And this brings us back to the beginning of our little work: the nation takes on the character of the homes. If the Nazarene spirit of humble obedience to God and to lawful superiors reigns in the home it cannot but radiate far and wide and make for a peaceful, happy and prosperous society. The contrary is obvious. Rebellious parents—rebellious against God and His laws—and rebellious children—revolting against the authority of parents or guardians—will not make peaceful and law-abiding citizens. Our overcrowded prisons and the wretched state of society testify to that. Obedience may be a hard word, but injustice, crime, war, depression, misery and suffering are much, very much, harder. Christ once said: My yoke is sweet and my burden is light. And He is right—ask those who obey! On the other hand, what price disobedience!

And what has been observed of the Fourth may be said of all the Commandments, for they all involve humble submission to the will of God, *but for our own good!* A moment's reflection will show how insane it is to refuse

service, since each act of disobedience retires us further from our end and goes to make life more miserable. A thing becomes more perfect as it serves more perfectly the end for which it was made. So it is with man: the more perfectly he submits himself to his Creator the more perfect and happy does he become and the closer he approaches to his end. Only humble submission will lead us to God. Today our lives and homes are being threatened by the invasion of "commandmentless" philosophies. We can only be saved by getting behind the protecting wall of God's will. Now when an army is confronted with threatening numbers, it draws closer together. Every unit feels the need of cooperation. Petty differences disappear, the authority of officers is unquestioned, effort is unified, with the result that frequently the very danger of destruction is made the occasion of efficiency and victory. And so with the home. Everything tends to disrupt and break it up. In the face of this threat the members of each unit—the family—should draw closer together and should cooperate with the Great Captain is saving the home. And this salvation will come only if the officers (parents and superiors) under the Great Captain obey His orders and in turn are obeyed by those under them. Peace, security, order and happiness will be the result of humble submission to the divine Commander and that submission must first be found in the home, for the home cannot hope to face the invasion successfully without the safeguard of religion.

## XII. A LITTLE HEAVEN.

And glancing at his wrist-watch, Father Carl concluded:

"That ought to do for the framework. It's getting close to my bed-time."

"Don't forget the siding and the roof," reminded Alida.

"Why not cover our framework with the love of God and neighbor? Then we will not

have a veneer but a genuine siding on our house: everything we do and say will be clothed in charity," suggested Walt.

"Splendid idea," praised the Priest. "I'll let you work out the details: windows, doors, etc. What about the roof?"

Larry was waiting for the question and came in quickly: "Divine Providence, for God watches over us always; and what better roof can we have over our heads than the watchful, loving solicitude of our Heavenly Father?"

"Very good. Surely a house based on God, sided with charity and roofed over with His Providence will not go down in the storm. And such a house, too, will be a lighthouse in this stormy world of ours."

"We have our house now, Father, but how about the furnishings?" asked Irene.

"I'm going to let you move in and furnish it yourselves for, in the words of Edgar A. Guest, "It takes a heap o' livin' in a house t' make it home. . . ."

"It isn't the price or style of your furniture, the loveliness of your curtains and linens or the up-to-date-ness of your equipment that makes it home. A poor man's cottage is more often a home than the rich man's mansion and it is so because God reigns over the cottage and where God reigns there we find peace and happiness in spite of poverty and hardships—maybe even because of poverty and hardships for then the cottage resembles more closely the modest home in Nazareth.

"Father Mateo tells the following story in connection with the splendid work of the enthronement of the Sacred Heart as the King of the home: 'I was once celebrating the marriage of two young people who were very poor, and they asked me to enthrone the King of Love in the cottage that very day. 'Promise me,' I said to them, 'to treat Jesus as a Friend, as if you really saw Him. His Heart will bring you happiness in spite of the troubles which are sure to come to you.'

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\*Read the whole poem, "Home," by this author.

“A few years later the young man came and called for me: ‘My little wife is dying,’ he said. And in fact she was most grievously ill, but at peace and breathing a sweet and infinite calm. The only treasure to be seen in that poor little hut was the picture of the Heart of Jesus, which I had presented them with and enthroned on their marriage day. After hearing her confession I was rather surprised that in so bitter an hour such a heavenly peace should reign there; so, wishing to find out the reason, I said to her: ‘Before going to heaven, come tell me, my child, have you been unhappy since your marriage?’ She opened her eyes wide in great surprise, and, raising herself up, said to me: ‘What! You who on our wedding day committed us to the King Jesus, and brought Him to us to be the Friend of this little home, you ask me if I have been unhappy with Him? Never, Father! not for one second! We have had to suffer, we have had our struggles also, that is quite inevitable; but could we be unhappy with Jesus, the King and Friend of poor people and especially of this cottage?’ And then, taking her young husband by the hand she said to him: ‘And you, what have you to say? Have you been unhappy? In a broken voice, yet in words which were almost a canticle of the soul, he answered: ‘Father, we have had a hard struggle; such is life but as she has said to you, with Jesus our Friend, we have seen happy, oh, so happy! He is the Master, He comes to take her away; but soon He will come down for me, and then, up there in heaven, we shall be united in happiness with Him, just as we have been happy with Him in our little home!’”

