

You And Yours Part 3

Practical Talks on Home Life. Part 3 - Son and Daughter

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Talk 6. SON.

THE son to whom I am talking has passed the age of sixteen. He is beginning to feel self-reliant — I might even say, self-sufficient. Self-reliance is a good quality. Self-sufficiency, which the youth often calls "independence," is its foolish exaggeration. Such "independence," or self-sufficiency, wants its own way at every point. It thinks its own way of pleasure the main thing in life.

As citizens of the United States, we are among the most independent people in the world. But the very Declaration of Independence which proclaimed the men of this country independent of one government, declared a new government to which they were subject.

In regard to some things, we can never be independent. We cannot declare ourselves independent of God. We are always and everywhere His subjects and bound by His law. We cannot emancipate ourselves from the Ten Commandments or from Church law, as the Church is the voice of God. It is one of God's commandments to "Honor your father and your mother." Whether we are sixteen or sixty, that command holds.

What is it to honor father and mother? We know what it is to honor our country. Any word or deed, which shows disrespect for country, is a failure to honor our country. Any word or deed, which shows disrespect for parents, is a failure to honor them.

And God puts so much importance on reverence for our parents that He makes an offense against them an offense against Himself. A son who does not respect his parents will not have God's blessing on his life. A son who does not respect his parents is only too likely to find later on, that his own children will not respect him.

The average youth knows in his heart that there is nothing worse than to show disregard for those who gave him life and cared for him during the years when he was not able to care for himself. There are many kinds of ingrates, and the worst of all is the ungrateful son. We owe more to our parents than to anyone else in the world. What ingratitude then, to repay their kindness and care by neglect, disobedience, opposition, and even defiance!

There is so much license now that the dishonoring of parents is becoming a menace. A Catholic young man is protected because his religion shows him his duty. Regard for father and mother is one of the fundamental points of religion. I suspect the religion of any young man who does not show the proper attitude towards his parents.

I admit that some parents make it very hard for sons to honor them. Mother and father in such cases must render their own accounts to God but their conduct does not justify a son in disregarding his

duty to them. "Honor your father and mother" holds in all cases. The question of who deserves honor as a man or woman does not change the son's duty to respect, protect and help his father and mother. Leave judgment to God. There are very few parents who do not deserve honor from their children. They live altogether for their children's welfare and even if there were no solemn command of God, a son would owe the greatest honor to his parents.

This honor is shown first of all by doing nothing which will cause them pain. If it is a choice between the son's pleasure and their pain, the son should drop his pleasure. Even if the pleasure be legitimate for others, it ceases to be so for the son in that case.

A son should take it for granted, ordinarily, that his parents are reasonable. They do not profit anything by restricting his pleasure. It is because they know conditions and consequences better than he does that they tell him to refrain from certain things. As a rule, they are acting for his best welfare, and if he disregards them, he will generally regret it.

If at any time a youth feels that his parents are wrong and that he is right, I beg him to distrust his own judgment and be guided by them; if he differs with them, he must still be respectful. Some young men think that they know more than their elders. They may be very bright, but they have not the experience of their parents. In any business, experience counts for more than anything else.

Besides honoring his parents by obedience, a son should also honor them by doing his part to support them. It is not a matter of choice but of duty, if his parents need him. Many young men nowadays spend all they earn on themselves.

Unless the son is a married man and needs his wages for his own family, he is obliged to do his part towards the support of his parents, if they need him. Who is to help them if not their own flesh and blood? Some day the son will realize this, perhaps. While it is time, a young man should try to deserve to have good sons of his own by being a good son himself.

Even though a youth is not altogether directed by his parents in important matters, he should do them the honor of consulting them. The more he does this, less likely will he be to make mistakes.

A son's main duty, therefore, is obedience to his parents, and contribution to their support, when necessary. Moreover, he will never say to father and mother anything to make them think that he does not care for their feelings; that can cut like a knife. Until he chooses a wife, no one should be closer to him than his parents.

A son has only to remember how, from his infancy, father and mother have denied themselves many things and much pleasure for him. It is not giving too much in return if the son denies himself for them, and if he adds the love of God to his natural motives, God will bless him when he may have children of his own. But above all, He will recompense the good son forever, when he returns to Him, as we all must, to receive the just due for our deeds in life.

