

# What Is a Catholic Attitude ?

*By*  
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## What Is a Catholic Attitude?

**O**UR talks tonight and the two succeeding Wednesdays concern Catholic attitudes, and we can best begin this series of talks by defining our words, or in plain English, explain what we are talking about.

First of all what is an "attitude"? It is of course a mental outlook. It means the way a man views things. It implies his judgments on life, on situations in life: health, wealth, honor; on the moral problems of life. When we ask a man: "What is your attitude on smoking?" he has no difficulty at all in realizing that we want an expression of his opinion thereon. Does he smoke? Does he think it injurious? What does he think of women smoking?

### Different Levels of Thought

Now, each one of us may look at things in many different ways. For instance I am a rational being, i. e., one gifted with intelligence; again, I am an American; yet again, I am a Christian; finally, I am a Catholic. These are as it were planes or levels of thought, and so I may have an attitude on any one of these levels. To use another metaphor, I have different avenues of thought. At one time I think just as any other human being would think, if he used his mind logically. Again I find myself pursuing a line of reasoning precisely on American principles. Yet again the principles of Christianity guide me along an avenue whereon the Jew does not travel. Finally, my Catholic faith guides me down yet another avenue whereon I find none but Catholics.

This is not all an idle speculation, just an attempt to be smart. These distinctions would help us much in ordinary everyday life, if only we kept them in mind. So often, so very often, we find someone saying or writing: "We Catholics are for this or against that," or "We Protestants" or "We Jews are for or against this or that," and so very frequently

<sup>1</sup>These talks were broadcast over WLWL, the Paulist Radio Station, New York, N. Y.

this phrase is chosen with poor taste and poor logic. There is poor taste, because we should not needlessly provoke opposition by labeling our position as Catholic or Jew or Protestant, unless there is a real reason to do so. Of course, if there is need let us do it frankly but always politely. Secondly, there is poor logic, for in many cases our religious faith has no more to do with it "than the man in the moon." One may in fact be in favor of or opposed to a thing from entirely distinct points of view: either as a rational man; or, again, as an American; or again as a Christian; or lastly as a Catholic.

#### A Rational Attitude

And, after all, it will not require a great deal of close thinking to see what this means. Let us take a few examples which may clarify this statement in the general way. If a proposition is advanced that we should teach in our schools, public or private, that the sum of two and two is five, I am against that precisely as a reasonable man; my being an American or a Christian or a Catholic has no least logical connection therewith. I hold that two and two make four and not five solely and precisely because I can reason, because I can use my head. Again, someone may advocate on principles of hygiene that the benefits of sleeping with the windows open should be broadcast to all mankind. If I consider the hygienic viewpoint sufficiently sound, I am in favor of diffusion of this knowledge, but not as an American, not as a Christian, not as a Catholic, but merely as a man, nothing more. I would have been in favor of it, if I had been an inhabitant of ancient Gaul and knew the medical arguments.

Again, I am in favor of liberty of conscience because my reason tells me that no man can be forced to serve God in a way that he considers false. I may hold his religious views wrong and mine absolutely right, but reason itself tells me that I cannot force him to my way of serving God. Hence one of the fundamental rights imbedded in our American life is held by me not precisely as an American, but definitely as a reasonable man.

## An American Attitude

So much for a rational or reasonable attitude, i. e., one that I hold just because I am endowed with reason. There are other things, however, which are not opposed or embraced merely on the grounds of abstract reason. For instance, in this second class, a thing may square with American principles or it may run foul thereof. Our guiding rule in this case is not the broader light of a general philosophy, but the more restricted one of our traditional theory of government.

The Curtis-Reed bill and all bills that make for centralization at Washington we consider un-American and should be opposed as such. Those who are Jews or Protestants or Catholics may be opposed to such bills and such movements but they are not opposed to them as Jews or as Protestants or as Catholics. Our religious faith does not enter therein in any direct way. We oppose such a bill precisely because as Americans we know that our whole tradition is in favor of and is rooted in the autonomy, the self-government, of the local unit which is the town, the city, the State. Other such proposals making for Federal control would be: Prohibition, and the Child Labor Amendment to the Constitution. Solely as an American, I would be opposed to such Federal control because it makes against local self-government.

So much for an American attitude, i. e., one which I adopt precisely because I am an American. If I were a Frenchman, an Italian, a Spaniard, my attitude might be very different and yet wholly reasonable, and in matters of statecraft or political science there is no valid argumentation from European methods unless they square with our American principles.