“The sublimity of this story needs no comment.”

“Gosh, Father, that’s beautiful,” commented Mary Elizabeth, visibly touched.

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\*Quoted from “Jesus, King of Love,” by Rev. Mateo Crawley-Boevey, SS. CC., The National Center of the Enthronement, Sacred Hearts Academy, Fairhaven, Mass.

Nor was she the only one who was touched by this simple but sublime account. And the Sacred Heart will work the same miracle of peace and joy in your home if you let Him in, for He is the God of peace and joy.

"Now just to help you along I'll suggest the following furnishings which the Christian home cannot do without: First of all, the Sacred Heart must be enthroned as the King and Mary as the Queen of the home. They must be set up and given the place of honor in the home and nothing should ever be done to displease them and nothing should be undertaken without consulting them. Secondly, there must be strong but fatherly authority. Children need direction, correction and even punishment at times. Thirdly, there must be a filial respect and loving obedience on the part of the offspring. And lastly, love for each other, an intense love. . . .

"That's putting it very briefly, but I must be on my way."

"Aw, Father, it's early yet," protested Don.

But Father was not to be dissuaded, and with a few pleasantries he took leave of the youngsters. Dad and mother prolonged their "good-bye" out to his car as was their custom. When they returned to the house they walked into a typical old-fashioned home scene.

### XIII. CLOSING SCENE.

Alida and Marilyn had, with the help of Don, dug out a couple of their hostess' aprons and were busy cleaning up the dishes. and Paul, more in the way than anything else, were "helping." Paul was telling Don how very fortunate he was to have such good parents and such a real home in every sense of the word. Out in the drawing room, Walt, chewing on his pipe, was finishing his sketch while Irene, loyally patient, was thumbing through the Encyclical on Marriage and was probably musing how happy she would be after she had married her bookworm. And quite caught up by the spirit of the 90's, Jerry was



banging away on the piano trying to revive some of the ragtime of the period and then mellowing into ". . . . on a bicycle built for two. . . ." No one could doubt that he was really enjoying himself. Snatches of his melodies were heard over by the huge fireplace where Joe and the rest were popping corn and roasting marshmallows. All in all it was a happy scene. Every one was having a good time—and they were making their own entertainment and not roaming about buying it. Even Mary Elizabeth had forgotten all about her radio and modern devices and was getting herself all stuck up with marshmallows roasted in the old-fashioned way. . . . Dad and mother smiled. The scene took them back some years—34 years—to the family parties they had known and especially to one evening when, in front of a log fire, dad had nervously asked mother to come and build a home with him. Storms had risen since then and winds had blown, but their home had stood fast—it was founded on rock; Jesus was Master and Mary was Queen.

When the hour grew rather late, the youngsters were loath to leave their haven of happiness where they had found real enjoyment and healthy recreation for both mind and body. However, they were compensated by their gracious hostess who extended to all a standing invitation to "cruise around and drop anchor" whenever they wished. Good-natured banterings accompanied their "Good-night and pleasant-dreams"—and we do not doubt that all had pleasant dreams of a really enjoyable evening.

#### CONCLUSION . . . . .

We would conclude these homely pages with an earnest appeal to you to love your home and to make it the very center of your life. Rich or poor, you can have a happy home. If your home is not what it should be, whose fault is it? Ask yourself this question seriously and then strive to remedy the defects.

Although the home is really formed on the very first day of married life, it is never too late. Parents may be aging and the children grown, but a start can still be made and success attained through the good will and honest cooperation of all. Consult the divine Architect, for "unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (Psalm 126:1), and then build along the plan suggested in the foregoing pages. We promise you a happy home. The saddest words ever recorded and, indeed, the most tragic, are the following taken from the First Chapter of Saint John's Gospel ". . . . He came unto His own and His own received Him not. . . ." He is knocking at the door of your heart and of your home. We plead with you to admit the Divine Caller with His untold treasures of happiness and peace—a joy and peace that only He can give. Bring Him in and, after having enthroned Him as King and Mary as Queen, hang up the legend:

HOME SWEET HOME.

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