In order that we may understand how the Lawgiver and Judge of mankind regards the duty of a son to his parents, let us listen to some of His declarations as given in Holy Scripture:

"Honor your father and mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live a long time and it may be well with you..." (Deuteronomy 5:16).

"Honor your father and forget not the groaning (birth-pangs) of your mother: Remember that you had not been born but through them: and make a return to them, as they have done for you" (Ecclesiasticus 7:27-29-30).

"He that honors his mother is as one that lays up a treasure. He that honors his father shall have joy in his own children..." (Ecclesiasticus 3:5-6).

"Son, support the old age of your father, and grieve him not in his life; And if his understanding fail, have patience with him, and despise him not when you are in your strength, for the relieving of the father shall not be forgotten" (Ecclesiasticus 3:14).

"Of what an evil fame is he that forsakes his father: and he is cursed of God that angers his mother" (Ecclesiasticus 3:18).

"A wise son makes a father joyful; but the foolish man despises his mother" (Proverb 15:20).

"He that fears the Lord, honors his parents..." (Ecclesiasticus 3:8).

By these declarations, God shows that a son cannot be acceptable to Him unless he honors his parents. He makes a son's regard for his parents the measure of his love for Himself. He declares that His blessings go out upon the son who treats with consideration the parents by whom God brought him into the world.

Considering how God regards a son's duty to his parents, how very foolish is it for a young man to be led astray into disregard for them by the prevalent bad example of those who have little or no religion or morals. Many young men nowadays ignore their parents altogether. God will ignore them. He has His own time and way of settling with undutiful sons.

All you have to do, in many cases, is to observe the career of those who have not honored their parents, and you will see how the curse of God has rested upon them. But even if they should go, apparently, un-chastised for their disregard of their parents, God's day of reckoning will come to every man in the end, and then the undutiful son will realize too late the dreadfulness of his sin.

Obedience to parents is not a question of whether we like it or not, but of our duty as marked out by God. A citizen may not like certain laws, but that does not exempt him from observing them. Parental authority is a legitimate authority, sanctioned by God Himself. While a man is under his father's roof, he owes his parents honor and obedience. And, at home or abroad, he owes them consideration always.

As a son approaches manhood, he may have, of course, more and more latitude. Wise parents realize this. But no son ever has a latitude that will justify him in being disrespectful to them. A young man may at times forget himself and cause his parents sorrow, but he will, if he is a good son, know how to repair the mischief, and take the sting from the pain.

A young man may honestly differ with his parents on some point or other. But he will, if a good son, know how to differ without disrespect. An honest difference of opinion, expressed in a dutiful way, never detracts from due honor. It is difficult to say in some cases whether or not a son is justified in going against his parents. But it is not difficult to say that he does wrong if he does not take his stand with all due respect and reverence. There is a way of differing and showing honor, as there is a way of agreeing and showing dishonor.

The good son, in all he does, will be guided by the desire never to inflict pain on his parents. Acting on this principle, for the love of God, the Catholic son will be a joy to those who gave him life, and will merit God's blessing on his days here and hereafter.

A young man can have no greater distinction in this world than that of being a good son. People generally have the greatest admiration for the man who reverences his parents. No matter what success or position a man achieves in life, if he has not been a good son, he is a failure. Hereafter he will be rejected by the Father of us all if here he rejects His ordinances in regard to father and mother.

The young man who is true to his Catholic faith will be true to his parents and pleasing to God. Many young men in these days have cast aside religion. Such men go the way of their passions, which is always a selfish way.

It is the selfish young man who is disrespectful to his parents. Selfishness makes him consider only himself. Sad is the ending of such a one. The man who lives for himself, gets in the end nothing but misery. Even if there were no future life, the selfish man, the one who is always looking out for himself and overlooking the feelings and rights of others, tends to be solitary and despised and disgruntled and morally bankrupt. That is his fate here, usually. What it is hereafter, we may judge from the fact that in seeking himself, he has strayed from honor, virtue and God.