## A Christian Attitude

We have thus seen how I may have an attitude as a man and again as an American. Now for the third attitude—my attitude as a Christian, and Christian I take in the sense of historical Christianity. As a Christian, I believe that

Jesus Christ was in a strict sense the Son of God. I further believe that Christ was the promised Redeemer and that He did away with the Older Dispensation. All this I hold in sharp distinction to my Jewish fellow citizens. As reasonable men we agree that two and two make four; as Americans many of us agree that such measures as the Curtis-Reed bill are constitutionally unsound. But when we come to the question of Christ, the Christian holds that He is the Divine Messiah, whereas the Jew holds Him to be neither Divine nor the Messiah. As we know, it is exactly that question of the Messiah-ship of Christ which divides Judaism off from Christianity.

#### A CATHOLIC ATTITUDE

The final attitude I may have is an attitude as a Catholic. The historic point of cleavage between Christians is a Church empowered by Christ to teach with authority and in His name. The Catholic believes that Christ left such a Church; the Protestant holds He did not. Hence my attitude of obedience to the Church as infallible in matters of faith and morals is peculiarly a Catholic attitude.

Again a public movement might be organized favoring divorce. As we know from philosophy, it is difficult to prove from reason alone that divorce with the right of subsequent remarriage is wrong in any and every possible contingency. Moreover, many Protestants allow divorce at least under certain conditions. Hence my opposition to any exception being made to the indissolubility of consummated Christian marriage is precisely due to my Catholic faith. Again, the absolute outlawing of alcoholic wine even for sacramental purposes would provoke opposition from us not as rational men, and not as Americans, but as Catholics. For all we know as men and as Americans, grape juice might be a proper sacrificial element for Divine service; it is precisely as Catholics that we hold to the necessity of alcoholic wine for the Sacrifice of the Mass. In other words, I hold these things precisely because I am a Catholic. If I were a Protestant or a Jew or a Mohammedan or a follower of Confucius I would hold otherwise.

If we examine into matters carefully we shall find that there are literally hundreds of views we hold in common with those who are not Catholics and that even where we do differ on matters of statecraft, economics, literature, civic movements and social service enterprises, there is frequently no question at all of our religion entering into the discussion.

#### Combined Attitudes

Further, to some measures I base my opposition as a rational man and as an American, e. g., to the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volstead Act: as a rational man, because it seems to me that it is a remedy that makes and actually has made the patient sicker; as an American, first, because sumptuary legislation has no business being written into the splendid document of the Constitution, and, secondly, because the Federal Government ought to keep out of matters that belong to the individual States and can be handled by them.

To other measures I may be opposed as a rational man and as a Catholic, e. g., compulsory or punitive sterilization; as a rational man, because it is a grave mutilation of an innocent person, or, in the case of a criminal, a punishment that does not punish; as a Catholic, because of the kindred teaching of the Church on other matters of sex. In the same way my opposition to birth control arises from my rationality and my Catholicism. My Americanism as such plays no particular part therein.

#### No Mere Splitting of Hairs

This is no mere splitting of hairs, a mere digression into speculative realms. It is a matter of prime importance. "We Catholics (or we Protestants or we Jews) are for this and that" or "We Catholics (or we Protestants or we Jews) are against this and that" is heard entirely too often, when what should be said is: "We rational men are for or against this or that. . . ." "We Americans are for or against this or that."

The fact that "we men" and "we Americans" do concurrently happen to be Catholics or Protestants or Jews has, in such cases, no more bearing on our position than the fact that "we men" and "we Americans" wear shoes instead of sandals. By insisting on the "we Protestants," "we Jews," "we Catholics" slogan we give evidence of careless thinking; we place the emphasis wrongly; we misdirect our friends and enemies to the source of our arguments; and, finally, but not least, we are apt to alienate the sympathy which might otherwise be secured and to precipitate into opposition every man, woman and child to whom the name Catholic or Protestant or Jew is anathema.

The need of this set of distinctions is acutely present when organizations of Catholics or Protestants or Jews go on record for or against a plan or proposal. Though the entire aggregation be Catholic or Protestant or Jewish, their approval or disapproval may be grounded entirely on rational grounds or on principles of Americanism. The fact is that where any measure has the united support of these three groups it seems quite safe to infer that it is so grounded.

