



by

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- I. Is Christianity Obsolete?
- II. Getting Along Without God.
- III. The New Internationale or the Old?
- IV. Education: Stepping-stone or Stumbling Block?
- V. Why a Gospel of Pain?
- VI. What is the Nucleus of Society?

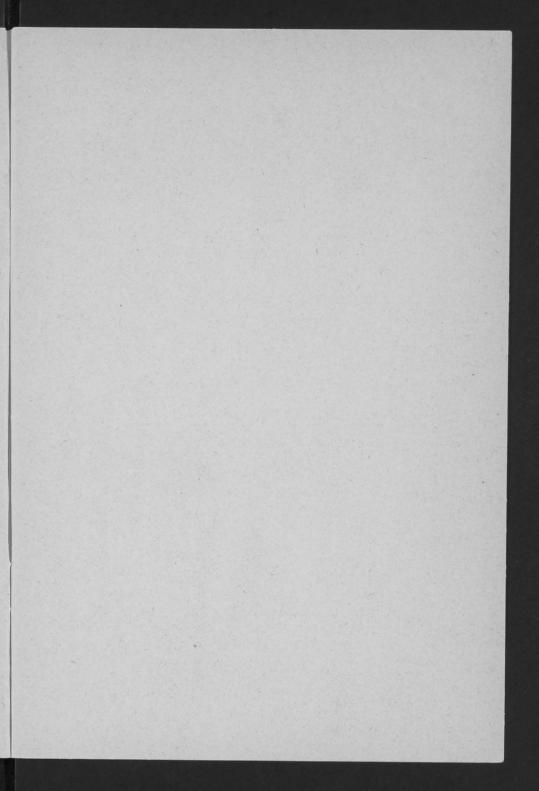
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Dedicated to My Mother and Father

### **IS CHRISTIANITY OBSOLETE?**

Address delivered on July 1, 1934.

American history, with its recounting of hardships, labors, and disappointments is in truth most interesting. From the very dawn of civilized life upon this continent the story of America's progress has been replete with sacrifice and arduous undertakings. From the turbulent passage of the Santa Maria to the perilous transit of the covered wagon. boldness, austerity, physical hardiness, have been written across the brows of the pioneers. Softness. ease, comfort, luxury were unknown to and unwanted by the adventurers as they cut their way through veritable forests of timber-land and hazarded the treacherous waters of racing rapids. Undaunted by the perils of the road, whether from savage or disease, our forefathers bequeathed to us as a sacred trust this spirit of progressive and aggressive activity.

There is at all times not only the summit, the crown of the hill (dangerous and trying to reach), but also the down-side—easy of descent. It is much more difficult to climb and plod upwards than it is to scamper merrily down. The tortuous, winding, rocky, narrow road is far more appealing to human nature on the way down than it is on the tedious, wearisome, monotonous struggle upwards.

Indications seem to point to the fact that the zest for conquest, the enthusiasm to attain the very crown of the mountain-top, are not twentieth century ideals and virtues. A soft race, given to pleasure seeking and dissipation, we have forsaken the admonitions of the builders of this great nation. Mentally we are fickle: bodily we are weak—and spiritually!



Time was when we prided ourselves in being a God-fearing and a God-loving race. The idols of paganism were banished from our shores. Men and women were not ashamed to admit the fact that they were followers of the Crucified Christ: Rather they gloried in His Cross and in bearing it with Him. The doctrine of Christ, and His moral precepts, were taken literally. The modern mental reservation-"I'll accept it if the teaching fits into my plan of things" -fortunately was unknown. Peace, tranquility, happiness, filled the hearts of men. The calm which is a consequence of strict adherence to the discipline of Christ was apparent on all sides. Thinkers were not backward in admitting that they knew little and that God knows all. Scholars and students found time not only for their textbooks of natural science, but also for the primer of the heart wherein God permits puny man to participate in and acquire of the unfathomable riches of His Divine knowledge. The literati saw in themselves creatures not creators: men not Gods. A true and balanced commensuration between the infinite and the human made for a deep-rooted belief in man's dependence on a most bountiful God. The echo of Lucifer's rebellious "Non serviam: I will not serve"-that cry of intellectual disobedience had not been lost in the hills of society's soul. In all honesty and without any mental exaggeration mankind knelt at the feet of the Divine Banqueter pleading, begging for crumbs of true learning. With the Psalmist, regenerated man humbly praved: "Teach me goodness and discipline and knowledge; for I have believed thy commandments."

Our twentieth century product will not consider himself a party to what he terms a very stupid de-

basement. "Don't tell me; I know" is too often the slogan not of the ancient but of the neophyte: not of the veteran but of the raw recruit: not of the ranking officer but of the tenderfoot. So far as the modern worldling is concerned (if interested at all) Christianity should have died with Christ on Calvary. To say the least (and in many cases the most) that religious system which historians call Christianity is obsolete, old-fashioned, worn out: and therefore to be completely discarded: to be relegated to the dusty, cob-webbed garrets of that house which we call forgetfulness. It has seen its day and its usefulness.

Strange that our militant atheist and sceptic allows that Christianity did stem the barbaric tide and avert the collapse of civilization which was imminent because of the rampant license of entire countries. He will even go so far as to admit that womankind was lifted from the slough of slavery and placed upon her very high pinnacle by none other than the religion which he attempts to confute and confound. Of course, it may be asking too much of the followers of Ingersoll and the disciples of Tom Paine to be consistent and logical in their reasoning. But the theory remains that Christianity will not and cannot exist alongside the many modern irreligious views of the free-thinker and the out-and-out atheist; so it must go!

Is Christianity *passé*, outmoded, decadent? Despite the views, and hopes, of the loud-shouting, very insignificant minority, over three hundred million Christian Catholics throughout the world give the lie to the question. To them an explanation of the increase in unbelievers is self-apparent. The words

of Jesus Christ, two thousand years young, ring just as clearly as when they first shocked a self-reliant and self-centered people: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For he that will save his life, shall lose it: and he that shall lose his life for my sake, shall find it." Such a doctrine could hardly be companionable to the worldling's frenzied invitation "to eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow . . ." well, he hesitates here for there is no place in his scheme of life for death. So why worry about the morrow? Why concern oneself with futures even though they be foregone certainties?

One finds such thoughts as these running through his mind when contemplating the conditions of our times. "Is civilization tottering? Do not our lack of and disregard for the ideals of the Christian religion point to a new and worse day?"