There are, I am ashamed to say, some young men nowadays who treat their parents with less regard and consideration than they do strangers. They literally break their parents' hearts. In some cases, a father even banishes a son from home on account of his disrespectful conduct. Or, not infrequently, the pleading of a mother saves the son from such disgrace. If a young man knew what it costs a father to forbid him his presence, he would die rather than oblige him to take such extreme measures.

Some young men keep late hours, frequent questionable places, spend all their salary on their own pleasures, ignore their parents and in various ways, live as if there were no Fourth Commandment. They even add to their parents' sorrow by not going to Mass on Sunday and by neglecting Holy Communion. I may say that, in many cases, it is neglect of church that has caused them to turn out such ingrates.

Such sons are inviting God's judgments upon themselves. They are the young men who become the undesirables and wrecks of society. We cannot trifle with God and His laws. In His own time and way, He will show that if we disregard His ordinance, He will strike us dreadfully in His just indignation.

I am speaking very plainly on this point because I know that many young men at the present time are a scandal to Christianity by their conduct in the home. If you had seen the fathers and mothers whom I have beheld, broken-hearted on account of the waywardness of their children, you would understand why it is that so many of the young men of our day meet with failure and ruin. They have disregarded their parents, and God has abandoned them.

God does not always chastise ungrateful and disrespectful sons in this life. But this I will say, — He does not bless them, and without His blessing, a young man cannot have any real success in life. He may have a superficial prosperity, but it will never truly benefit him or his.

Thank God, the Catholic son who is faithful to his religion need have no fear of ever transgressing seriously in regard to his duty to his parents. The natural instinct of a son, to love and honor his parents, is fortified by the command of God and the example of Jesus Christ.

The Catholic son knows that, in obeying and reverencing his parents, he is performing an act of religion as well as of filial duty. He knows that every word or deed of his, which tends to make his

parents happy, also rejoices the heart of God. That is why people are so frequently edified by the good Catholic son. That is why, in these days of irreligion, when so many young men slight their parents or treat them disdainfully, the Catholic young man, true to his Faith, reverences father and mother.

Show me the Catholic man who does not honor his parents, and I will show you a man whose Faith is dead or dying. A Catholic cannot go to the Sacraments and continue to despise God's ordinances in regard to parents. I am not now speaking of the occasional lapses into which the best of us may fall, but of that state of habitual contempt and defiance which characterizes some sons in their intercourse with father or mother.

If young men understand aright and practice their religion, they will find that their filial and every other duty will be not only tolerable but agreeable. If they have home troubles, which make their position as sons difficult, their religion will show them how to meet them, bravely and cheerfully. But their religion must be real, not merely nominal. Nominal religion is as serviceable as an engine without fuel.

Too many young men today have a religion that is nominal only. The commandment to honor father and mother is so disgracefully violated these days because many of the present generation have turned away from God, and in so doing, have turned away from natural virtue as well. For it is against nature to show contempt for those who gave us life.

Frequently, the penalty for rejecting God is to become a victim of sins against nature. Our nature is from God, and if we are not faithful to Him, He may let us degenerate into offenders against nature, as well as against God.

The Catholic son is, therefore, greatly blessed in his religion, if only he live up to it. The young man of today is in danger of going with the crowd. But the crowd will avail him little when he stands in judgment before the Son of God. Evil associates, no matter how many they may be, will not justify us before a worldly tribunal. Neither will a crowd save us when we appear before the eternal Judge.

If we live for that judgment, we shall live well. By living for that judgment, heaven and its blessedness will surely be ours.

Talk 7. DAUGHTER.

Next to mother, there is no word, which recalls all that is hallowed, so much as daughter. Whether it be parents who speak of her as their child, or brothers who call her sister, the daughter is one of God's special gifts and blessings to mankind.

The fathers and brothers who have been inspired or reclaimed by daughter or sister are legion. The mothers whose hours and cares have been lightened by a devoted daughter are beyond number. The devotion and sacrifice of the daughter for parents and brothers are proverbial. Next to a mother, the heart of the daughter reminds us most of the Heart of Christ.

It seems hardly necessary to say any words of advice to the Catholic daughter. Her devotion to family and Faith make us almost prefer to learn from her rather than to instruct her. Bowing down in respect and reverence, we offer her our gratitude for the example and inspiration she has been to us.

The Catholic daughter has indeed been one of the greatest glories of the Church, as well as of the Christian family. The heroism and sacrifice displayed by her in the home, and in work for God's

needy ones elsewhere, have endeared her to the most callous. Catholic daughters have a wonderful power of making the world happier and better, and, thank God, they have exerted it most generously.

The daughter's first field of operation is the home, and her first duty is to her parents. Nothing except a spiritual call from God should be permitted to take permanent precedence of home duties. And what a beautiful field she has for her activities! She has it in her power to be the greatest comfort to father and mother. That in itself must be a wonderful joy to a nature so exquisitely good as hers. Also, she has an influence over her brothers second only to that of their mother. Good daughter and good sister, what a career of usefulness, cheer and inspiration is yours! But what an opportunity in life has been missed by the girl who is not a good daughter! And generally, a girl who is not a good daughter has given up this wonderful opportunity for a bauble.

A young woman will never get the equivalent outside for what she loses in the home. If through frivolity or vanity or waywardness, she gets a little passing pleasure at the cost of turning her back on home duties, she is simply indulging in froth. If for the sake of amusement or sociability she disregards the advice and welfare of her parents, she is weaving a garment of unhappiness for herself. No young woman ever purchases contentment by having her own way against the reasonable wishes of her parents.

As a girl approaches closer to womanhood, she may more and more decide for herself in many things, but the more she makes her decision conform to her parents' views, the more, generally speaking, is she consulting her own welfare. Besides, as a good daughter, she will be giving her parents the best proof of her love and loyalty.

Some young women act as if they owed neither obedience, nor respect nor submission to their parents. The path of these undutiful daughters is filled with thorns, and ends frequently in misery. A short period of what they call independence may exact a life-long penalty. Beyond estimate is the number of women who wear out their lives in wretchedness because they had their fling in youth. I speak of serious matters. It is easier to begin than to stop short and many a silly girl who preferred the attention and flattery of outsiders to the wholesome advice of her parents, has spent her middle and old age repining.

It is sad enough if a career is wretched even though one has done one's duty. But when wretchedness is the result, of one's disregard of duty, it causes inexpressible sorrow. Disasters, which occur to the girl who has been dutiful and faithful, have in them the bright rays of sacrifice and loyalty. But the girl who seeks her own silly pleasure regardless of her parents' prohibitions and unmindful of their happiness and welfare, is accumulating trouble for herself. And she will soon learn that the trouble which is of one's own making is the hardest of all to bear.

Some girls fancy that their duty lies everywhere except at home. They flit about here and there, and have time and effort for everything except what their mothers require of them. The girl who judges so poorly or chooses so badly that she thinks everything is more important than her home, is just the girl who never achieves anything in life. Notice for yourself how often this type of young woman is not prized in her social set, nor considered valuable in her work.

Perhaps this type of girl thinks that by frequenting clubs, parties, and dances she will make some young man pay marked attention to her. But the thoughtful young man is too sensible to offer his affections to the girl who is always away from her home. These runabouts either do not get married, or they wed husbands of their own type. And then trouble begins!

Other girls are willing to seek their pleasure even in questionable places of amusement. Public dance halls and pavilions have lured many thoughtless girls to life-long unhappiness. Young women should know that men, as a rule, have no good opinion of a girl they meet in such a place. Even men who go to these resorts for purposes of their own, do not want to find their sisters or sweethearts there. A young woman might possibly make a marriage by frequenting places of this character, but the chances are that it will be a marriage, which she will rue. If a girl, by being what a good daughter should be, does not attract a man, it is far better for her never to marry. The unmarried daughter of today can have a busy, and useful, and happy life. Marriage is not the only hinge on which happiness swings.

As a matter of fact, it is the good daughter that usually wins the good husband. She has the very qualities that stir the deepest feelings in a good man. The flashy, runabout girl attracts attention, yes, but it is not the attention that makes for happy wedlock. One reason for unfortunate marriages is just this license and vanity of girls, alas, too common at present. I beg of you, young women, to put your self-respect and dignity above a short career of amusement and vanity.