It is claimed that Christianity is old-fashioned, out of step with modern civilization; a relic which should not even compel our admiration, much less our veneration; that we have given it a chance only to learn of its inability to solve current and perplexing problems. It has failed us in the hour of need.

My dear friends, have we really given Christianity a chance? Might we not go further and ask the question, "Have we given Christianity half an opportunity to prove itself?" A golfer will at least try out a new make of club before he condemns it. The housewife will not pass unfavorable comments upon an article of domestic utility until the commodity has sealed its own doom. An honest professor in a university is unwilling to commit himself as for or against a novel theory until he has taken the time

to examine the evidence at hand. Fair play is demanded and exacted in all fields save that of religion.

May we become more practical? In our own United States there are some one hunded and twenty millions of people. Of this vast army twenty-two millions find Christ in the Catholic Church, while some forty millions divide their allegiance among other churches. We are appalled at the sight of sixty millions of people who are churchless. Bear in mind the fact that we are not speaking of pagan citadels in the Orient, nor of Voodoo strongholds in Africa, nor of the fakir marts in India. Our concern is not with those of centuries ago who had not the marvelous agencies of the press and the radio. Is our country a cross section of the whole world? We hope and pray not: for our local picture is sufficiently discouraging.

The spirit of our forefathers is rapidly dying. Are we the better for the loss of that saving influence? True we may point to our loftly skyscrapers: our rapid transit systems: our many mechanical contrivances which have robbed the laborer of his hire. But have we that peace, and rest, and content which so marked our forbears? Is there any person of three score and ten who will deny the fact that life with God and religion was far happier, far more wholesome five and six decades ago than is this existence without God of the year nineteen hundred and thirty four? Sacrifice, toil, calloused hands, could not and did not rob hearts and minds of that peace which surpasseth understanding. Ease, comfort, wealth, extravagance, have made of us aliens to God our Heavenly Father.

The hill of religion is not always a pleasant one.

No sensible person believes that this vale of tears has been transformed into a paradise of bliss. If anything is learned of life, it must be the fact that rewards are held in store for the future. The fearlessly honest judge, the blameless politician, the scrupulously ethical doctor, the courageous Christian father and mother-all know well from their training in the sad school of experience that religion is no child's play-toy. To them Christianity is not obsolete, decadent, archaic, a mere tradition. It is as vital and energizing today as it was when daringly and valiantly practiced in the very bowels of the earth during the first three Christian centuries. For them Christ's religion is not a decrepit set of formulae awaiting the death-knell to be tolled by an antagonistic and godless society. Christianity is a part of the marrow of their bones, of the blood which is being incessantly circulated through their veins.

Healthy marrow and wholesome blood insure us of a sound and hale body. The consequence of fair play towards Christ and His religion will of necessity mean for us a whole-hearted acceptance of Him and His teachings.

In the book of Isaias the prophet we read, "For thus hath the Lord said to me. Go, and set a watchman: and whatsoever he shall see, let him tell. And he saw a chariot with two horsemen, a rider upon an ass, and a rider upon a camel: and he beheld them diligently with much heed. And a lion cried out: I am upon the watchtower of the Lord, standing continually by day: and I am upon my ward, standing whole nights. Behold this man cometh, the rider upon the chariot with two horsemen, and he

answered, and said: Babylon is fallen, she is fallen, and all the graven gods thereof are broken unto the ground. Oh my threshing, and the children of my floor, that which I have heard of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, I have declared unto you. The burden of Duma calleth to me out of Seir: Watchman, what of the night? watchman, what of the night? The watchman said: the morning cometh, also the night: if you seek, seek: return, come."

May it be, my dear friends, that the millions who are unsuccessfully attempting to convince themselves that Christianity is obsolete will heed the watchman's cry of the night: so that the day of Christ's glory will break in upon their souls forever to dispel the shadows and the gloom of a spiritual night.

## GETTING ALONG WITHOUT GOD

Address delivered on July 8, 1934.

No man wishes to have himself considered as merely a cog in that wheel which we call Society. True, he is a very minor (and usually a not too necessary) part of that vast organization. In all sincerity the average man is willing to admit this fact-for fact it is. But simply to be considered as another number of four or fourteen figures: to be placed in test-tube A. B. or C in the world's laboratory goes against the grain. Figures and test-tubes are heartless and therefore cannot adequately reveal a man's identity. Furthermore when we float through the field of higher mathematics we are very apt to slight the addition, and subtraction, and multiplication tables. Or we may easily place the testtube on the laboratory rack, along with thousands of similar receptacles, there to be obscured forever in the dust of forgotten experiments.

The individual is too often swallowed up in that seething sea called mankind. His distinctive likes and dislikes, preferences and aversions, fancies and repugnances, are quite likely to be trampled upon by an unconcerned, insanely accelerated world. Because of this abnormal haste, minds are sterile. barren, unproductive. Geniuses and prodigies seem to have deserted this planet of ours. Our modern mode of living and thinking has deprived us of independent thought. Deep recollection, the searching of our hearts and souls, has been supplanted by mass reasoning. Many a splendid, progressive, constructive thought has died aborning because of our slavishness to arbitrary popular opinion. The cry of the mob has often deterred men from expressing and following their own judgment. "I don't

want to be looked upon as odd, queer, eccentric," is usually a confession of one's inability to face his own conscience and his fellow-men. The crowd, others, my next door neighbor, too frequently fashion and mould our deliberation. "Because so many thousands think and act thus and so, I must fall into line", is apparently the life slogan of many of our contemporaries.

Quantity, magnitude, size, have done more to exterminate reasonable individuality than any and all other possible agents.

A building is the best in a locality becaause it has eighty or ninety stories. The fact that worldrenowned scholars, reputable business men, masters of the medical and surgical arts, use that building as their center of action does not enter into the consciousness of the local citizen who proudly shouts to the visitor, "This is the largest place in town".

In our frenzy to compete with other municipalities we have been known to double and triple figures so that a more favorable impression might be made in other quarters of our little world. So, a library reputed to contain six hundred thousand volumes may be found to house only sixty thousand. A railroad spoken of as having ten thousand miles of track may turn out to be a street car line which traverses a rather small city. The factory which is credited by an overambitious individual with the employing of eighteen thousand may be one of several active plants in an isolated community which reported in its last census only seven thousand inhabitants.