The good Catholic daughter who honors her parents and follows their advice is safeguarded against the risks of folly and waywardness. It is one way God has of rewarding the good daughter. The girl who flings reverence for her parents aside to claim her own way — 'harmless' though it be at first — will find herself on a dangerous road. Before long, she will lose control and then — the price she must pay for her waywardness is terrible.

Not the least of the consolations of a good daughter is the fact that she is making her parents happy. In their happiness her own becomes manifold. Devotion to them becomes a pleasure because she sees that their only thought is for her and her brothers and sisters.

But if she is not a good daughter! I dread to think of the consequences to her. Some girls break their parents' hearts by their self-will and license. Eventually their own hearts are broken. But worst of all, they are living in sin. For deliberate misbehavior towards parents is a sin. A daughter who died in that sin would appear before God as one who had turned her back on Him in life. It is treason to God to ignore His commandment: "Honor your father and your mother."

I do not speak of thoughtless acts of disobedience, sometimes committed out of carelessness, but of that downright insulting disobedience which some girls continually display. The good daughter will be shocked to learn that there are girls of this kind. The good daughter finds so much pleasure and comfort in doing her duty to her parents, she has so much dread of sin, that she cannot understand the misbehavior of the bad daughter. Some daughters are bad because they fail to realize the mischief they are doing. But you may be sure that if dishonoring one's parents were not a dreadful thing, God would not condemn it so terribly.

In present times, young women are more and more drawn from the home by business. In many cases, this is necessary. Modern methods have substituted women for men in many kinds of work and have carried woman's home industries into the factories and shops. The effect has been a change in the manners and attitude of women. Contact with the business world and the debasing nature of rush hour transportation have tended to spoil, if not destroy that charm which we call womanliness. The new boldness and self-sufficiency are visible not only to outsiders, but at times even in the home. It is a great pity. Anything that tends to lessen the exquisite qualities of womanhood should be avoided by every possible means.

The good daughter who goes out to business will make special efforts to prevent the manners of office or factory from entering her home. Just because she has an income of her own and considerable liberty, she will not be a bit less reverential to her father and mother.

The danger to girls in the business world is that they may lose the reserve, which is their greatest protection. No matter who the man or what the circumstances, a Catholic girl should never permit anything anywhere which may be in the slightest way against womanly reserve and Christian modesty. Fidelity to her religion is her greatest safeguard.

In all walks of life, there are men with little or no religion, who are ready to do all in their power to mislead a young woman. As she values honor and happiness, she should make no concessions to these unprincipled men. If in doubt about anything, she should go, as a good Catholic daughter, to her mother or to her confessor, and she will thus avoid the pits into which so many fall, often, alas, never to rise again to what they were before.

A girl's religion and her mother are her best friends. Not that I leave out father or brother, but there are certain helps and preventives which religion and mother are best qualified to provide.

A good Catholic daughter will find joy, too, in serving her home. Her love and devotion will not hesitate to take the form of house duties — according to her strength and time. If she is a real business woman, she will recognize duties at home which for her own sake, she cannot afford to omit. Every woman is almost certain to see the day when all her knowledge and expertness at housekeeping and cooking will be a valuable asset to her.

The girl who marries, not knowing how to cook, will be a dreadful imposition on her husband, unless perhaps, she marries a millionaire. Many a marriage has been made a tragedy because of bad meals. And even the girl who does not marry, will need to know the art of cooking. What of the time when her mother comes to depend on her to take her place? Or suppose a brother turns to her for help when his wife has been taken? Every girl, no matter what her place or position, should know how to take hold and manage a home. I have known charming girls who considered it beneath them to bend to home tasks. Later on, as wives, it was a source of regret to them.

No matter what our station in life, we do not know where its ups and downs may find us ten months or twelve years hence. Poor food or badly cooked meals may be the opening wedge, which will split asunder marriage happiness. A hungry man with nothing palatable to satisfy his appetite, is in condition to find fault with everything. And fault finding usually ends in family discord, and too often in disaster.

In conclusion, my dear young woman, I wish to say that your happiness here and your blessedness hereafter are bound up with your devotion and reverence for your parents. Your influence in the home and outside of it is incalculable. Indeed, it is not too much to say that society at large will be what you make it. If daughters were all they should be, the world would be a far better place to live in. A good girl is a good influence everywhere. What your influence should be in your own circle, you know better than I can tell you.

Leave other girls, therefore, to their own duties and spheres of influence. Your responsibility is your own. No one has finer opportunities than the Catholic daughter, and, thank God, no one, for the most part, employs her opportunities better. The good Catholic daughter is the pride and joy of her parents, the inspiration of her brothers and husband, and the best hope for a renewed world.

Talk 8. DANGERS TO YOUNG MEN.

Every period of life has its pitfalls. But no time is so dangerous as that of youth. A young man feels that he is more or less his own master. He also feels that he is very capable of managing his own affairs. He is full of life. The future looks bright. He has great confidence in himself. Self-confidence is a good thing, but not if it displaces confidence in the wisdom of others.

And that is the very thing which ordinarily happens with a young man, and it is the main source of danger to him. How many men of middle age have said that they would give all they possess to have known at twenty what they knew at forty! Yet, in spite of this, the man at twenty fancies that he has no need of advice or direction. The man who has that assurance is the very one who needs advice most.

If a young man can be brought to see the benefit of advising with his parents, he has escaped half the dangers ahead. I do not say he must always act on their advice, for he may have tendencies and capabilities which they fail to appreciate. But ordinarily their advice will be sound and the best to follow.

A young man sees visions. Life to him is one brilliant prospect. A heart to heart talk with parents will often dispel the unrealities of his vision and disclose the substantial realities. My first word to young men is they should have full confidence in themselves, and yet distrust themselves. That looks like a contradiction, does it not!

Napoleon always planned to win. He also made every provision for retreat, in case of defeat. Let a young man have confidence in himself, but also realize that distrust of self is the true associate of self-confidence. This self-assurance, joined with self-distrust, will also be the young man's greatest protection against the peculiar dangers, which beset the path of youth. He should have confidence in his power to overcome temptation. Otherwise, he is defeated beforehand. But he should also have that distrust of self which warns him against rushing into temptation.

No man is strong of body, no matter what his constitution may be, if he does not eat what preserves health and avoid what ruins it. Because a man is strong, he cannot trust himself to eat tainted meat. Any man who is so sure of his strength that he does not distrust dangerous food has not self-confidence, but self-disregard.

There are certain things in life more deadly for young men, no matter how virtuous they may consider themselves, than poisoned meat is for a healthy and strong man. There is such a thing as poisoned pleasure. Keep away from it!

Sometimes we read of persons poisoned by something they ate at a banquet. They enjoyed the banquet immensely. A few hours later, they were dangerously ill, or perhaps dead. There are pleasures of life, which are tainted. They cause illness of mind and body, and often death. But we cannot be taken unawares by them, as men at a banquet. We are warned. Tainted pleasure is labeled.

Every pleasure of life that is forbidden by God's commandments is labeled poisonous. Sin is that label. The man who wants to disregard that label, may do so. But he must not blame anyone but himself if he meets with fatal results.

If we should see a warning flag outside a house, in a neighborhood where there was the deadly and contagious disease smallpox, we would keep away. God puts a warning flag on every pleasure that is dangerous to the life of the soul. It is the warning flag called Sin. Is a thing a sin? Keep away from it. Otherwise, you will rue your action. You may have what you call a good time, but you will pay for it.

The government and the press have of late been warning men of the dreadful dangers of certain sexual indulgences. God gives a better warning. He gives the only warning that is really effective. He tells men that if they do certain things they violate His orders — they disobey the Ruler of the world. They commit sin, and if they die in sin, they will lose their souls.

That is God's preventive, and it is the best on all occasions. Instruction and enumeration of diseases and disasters, which usually follow impure practices, will not stop them. Men will take a chance. That is why nowadays when we are better informed on sexual consequences than ever before, there is more sexual delinquency than ever before.

God knows man better than he knows himself. He provides the best means of safeguarding virtue and welfare. He says: You shall not do it. And He adds that the man who violates His command, will lose his soul. Because he has God's help, a Catholic young man has greater protection in life than any other.