Awestruck by the mentally overpowering

figures of an extremely fertile imagination, staggering under the heavy burdens of numbers that well-nigh spontaneously skip from hundreds into thousands, and from thousands into millions, the recipient of this fund of information never dares ask, "Well, what about it? Is your building an architectural gem because of its eighty stories? Of its thousands of volumes, are there in your library ten really worth-while books? Is your uncountable army of laborers well paid, and decently protected against the many perils of industrial life? Supposing all your claims to bigger things be correct, what then? Are we to bow down in adoration before the last number that may be turned out by an adding machine? Is our God, our goal in life, to be a mere accumulation of high, and highly improbable, statistics?"

We are all prone to part company quickly with an egotist. The self-centered man who eagerly and frequently sings the praises of "I" soon finds that his hymn of praise is enjoyed by no one other than himself. Self-centered individuals without much ado from fellow-creatures discover that they are most frigidly dissociated and segregated from all but their own tiny, unknown selves. Too close an intimacy with one's own virtues brings to a man too deep a knowledge of the vices of the rest of the world.

Frank self-knowledge and sane self-assertion bring out in true relief the accurate position of the individual man. The Saints frequently spoke of themselves—but no man dares call the Saints egotistical, self-centered, self-opinionated. The highly capitalized "I" which has ruined so many talented

and promising individuals has been used by the Saints to a supremely spiritual advantage. St. Augustine in his Confessions speaks at length of himself but always placing the "I" where it properly belongs-far below His God. "I will now call to mind," he says, "my past foulness and the carnal corruptions of my soul, not because I love them. but that I may love Thee, O my God. For love of Thy love I do it, recalling in the very bitterness of my remembrance my most vicious ways, that Thou mayest grow sweet to me, and recollecting myself out of that my dissipation, in which I was torn to pieces, while turned away from Thee, the One, I lost myself among many vanities. But Thou wert always by me, mercifully angry, and dashing with the bitterest vexations all my illicit pleasures in order that I might seek pleasures free from vexation. But where I could meet with such except in Thee, O Lord, I could not find-except in Thee, Who teachest by sorrow, and woundest to heal, and killest us that we may not die from Thee". Surely the renowned Bishop of Hippo declared much of himself, but not to the exclusion of Him Who has made us for Himself and Who creates in our hearts that spirit of restlessness until we rest in Him.

Religion is not to the well-instructed Christian individual a preparation for a never-ending state of happiness and enjoyment considered apart from God. Indeed the follower of Christ never attempts to divorce the reward from its Source. The ego is seen and considered and treated in its true dependent relation with Him Who permits us to live and breathe and move. When a child says to his mother "I love you", he is not concerning himself with

the "I" or the sweets that may be consequences of a profession of esteem. The same youngster may have but lately received a very salutary piece of punishment. Recognizing and realizing his act of disobedience or thoughtlessness and the justice which attaches a none-too-pleasant sanction to such an act, he is ready and anxious to prove to his dearest earthly friend, even through his tears, his high regard and deep affection for her.

For centuries Catholics have sung:

"I love Thee, Lord, yet not because I hope for Heaven thereby, Nor because they who love Thee not Must burn eternally: Not for the sake of winning Heaven Or of escaping hell— Not with the hope of gaining aught, Not seeking a reward: But, as Thou Thyself has loved me O, ever-loving Lord. Even so I love and will love And in Thy praise will sing Solely because Thou art my God And my everlasting King".

Such sentiments as these and Augustine's demonstrate the fallacy that the individual human being is simply another inconsequential grain of sand to be lost on an almost infinite expanse of beach, and the more supremely ridiculous blunder that the modern twentieth century man is a god unto himself.

"Without Me you can do nothing" is written high on the fleshy tablet of every genuinely Christian heart. And immediately below are inscribed the words, "With Me, by Me, and through Me, you can do much". Human dignity, the true worth of each created soul, is acknowledged by such an act of dependence. Man is denuded of misconceptions re-

garding his strength and weakness. The individual in all truth and sincerity sees himself as God sees him and finds himself to be neither a mere tool nor a self-deified hero. Experience, either personal or that of others, has taught him that he can't get along without God. Pleading for continued divine assistance, man plods along the highway of time with the assurance that God will be at his side most willing and ready to give sufficient strength during the long and tedious journey. The pack on man's back may seem heavy and unbearable: bandits are bound to infest the road; shady lawns may entice one to give up the trip and rest; babbling brooks of pleasure will undoubtedly chant their allurements and enchantments; but trudging along-now lightly, then heavily-the man with God by his side and in his heart is certain of reaching his eternal goal-God Himself.

The tired traveller over life's dusty and at times seemingly interminable road will bear out the contention that man can no more keep going without God than he can live without God's fresh air and warming sunshine. The carcasses along the way, decaying in their own corruption, have firmly and fully convinced him of this fact. Stragglers and idlers have scorned, derided, hooted, insulted, as he tramped by. "Join us. If there be a hell we'll be your associates and companions. Why exert and tire yourself? You are only one of many millions. God has no more regard for you than He has for the well-nigh-invisible gnat". Or from the other side of the thoroughfare: "Walk in these days of luxurious transportation? Face the inclemencies of gnawing winter and parching summer? Man,

think of your importance and greatness! Don't be silly as a result of this bugaboo called God"!

Aware of his extreme limitations, life's hiker girds himself with the necessary equipment provided by Christianity. Religion is to him no fool's paradise, nor is it a playground on whose gate hangs the notice, "For women and children only". According to the testimony—internal and external which he has received, the Christian religion is an active and necessary binding of one-self—a very shackling, if you will, of one's intellect and freewill, of one's very heart and soul—to Jesus Christ and His Gospel.

Men live fully, completely, and perfectly only when they rise higher than the animal that is within them. But no man can live beyond and above the brute creation unless he has God as His Father, God as His Friend, God as His Inspiration, God as His continual Provider.

## THE NEW INTERNATIONALE OR THE OLD?

#### Address delivered on July 15, 1934.

It is a fatal mistake to isolate a text from its context. A writer is too readily criticized and condemned because of his reader's anxiety either to take too much or too little from one particular sentence or paragraph. A thoughtful perusal of the entire manuscript may draw forth the conclusion that the author not only had no intention of retailing a notion ascribed to him by cursory and hurried interpreters, but that he was even assailing the concept of which he is claimed to be the father. Quotation marks are frequently ignored much to the rightful chagrin and annoyance of the party quoted. A hasty glance at a page with the eye busying itself with very fifth or sixth sentence will by no means be the foundation of a complete and trustworthy review.

There have been self-styled leaders of thought who have argued thusly: "The author expresses a most erroneous doctrine when he claims that foods are poisons." Of course, the wrtier's qualifying statement is ignored and lost: "Some foods are deadly to certain people not because of the inherent qualities of the foodstuff but because of the inability of certain organisms rightly to digest such viands." The faithful jurist who has merely stated a fact when saying that perjury is on the increase sadly finds himself alleged as having proclaimed to a world all too eager to hear and use such a statement: "Perjury, because of its extent, has become a necessary part of our juridical life." Ridiculous and silly exaggerations? Ask the man in high station whether he has always-privately and pub-

licly—been quoted correctly. Whether his heart has not been heavy when he learned that through no lack of clairity and precision on his part his words have been so jumbled and garbled that they are beyond his recognition.

It has been known in the past that self-appointed teachers of the people have distorted the very word of God Himself. Even the divine sayings are not safe in the hands of mutilators and falsifiers-especially when some personal advantage is to be reaped. Those who would fain deny the existence of God, and therefore the need of any religious belief, have been known to point out for the consideration of a gullible audience the sentence (naturally despoiled of its complete context): "There is no God." Possibly they feared to be allocated with the fools who say in their hearts "There is no God." We are very much reminded by such a flourish of insincerity of the school boy, who on being reprimanded by the teacher for having blackened another lad's eve, retorted: "Didn't vou read to us from the Bible only yesterday, 'Do unto others as others do unto you'?"

For their own purposes men have been known to use an identical text the one day to prove a point: the very next to disprove a strikingly similar thesis. By contortions (foreign to a well-drilled mind) black is black today: but if necessary, tomorrow the same black may be seen as white. The difference is not to be found in the object at which one is gazing but in the benefits and profits which may accrue today and the privations and losses which may be heaped to our dissatisfaction tomorrow. Colored glasses are easily and readily

adjusted, particularly when the wearer is thereby always the winner.

So, for example, we find some leaders of modern thought (just how modern thought parts ways with ancient thought remains to be demonstrated) arguing that Christianity is the Mother of Communism: and in the next breath asserting that Christ and His dicta cannot be coexistent with Communistic ideals. In the first instance the soapbox orator, hardly a Demosthenes, gives at length and with many fanciful details, a rather inaccurate account of Ananias and Saphira. The secret retention of part of the sale price and the visitation of the Lord are portrayed quite vividly. Only the narrowest and most hard-hearted could resist the torrent of verbiage, the plaintiveness of tone, the beatings of the breast, and the dire prophetic utterings. Nary a word is said of the reprimand of St. Peter, "The field was yours, and even after the sale, the money was yours. What reason was there for your lie?" The early Christians did not look upon property-sharing as obligatory for their eternal salvation. The sacrifice of one's goods and wealth was, except in cases of extreme need and want, a work of supererogation: an act which might the more easily draw us closer to an infinitely bountiful God. Of itself, however, the giving up of one's possessions was not meritorious and praiseworthy. The pagan philosophers could and did cry out, "We have left all things." The essentially indispensable corrolary, "And have followed Thee," was the motivating reason for the distribution of a Christian's belongings. But why agitate and disturb one's mental equilibrium about

an insignificant, immaterial context when the desired conclusion may be deduced from an expatriated text?

The gentleman of the loud voice and the almost interminable vocabulary is found regaling his audience the very next night with a flat and complete contradiction of his former stand. Christianity must go. It has and can have no partnership with a Society that gives to all equal rights, equal opportunities of improving their living conditions. Last night Christianity was the leaven of Society: its teaching that .Christ had shed His precious Blood for all had established an equality of souls. But tonight it is contended that the Christian religion impedes the dissemination of the doctrine of parity. Of course, the listener has by this time forgotten the pompous state funerals accorded those in high station. We thought that there were to be no high stations nor low ones. Every man, doctor, lawyer, artist, business man, college professor, farm hand, ditch digger, street sweeper, was to have been placed on an equal plane with his fellow man. O mores, o tempora!

Since all individuals in this newly conceived type of government are to be supreme, what need can there be of a God? Consequently we have a State crucifying the very thought of a Divine Being. All vestiges of religion are hanged, drawn, and quartered. The veil of the Temple has not only been rent: the dwelling of God in the midst of His people has been demolished until there remains not a stone upon a stone. It is quite singular that a statue be erected to Judas for his betraval of a God Who never existed! A new

political order of things, did we say? Why history concurs in our thought that almost since the beginning of time man has endeavored to found a godless state only to find that all order, all love for law, comes from above.

When the forefathers of this democracy conceived a popular form of government they had no desire to attempt to banish God from our land. Loose, irresponsible thinkers divorcing the text from its context would lead us to believe that those who builded so well the foundation and the superstructure of our American system considered the ideal state to be the one without religion. If that be true, why then did those self-same builders assure freedom of religious worship? If they anticipated a godless nation, why did their spokesman and choice as first ruler of the new regime, Washington, speak so plainly and lengthily in his Farewell Address:

"Of all the dispositions and habits," he said, "which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness—these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician equally with the pious man, ought to respect and cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked, where is the security for prosperity, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition

that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

Judging from Washington's tone, it would seem as though the Father of this great republic, although writing some one hundred and thirty-eight years ago, had heard of this modern experiment which is concerning itself with the extermination of God not only from human hearts and minds, but also from the halls of justice and government. In language intelligible to a grammar school boy, Washington indicates a national conscience answerable to God for its deeds and misdeeds. "Can it be that Providence," he says, "has not connected the permanent felicity of a nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommendable by every sentiment which ennobles human nature. Alas! is it rendered impossible by its vices?"

We hear much and often these days of a new Internationale. In the span of a relatively brief life-time we have had three such systems, and now we are told that a fourth is about to be launched. Why the apparent failure in so short a time of three systems? In this enlightened and progressive era, scholars with every means of acquiring a greater store of knowledge should not be so shifty and fickle. Why didn't the first Internationale satisfy the souls of those upon whom it was foisted? Why did there have to be a second, and a third, and now a possible fourth? Has not the anciently modern teaching of a godless, athe-

istic state fulfilled all its promises? Evidently not, if in so short a space of time the ruled and the erroneously called rulers, have seen fit to change so frequently. At the expense of being boresome in iterating an apt quotation from Augustine (one which should be deeply treasured in every human breast) may not the godless and partially atheistic state cry out, "Thou hast made us for Thyself: and our hearts are at unrest until they rest in Thee"?