The Catholic knows that he who loves God must also respect and reverence Him. The reverence, which he has for God, makes him regulate his life as God directs. Those who have no faith look upon God as a benevolent somebody who may be treated with less regard than they have for their fellow man. If the government orders us to do something, we must respect the order. It will not do to say we love the government while we disobey it. Nor will it do to say that the government is good, and that it is too kind to punish for defying its orders.

It is all nonsense, this prattle about God being too good to punish transgressions of His law. It is worse than prattle, for it leads to the utter disregard of God's law, and to the ruin of body and mind here and the ruin of the soul hereafter. Your father loved you when he punished you for your faults. He punished you because he loved you. God is not only good. He is also just. What a weakling He would be if He allowed His creatures to despise His authority!

Some young men who want to have their fling imagine that they can leave God out of the reckoning. But ask them at sixty or seventy. Even if there were no hereafter, the wages of sin is death. Nature, which is God's servant, takes an awful toll for transgressions of God's law.

But I leave that out. I am talking to Catholic young men. They know that Christ died on the Cross to save them from the consequences of sin. They know therefore that sin is a dreadful thing. That is enough. That is more than they could learn from all the lectures and instructions on sex matters, which they could get in a year.

The love and fear of God have been sufficient to make generations of pure youths during all the ages of Christianity. How much sex instruction do they get in Ireland? And yet there is not a purer people in all the world. They fear God and love Him.

Everyone who truly loves God, fears Him — fears to offend Him. The reason so many young men are going to the devil is that they do not fear God. Neither do they love Him. They may say they do, but will they insult one whom they love? And what is it but an insult to God, deliberately to do what He declares to be most hateful to Him?

It only requires one truth rightly understood to make us virtuous. It is not necessary to know all the whys and wherefores of virtue. It is enough to know that God Almighty commands. If the commander of an army gives an order, the soldier has not to be told the why and wherefore. So it is sufficient for the young man to know that God commands him to avoid certain sexual indulgences. Even if no harm followed, the command is entitled to obedience.

And, thank God, with Catholic young men it is sufficient. That is why a Catholic keeps away from certain places, no matter how many irreligious young men may frequent such resorts. I know it is a terrible temptation to a young fellow to see his companions going the way of sin. But remember that numbers do not make an argument for a thing. If ten men or a thousand jumped from the Brooklyn Bridge, that would not make it right. If ten or a thousand ate tainted meat, that would not make it less detrimental for each one. So numbers do not count with God. Do not forget that.

Numbers are the young man's big temptation in many things. He must make up his mind now that a crowd does not make a wrong thing right. Each man stands judgment with God on his own account.

Reverence for God is the young man's greatest safeguard as he goes through life. It alone will carry him securely over the most dangerous paths. Reverence for God will also make him avoid the dangerous spots along the road. It is not safe to play with dynamite. Passions require only a spark under certain conditions, to cause an explosion. Keep away from the spark.

God has given certain passions and instincts for a wise purpose. Man is drawn strongly and agreeably towards woman for the purpose of honorable marriage. If man were without these passions and instincts, he would never marry. In that case, the human family would perish. Man is supposed to master his passions in accordance with God's law. If he does not master his passions, they will run away with him.

No man is tempted beyond his strength. God says it. But man must do his part. If you give an unruly horse too much rein, he will run away with you. And so the passions. Either you are master or they. If they are in the saddle, God help you! If you have strong passions, God gave them to you, and He also has given you control of them. If they get beyond you, it is because you let them.

It is silly to hear young men say that they cannot help such and such a vice. They cannot help it because they do not, or did not, want to. God does not impose an impossible law. It may be hard at times to observe it, but it is hard at times to observe the law of the government. It is hard at times for a soldier to carry out orders. But that does not excuse him if he fails. So we should never say that God's law is too much for us.

The sexual instinct is so strong in men generally because it is God's way of bringing man and woman to be husband and wife. The sexual instinct in a man goes out to women generally. But it may be indulged only towards the one woman who is his wife, and has won his love in honorable marriage. Any sexual indulgence outside matrimony is condemned solemnly by Almighty God.