Christianity has no brief to bear for any particular form of government. In her length of days she has seen empires, oligarchies, monarchies, and republics rise and fall. Her deep and interested concern is that man in his government forget not his God Who has ordained that there be the governed and governors: that the necessary thought of a Judging God be in the minds of those who control the destinies of the multitude.

To every species of rightly ordained government the Christian religion is ready and willing to extend the hand of cooperation in the working out of the salvation of its adherents. For she knows well that loyalty and patriotism, and love of country are demanded by her teachings.

"Let those who say that the doctrine of Christ is adverse to the State," said St. Augustine, "let them show us an army of soldiers such as the doctrine of Christ has commanded them to be, let them show us such governors and provinces, such husbands and wives, such parents and children, such masters and servants, such kings, and judges, as the Christian teaching would have them to be, nay such contributors of all manner of taxes and

such gatherers of taxes: and then let them have the face, if they can, to call this teaching injurious to the State".

## EDUCATION: STEPPING-STONE OR STUMBLING-BLOCK

#### Address delivered on July 22, 1934.

It may seem to be taking unfair advantage of our juvenile listeners to ask them to bear with a talk on education in the very midst of their liberation from school activities. Fond parents who have had to submit themselves to a too exacting examination of their ignorance of modern educational methods may also find themselves mentally pleading for a respite from anything smacking of the word "school". Report cards, tests, books, and the extremely formidable teachers' communications have been duly and ceremoniously packed with winter clothing in moth-proof containers. Why, then, resurrect a subject which should not have the courage to face the world until bathing beaches are closed and bare feet once again uncomfortably shod?

Education, strange to say, confines itself neither to the class-room nor to the months of the scholastic calendar. It concerns itself with our children (and for that matter with ourselves) whether the climate be torrid or frigid. It advances towards us to be accepted or rejected under summer skies as well as wintry ones. While the school room with its odor of fresh paper and chalk dust tends to create a more desirable educational atmosphere, it by no manner or means claims to be the exclusive seat of learning. It stands to reason that the school which can command but five of the fifteen waking hours of the child is but a handmaid to other agencies. Without a doubt there is much foundation for the oft repeated criticism of the school teacher: "There is little or no concern among parents for the other educational forces which are demanding two thirds of the normal child's life."

The all too prevalent idea that education commences with the ringing of the nine o'clock bell and ceases with the three o'clock liberating tones of the same gong, is giving to our young ones a perverted notion of educational values. The diploma of graduation becomes, because of this misconception, a document of freedom granted after eight or four years of involuntary incarceration. A piece of beautifully engraved and highly ribboned paper becomes the price paid for by one's best years. A certificate of graduation whether it be from a college or a grade school cannot, by the greatest stretch of the imagination, elevate its owner to the pinnacle of a fully educated man. It merely (and sometimes doubtfully) implies that the basic requirements of that particular institution of learning, to the best knowledge of the faculty, have been realized. Very little, if anything, is said in favor of the recipient being a truly educated person.

Our imposing roster of American men and women who have carved for themselves names in our hall of fame, despite their partial or complete lack of formal education, proves well the contention that learning may and must be acquired outside the hallowed walls of the school room. Long before this nation could boast of its imposing scholastic structures, its well appointed classrooms, its thoughtfully prepared curricula (designed too frequently to make education as painless as possible), and its vitally necessary stadia, there were to be found scores of scholars. The absence of school bands and school cheers did not seemingly make of us a nation of

ignoramuses and dunces. Learning did not begin and end with the fear-inspiring presence of a well or poorly paid teacher. The home shouldered a part of the educational responsibility; and the Church, for so many centuries the mother and custodian of letters, plentifully imparted to both the home and the school of her largess of wisdom. Study was sanctified by the constant remembrance that true and worthwhile wisdom comes from the Father of all truth.

It is not strange that our juvenile ills to a large extent originated with the propagation of our unreligious educational theory. It could hardly have been otherwise, for even the child in his teens is a being composed of soul as well as body. Starve the spiritual side of the child and there is necessarily put into play the animal. The youngster is just as much the heir to original sin and its undermining consequences as is the oldster. If, as is the case, man cannot live by bread alone, so the child, whose daily diet we supervise so closely, must have his spiritual being properly nourished.

For some years we have striven to lull our consciences to rest with the thought that all is right with the world because the veneer of education has been so liberally granted our young. Their eternal salvation or damnation, their duties to their associates, their obligations to their own little selves, have been passed over with the hurried apology: "They will get all that when they grow up"; "There will be ample time for these considerations after Johnnie or Mary has been relieved of the many worries of school life." Well and reverently might we paraphrase Christ's condemnation: "Thou fool, this

very night do they exact thy child's soul of thee."

When temptation assails our children they may with clear consciences place half the guilt upon their parents who have dodged the task of acquainting them with the weapons needed for the spiritual combat. Their education has been but half begun and, therefore, half completed. It is pitiable to hear the lament of those parents whose children, never rightly instructed in the things of God, have become a bane to society. Is it an exaggeration to think that the very bulwark of human society is, in spite of all our educational advantages and achievements, far from being the flower of our land? When a child's training began with the little tot dropping to his knees upon rising in order to ask God's blessing and protection during the coming day, and ended with the youngster cuddled at his mother's knees lisping his night prayers, asking his Father in heaven forgiveness of his tiny offences, there was much hope for a better and a brighter world. Without a doubt there was trouble aplenty; but it was a thoughtless mischievousness. A window broken by a poorly batted baseball or the succumbing to the attractiveness of a dip in a nearby creek, betraved no indications of bad blood.

It was left for our present day youth to show the world just how badly a bad boy (and for that matter a bad girl) may act. His birth-right of religion had been stolen from him by his parents. If they did not think the matter of religious education worthwhile he would show them their mistake by his irreligious way of living. It is not uncommon to read of crimes perpetrated by children which must send chills up the spines of many hardened criminals.

May I read to you a catalog of some of the misdeeds of our uneducated twentieth century children? I am quoting from a rather trustworthy source of information-Juvenile Court Statistics published by the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor. A table therein which considers children ten years of age and over, recounts this sorry tale of delinquency-"automobile stealing, burglary or unlawful entry, hold-up and other stealing, acts of carelessness or mischief, traffic violations, truancy, running away, ungovernable, sex offences, injury to person, use, possession, or sale of liquor or drugs." Crowded calendars in our childrens' courts attest to the fact that our modern system of training is not fully and roundly preparing the potential citizen of tomorrow. Before the bar of justice he may well plead ignorance of the divine origin of law, for at home, at school, and at play he has seldom if ever heard of his God.

One of the severest maledictions of Jesus Christ (and they were few because He was given to blessing rather than condemning) was hurled at those who would wrest from His divine Heart little ones in their tender years: "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea." Surely these words should be taken most seriously by those in high position because our children *are* being scandalized, for the excesses and abuses of which they have been guilty must have been manufactured by maturer minds. Their lack of ideals, their absolute disregard for law, their sophistication which robs them of their innocence,

are traceable directly to the unwholesome silence regarding God at home and abroad.

State and municipal coffers are being emptied year after year in our endeavor to impart learning to our young. Despite our prodigality we hear ringing in the ears of our heart the words: "Cheater, defrauder, swindler!" The billions of dollars that we have spent have pauperized our young. The socalled freedom which we have advised in matters pertaining to religion has imprisoned the very best of which a child is capable. Our hope of the future has cried for bread—only to be given a stone. We have made of education not a stepping-stone to godliness and God but a stumbling-block.

Our efforts to rid the child of all thought of God during school hours have not been without abundant fruit. If, the youngster reasons, God is not good enough for the class-room why should I waste time with Him outside the school? The list of crimes alluded to a few moments ago is sufficiently lengthy and abhorrent. Given another decade of an educational system which ignores the Crucifix, and hushes the Crucified, we shall have convinced ourselves, not by an academic suasion, that bad children may be frightfully bad. The sorrows and woes of other civilizations had their birth in the religious disregard of the younger members of the State.

This doctrine of the religious education of our young is by no means un-American, a breeder of religious bigotry and hatred. Historically it will be well to remember that the schools of the original colonies were religious institutions. The greatest of American patriots, those who not only sang of the banner of this land but also sealed their belief in

the future of this country with the shedding of their very blood, they saw fit to send their own children to schools where the name of God was uttered openly, reverently, not in an apologetic whisper. It was quite in accord with good manners in those days to speak of God even in the home. In other words, the child of yesteryear was not lopsided in his education : his heart and mind and soul and will had been developed along with his body.

At the tremendous annual expenditure of \$204,-526,487, Catholics in the United States are carrying on the very best traditions of their home-land. Guided by 77,344 teachers paid directly out of Catholic pocket-books some 2,423,055 girls and boys have been entrusted to the zealous care of the Mother of worthwhile studies. With her, education has ever been a stepping-stone, for which every morsel of learning she creates a hunger, a longing for the very Font and Source of all Wisdom, God Himself.

America, awaken to your former sense of duty and obligation. Repair the damage before the whole structure collapses. By generous effort, by constant determination, may the stumbling-block of a godless system be supplanted by the stepping-stone of true Christian education. At the fireside, in the home, in the fields with his playmates, in the quiet of the school-room, may the child of America learn (in many cases for the first time), of the divinely tender love of the Child-God for the least of these His little ones.

### WHY A GOSPEL OF PAIN?

#### Address delivered on July 29, 1934.

Suffering is a strange artist. The bed of pain his canvas—certainly presents contrasting results. His paints and brushes are the same in all cases. Whether the daub be light or heavy, the color, bright or sombre, the artist's identical efforts by no means produce similar effects upon his subjects. A bird'seye view of the interior of any hospital will readily bear out this contention.

There, lying racked with pain, tormented by mental distress, is a creature so twisted and torn that it is difficult to recognize in him a human being. With King David he may indeed cry out: "I am poured out like water; and all my bones are scattered. My heart is become like wax melting in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue hath cleaved to my jaws: and thou hast brought me down into the dust of death." Ignorant of few of the infirmities of which our mortal frame is susceptible, partaker of the most horrible and devastating of human ailments. this sorry spectacle of corporal misery presents to the world one of its most fundamental and universal mysteries: the enigma of varied results from uniform and corresponding causes.

One individual who has heavily felt the hand of the Lord cries out in complete submission—yes, even in gratitude to the Divine Will which permits such tribulation—while from the next bed we hear naught but blasphemy, defiance, hatred of a God Who allows this wretchedness and affliction. The artist has wielded his brush. The result? A perfect masterpiece of accordance with God's permissive will on the one hand, and a complete consummation of bitter

defiance on the other; the countenance of one beaming with gentility and serenity, the mien of the other overflowing with malice and odium.

What is the explanation of such a disheartening contrast? It can't be in the paints and brushes for the artist has dipped with the one brush from the same pots. The same proportion of oils and colors has been employed in both cases so that the weight of the materials is no greater in the case of one than in that of the other. The recipients, therefore, must be the variable elements. Why, then, does one bless while the other reviles; why is one perfectly satisfied to accept while the other attempts to reject?

The answer to this seemingly unanswerable paradox is easy to those who would know. The author of *The Imitation of Christ*, a marvellously consoling book for those in suffering, gives us in childishly simple language the key to the great problem of suffering. The length of the quotation will be pardoned, I am sure, because of its inestimable value:

"To many this seemeth a hard saying: 'Deny thyself, take up thy cross, and follow Jesus'. But it will be much harder to hear that last word! 'Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire'.

"For they who now love to hear and follow the word of the Cross shall not then fear the sentence of eternal condemnation. This sign of the Cross shall be in heaven when the Lord shall come to judge. Then all the servants of the Cross, who in their lifetime have *conformed* themselves to Him that was crucified, shall come to Christ their Judge with great confidence. Why, then, art thou afraid to take up thy cross, which leadeth to the kingdom? In the Cross is salvation: in the Cross is life: in the Cross

is protection from enemies: in the Cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness: in the Cross is strength of mind: in the Cross is joy of spirit. In the Cross is height of virtue: in the Cross is perfection of sanctity. There is no health of soul, nor hope of eternal life, but in the Cross. Take up therefore thy cross and follow Jesus, and thou shalt go into life everlasting. He is gone before thee carrying His cross, and He died for thee upon the Cross, that thou mayest also bear thy cross, and live to die on the cross.