The sexual instinct is nature's means of establishing the family and continuing the human race. To employ it otherwise is to disobey the orders of nature's God.

Suppose a messenger received a sum of money from a merchant with orders to deposit it in the bank. If the messenger used that money otherwise than as directed, he would be a thief. If he spent it to suit himself, even if what he bought were serviceable, he would be a thief and condemned as such. He might like very much to have a good time with that money, but if he used it for his own purposes, he would pay the penalty by arrest and imprisonment. If he said he was tempted, the court would ignore his plea.

So with us. God has given us certain instincts for a definite purpose. If we use them otherwise than as He directs, we incur the penalty of a transgressor of God's law. No matter what anyone or any crowd may say, it is wrong and false if it goes against what God commands. There are many young men without any religion who are a law to themselves. We must let them alone. They have their

responsibility with God. We have ours. And we shall find before long that their way is the way of destruction, even in this world, the destruction of everything that really counts in life.

The sooner a young man meets the girl he respects and loves, and marries her, the better, generally speaking. An early marriage well-made is a great blessing to a young man. But a young man should never keep constant company with a girl whom he does not hope to marry. It is wrong for many reasons.

First of all, it is not fair to a good girl, and that is the only kind of girl he should associate with. It gives her false hopes and keeps her from other prospects. Suppose someone should act thus with his sister! In the second place, company keeping is dangerous unless it is inspired by the reverence and true love, which leads to marriage. Protracted courtship is the source of great evils. If, after honorable association with a girl for a reasonable time, a young man realizes that she will not make a good life's companion, let him cease his attentions to her.

Again, I repeat it; a man should seek something more than looks in the girl whom he hopes to make his wife. Her traits, her disposition, and above all, her normal and ordinary conduct are important. When a man meets a girl who is suitable to his character and whose love he may win, the sooner he marries her, the better.

Marriage steadies a young man, gives him ambition, and removes him from the temptations, which beset the path of the average youth. Unless he has family obligations, which stand in the way of marriage, or intends to embrace a life, which requires celibacy, his normal career will be aided and safeguarded by a good marriage.

A good marriage! Ah, that is the point. And it will stand a good chance of being good if the young man tries to carry out the teachings and directions of Faith. Even for welfare here, there is nothing so helpful as religion. And for eternal welfare, which after all is life's main issue, religion is indispensable.

A young man who is a practical Catholic has the best key to welfare in this life and in the life beyond. Dangers to young men are many and insidious these days. Human nature, left to itself, will not ordinarily carry a man through unharmed. That is why God comes to our aid by the Sacraments. No matter how weak we may be, we can make ourselves stronger than any temptation by the right use of the Sacraments.

God says we shall not be tempted above our strength. But He supposes that we take the nourishment He has provided to make us strong. We should not leave the Blessed Eucharist, the food of the strong, to old age, when the passions have run their course of ruin. A fiery horse needs a firm rein. In youth, passions are a fiery steed. The Sacraments give us the spiritual strength to hold a firm rein on them. Unless a man controls them by God's law, they will rush him over a precipice. Rightly controlled, they aid him to attain success and peace.

The passions serve a noble purpose. So does a surgeon's knife. But the knife must be in a firm and skilled hand. Otherwise, the operation brings ruin instead of relief. So the passions. Controlled by the Catholic man skilled in God's ways and the use of His holy Sacraments, the passions become the motor of splendid achievements.

If a chauffeur guides his power properly, it drives his car safely and for long distances. But let him release control, and the machine will dash to its destruction and his death. The passions are a

tremendous power. Controlled by God's directions, they become man's best agent of efficiency. Uncontrolled, they become his ruin.

Young man, follow Jesus Christ, and not His enemy, Satan. As you go through life, you are under the leadership of Christ or Satan. There is no middle course. You are either with God, or against Him. If you are with God here, you will be with Him hereafter. To be with Him here means that at times you must fight, you must do violence to yourself; you must subdue your unruly passions.

But the issue will be eternal victory. With Saint Paul, you will be able to say, "I have fought a good fight. As for the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me in that day."