"Because if thou die with Him thou shalt also live with Him: and if thou art His *companion* in suffering, thou shalt also be His companion in glory. Behold in the Cross all doth consist, and all lieth in our dying; and there is no other way to life and to true interior peace but the way of the holy Cross and of daily mortification.

"Go where thou wilt, seek what thou wilt, and thou shalt not find a higher way above, nor a safer way below, than the way of the holy Cross. Dispose and order all things according as thou wilt, and as seems best to thee, and thou wilt still find something to suffer, either *willingly* or *unwillingly*: and so thou shalt always find the Cross. For either thou shalt feel pain in the body, or sustain in thy soul tribulation of spirit.

"God willeth that thou learn to suffer tribulation with comfort and wholly submit thyself to Him, and become more humble by tribulation. No man hath so heartfelt a sense of the Passion of Christ as he whose lot it hath been so suffer like things. The Cross therefore is always ready, and everywhere awaiteth thee.

"If thou carry the Cross willingly, it will carry

thee, and bring thee to thy desired end, namely to that place where there will be an end of suffering, though here there will be no end. If thou carry it *unwillingly*, thou makest it a burden to thee and loadest thyself the more, and nevertheless thou must bear it. If thou fling away one cross, without doubt thou wilt find another, and perhaps a heavier.

"For even Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself was not for one hour of His life without the anguish of His passion. 'It behoved' said He 'that Christ should suffer, and rise from the dead and so enter into His glory'. And how dost thou seek another way than this royal way, which is the way of the holy Cross?"

Six words culled from that magnificent passage of a Kempis give the reason for the vast differences between sufferers; namely, "Jesus Christ", "cross", "companion", "willingly", "unwillingly".

The willing recipient has learned the absolute necessity of Christ's religion for the sufferer. Pagan stoicism and inurement to pain render suffering neither the less real nor the more tolerable. Martyrdom with and for Christ is far more sensible and rational than bodily anguish undergone for its own sake.

St. Paul speaks daringly when he calls upon Christians to fill up those sufferings which are wanting in Christ. The infinite act of redemption exacted of the God-Man the bearing not only of His many almost incredible physical torments but also of that heavier load—which will never be placed upon our shoulders—the iniquities and guilt of a heinously sinful race. Surely He Who cried out in the words of the Prophet, "I am a worm and no man. . . They have dug my hands and feet: They have numbered

all my bones"; the Divine Innocence Who bathed in a sweat of His own priceless Blood (one drop of which would have sufficed to redeem countless millions of worlds): that Spotless Lamb of God Who thrice cried from the very depths of His being, "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt": surely our torn, lacerated, bleeding, dving God, Who voiced that most pathetic crv of desolation. "My God. my God why hast thou forsaken me?"; surely His cup of suffering had been filled so that it could not contain one more tiny drop. St. Paul, who had well learned in a practical way the necessity of enduring for Christ uttered no vain and empty platitude when he spoke of filling up those sufferings that are wanting in Christ. A Kempis insists upon and frequently iterates the words, "Jesus Christ", "Cross", "companion". As members of Christ's mystical body, the Church, we must be prepared to submit ourselves with Christ to His harrowing pains and His mental anguish.

To the unbeliever and the scoffer this is all folly. The corridors of his life are blotched with experiences that he terms necessary ills. Why he must suffer does not in the slightest interest him. His regard is not to complete the sufferings that are lacking in Christ's mystical Body. Save in a profane or blasphemous manner he has never heard or used the very name of Christ. So why fret onself over the possibility of voluntarily sharing Christ's Cross with Him? Put pain to rout as quickly as possible and then forget about it, is the snickerer's philosophy of life and of action. And just as soon as he has put what he calls the "demon pain" to rout

the little imp's older brother dances on the scene demanding perhaps a longer and a more trying hearing.

O Christ. O bruised and broken rood of Jesse. O flagellated, thorn-crowned Savior, give us a saving outlook on the problem of pain, and misery, and woe. Teach us the very essential lesson of the necessity of religion for the sufferer; so that when the time comes, if it has not already been our lot, we too will have the courage and the divine assistance willingly to embrace the Cross, lovingly to kiss it, and courageously to shoulder it, not for the sake of pain itself but for the sake of Thee, our God Who chose for Thyself the death-bed of the ignominious gibbet. May it be that tonight those who will toss restlessly upon their beds of pain will see in their distress Thy good and gracious purpose working in the trials which Thou dost permit them to bear with Thee. May they see an invitation to become active participants in Thy smarting, twinging, twisting, crucified mystical Body. "For unto (them) it is given for Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him", for "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him".

## WHAT IS THE NUCLEUS OF SOCIETY?

Address delivered on August 5, 1934.

A major catastrophe compels our immediate and undivided attention. A fire involving fatalities, a shipwreck causing the loss of many lives, a famine depriving a nation of the barest necessities of life, find themselves rightly featured in our press. I purposely use the word "rightly" for an aroused public opinion has been a valuable handmaid in the prevention of similar tragedies. Glaring headlines drive home the lesson that if we ourselves are to be insured against such occurrences, adequate and proper means must be sought and found against their recurrence.

An intelligent and vigilant public opinion has done much in driving from these shores illnesses and diseases which we once thought a necessary part of childhood days. Of old, mothers and fathers took it for granted that their little ones would of necessity have to pass through those trying stages of whooping cough, measles, and scarlet fever. Because of a widespread crusade against these ills, because of the usage by medical men of appropriate antidotes, the mortality rate among children has rapidly fallen so that today it is almost negligible. We have been well repaid for following the precautions so liberally set before us by public health authorities.

One wonders just how exercised and wrought up our country would be were our dailies to scream in large, bold, blocked headlines: "Whole Nation Imperilled Because of Family Decadence". Would the topic of conversation in the office, at the beach, then be confined to the demoralization of family life? Or would the otherwise religiously scrupulous newspaper reader desert the front page for the comics or

the stock quotations? The dictionary informs us that the word "news" means fresh information. Why then shouldn't this bit (or mountain) of fresh information react upon us just as do wars, shipwrecks, pestilences, tidal waves? Do we so fear the facing of this alarming fact that we are unwilling to read because we know that the remedy is bitter and unpleasant? Surely a country which demands lifeboats for the protection of ocean voyagers, extinguishers in all buildings where there is the least possibility of fire breaking out, the immunization of our little ones against the ravages of disease, the licensing only of capable drivers in the management of our vehicles—surely such a nation desires to know the why and wherefore of this imminent peril.

Yet we see no visible signs of enlightenment regarding its existence and we hear no public opinion proclaiming from the housetop its universality and its devastatingly logical effects.

Were a nationally prominent lecturer to advertise a talk on "Civilization Unhealthy Because of Domestic Difficulties," do you think that he could gather more than the proverbial baker's dozen to hear his discourse? But were the same gentleman to harangue on "The Benefits to be Derived from Sun Bathing," all the king's horses and all the king's men could not keep the crowd in order.

When the foundations of a house commence to give and sink, the owner quite normally seeks advice from a qualified and experienced contractor. Not wishing to find his kitchen stove in the cellar some bright morning, the man of the house follows the counsel given by the expert. Why should this same

man be so unconcerned, unmoved, careless, indifferent, when told that his very nation's life is at stake?

We pride ourselves on being a fact-loving people. Statistics are at our fingers' tips to prove or disprove petty private grudges. Yet how few of us really know the facts about the very nucleus of society either at home or abroad? We take it for granted that such knowledge is useless and worthless. Very readily we rattle off dates, ball scores, the names of winning horses, and because of our feat of memory we think ourselves prepared for any pitched battle.

How many, or rather how few, there are who are harassed and worried because home life is fast disappearing from this land? It has almost become such a foreigner that we stop and stare at it. We are poorly acquainted with its dress and manners. Closed doors, bolted windows, peeling paint, are so common that they evoke no surprise, no questioning. Gone, we hope, only for a very short stay is the home life which for years was the glory and pride of our country.

Until we bring ourselves to face the problem and seek its solution, until we publicize the moral insecurity of a homeless nation, just so long shall we be sowing the seeds of our own ruin and destruction. History is replete with examples if they be demanded. "Tolle, lege." Take and read. Scrutinize carefully the reasons for the downfall and ultimate extermination at their own hands of the Greeks and Romans. If a chain be as strong as its weakest link certainly a country is as robust as its most delicate family. Families can and have existed independently of nations; but nations, and that amalgamation

which we call Society, cannot exist without families. If domestic ideals sag and rot, Society cannot subsist. Devotion to duty, a noble regard for laws human as well as divine—the indispensable attitude of chivalry towards womankind, the safeguarding of our tender young from the wiles and ruses of vicious angels of darkness—these quickly disappear from Society if its very core, the family, be cankerous.

Statisticians inform us that but two or three years ago in our land alone there were five hundred and thirty one thousand three hundred and thirteen disrupted, dismembered, severed families. Over one half million couples had obtained divorces! What a staggering picture if one realizes the almost irreparable spiritual harm not only for the men and women involved, but most especially for the millions of children who have to suffer the plight of orphans because of the folly of their parents? In the late war, the very memory of which is abhorrent to civilized men, the United States Army lost one hundred and twenty-six thousand men. What a gruesome thought -this large city of dead young men! Every year in this country we are, through divorce, stripping ten and fifteen times that number of children of their native right to the guidance, helpfulness, and love of parents. A prophet might well cry out in the barren wilderness of our divorce courts: "Beware. or the prayer uttered at the marriage ceremony begging God's blessing not only for the couple embracing the holy state, but also for their offspring even unto the third and fourth generations, will draw down upon our heads and those of our children. God's malediction, His just punishment."

"Be appalled, ye heavens, at this! for my people hath done two evils. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." Over many family hearths used to be engraved the words, at least in spirit: "Christ is the Head of this Home." His sweet yoke of religion was the code and norm of the thoughts and actions of separate members of families and of families as units. It was by no means unusual, much less queer and old-fashioned, for the family to say its prayers in common. Constant reminders of religion were to be seen throughout the home. The fountain of living water flowed plentifully in such homes. What God had joined together had not been torn asunder. Scandals and their distressing influence upon others were uncommon. The press did not have to grind out daily, column upon column, the story of broken cisterns incapable of being filled with the refreshing water of friendship with God. The curfew not only drove people within houses constructed of brick and wood, it brought them into a closer relationship with the Divine Head of all families; for in the religious atmosphere which pervaded those homes the omnipresence of God was felt by all.

The divine command "to leave father and mother and cleave to his wife" was not malinterpreted so as to include the clause "if I find everything to my liking." The solemn pledge of husband and wife, "I take thee to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part," admitted of no mental reservations, to say nothing of the frequently alleged mental cruelty. Responsible fathers

and mothers built securely, only to have their edifices demolished by ungrateful irreligious children. The high purpose for which God created marriage and raised it to the dignity of a sacrament was treasured by godly parents. Called to be participants in the very creative act of God Himself they were proud of their vocation and exercised their sacred right in accord with the Divine Will.

The Christian family knew that there were to be blue days as well as sunny ones; that sickness, and poverty, and sacrifice would stalk every room of the home. But the pledge had been ratified before God, and only cowards shirk their duties in the face of danger and deprivation. Fair-weather friends are worse than useless during trouble and calamity. Home was a novitiate where the beginner learned, not from beautifully couched counsel, but from practical experience, the necessary lesson of having religion as his strong arm in the conflict with the powers of darkness.

Home was, in days not long since past, as it should have been, a sanctuary and a haven: a sanctuary because in it was properly enshrined God Himself: a haven because the tempests of the world could not penetrate its walls. It needed and received no apologies for its vigorous existence.

Today men and women are depriving themselves and their children of their due; they are abandoning the last stronghold of any civilized race. "Vacant" and "To let" signs are not the earmarks of a cultured, refined, religious generation. We lived our family life with God and merited His continued benediction; we are striving to survive without the happy restraints of religion and have failed miser-

45-

46

ably. Our stride, once steady and sure, is today halting and irresolute.

Christianity has not forsaken the family; the family (what remnants there are of it) has discarded Christ and His precepts. Until Jesus Christ finds Himself actually the Head of our family life there is slight hope for the future of the race.

What a splendid topic for debates and discussions, for luncheons and dinners, for the factory and the fairway, for the lettered and the untutored! Dare we honestly, fearlessly, and publicly, take the challenge to consider and argue this all important question with our fellow-man?

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