#### The Logic of a Catholic Attitude

Again, even where my attitude is a distinctly Catholic one, I can, on grounds of reason alone, show that it is logically consistent with and necessarily flows from other principles which I hold as a Catholic. Let a story exemplify this. On one occasion I was returning by auto to New York from a convent school. Riding with me were a Protestant judge and his Catholic wife, whose little girl attended that school. As usual, the conversation turned on matters of religion. The judge said: "Father, I don't think you Catholics are square. My wife is a Catholic. If there is no Protestant church around, I go with her to the Catholic church. But if there is no Catholic church around she will not go with me to my church. Is that square?" And the answer—was what? It was an answer based wholly on reason. "Judge, suppose you lived in a place where there was no school that taught two plus two make four. But there was one that taught that two plus two make three; another,



two plus two make five; another two plus two make six, etc. Would you send little Mary to any of those schools?" "Well, of course, I would not." "All right, then, Judge, here we are. We Catholics hold that we and we alone teach in matters of religion that two and two make four. We hold that we and we alone are right and that all other churches teach in matters of religion that two plus two make three, or two plus two make five, or two plus two make six. Are we not, therefore, logical, reasonable, when we do not go to some other church?" He looked up in surprise. "Why, yes, you are. I never saw that before. But I think—" "Oh, yes, Judge, you think we have a lot of nerve to hold that we and only we are right, eh?" "Well, I surely do." "All right, Judge, that is another question. But supposing we do, as we really do, hold that doctrine, then you admit we are logical in refraining from joining in church services with our Protestant friends."

A Catholic attitude is, therefore, one that I hold precisely as a Catholic, and in our subsequent talks we shall try to define what this attitude is toward the individual and towards the family.

## The Catholic Attitude Toward the Individual

**I**N the first talk we defined a Catholic attitude and we found that it means a mental viewpoint or position or stand that we take precisely because we are Catholics. We also saw that we have other attitudes: an attitude as rational men; an attitude as Americans; and an attitude as Christians. In all these attitudes we have associated with us very many from among other groups of men. But our Catholic attitude is proper and peculiar to ourselves.

In this our second talk we are to consider the Catholic attitude toward the individual. It might not be far from correct to say that the modern world literally has "gone wild" over the individual. Man himself is always the engrossing study of men; but today, what with sociology in its ample ramifications, what with anthropology, both physical, cultural and linguistic, what with ethics and its seething questions of morals, what with psychology and its slogans of repressions and complexes, behavior patterns and reconditionings—man, the individual man, the "man of the street," occupies the very center of the stage.

### What Is a Human Being?

And what is this individual man? What is a human being? Let us see.

From reason itself, if we use it aright, we know that man is composed of body and soul, that he is made up of matter and spirit. Sound metaphysical psychology teaches us that while we have a body that is in many, many ways like to the bodies of brute animals around us, we have a soul that is not matter, but is spiritual. Reason itself teaches us that this soul being spiritual could not by any means, under any circumstances, have come from an animal soul, and that, therefore, the evolution of the human soul from an animal soul is sheer impossibility. To speak of "the mind in the making" is to talk nonsense.

Reason further teaches that this soul being spiritual is, therefore, immortal. When a tree or an animal dies its principle of life, i. e., its soul, just ceases to be. Like the light of a lamp, it does not go anywhere; it just goes out. When man dies, it is the separation of his soul from his body, and the soul persists in existence.

Moreover, we hold as reasonable men that since the soul is spiritual, it cannot come from matter, cannot come from the parents, but is, in each and every individual case, created immediately by God. This soul, or principle of life, guides and dominates the development of the embryo, and to kill the embryo or unborn child by abortion, criminal or so-called therapeutic, is plain and simple murder.

Again, using our reason alone, we know that man, the individual that we are studying, is endowed with free will, i. e., he has the power of choosing whether he will act this way or that, and is not driven necessarily into action. All morality and all law is built up on the doctrine of free will. Our civic institutions, our social relationships are so based. Deny free will, like Clarence Darrow, and you deny the root of human progress. Deny free will, and you have no right to reward, no reason to punish.

#### W r o n g V i e w s

Of course some men, claiming to use their reasons, hold that the individual man has not a spiritual soul; that when a man dies he dies absolutely just like a dog; that he has no free will any more than a dog or a rat or a cat has. And, then, with sound logic they deny all principles of morality, all responsibility to a Supreme Lawgiver for doing this or doing that. Remember they are logical here. If I am just an animal and have no free will, then there are no Ten Commandments for me any more than there are for a goat or a pig; and, provided I want to live like a goat or a pig, there is no reason why I should not. When I say no reason, I mean no reason which does not ultimately depend "on my own sweet will." We ought to remember this when we quarrel with modern near-thinkers of the type of Harry Elmer Barnes, who not being able to get the idea of God

into their fragmentary minds, banish God, banish the spiritual soul, banish free will and look to the test tube and the measuring rod for guidance in morality. They are logical. Do not quarrel with their conclusions. Rather applaud them for being brutally logical. Get at their principles.

#### A Purpose In Life

As reasonable men, we further hold that man has a purpose in his life, which purpose is placed there by God Himself. This purpose can be and is known by an examination of man's nature. Man is not made to find the completion of his life here in this world through the enjoyment of the good things that are in the world. He may rightly enjoy the good things of life and he has a definite destiny in this world. Yes, but it is only a prelude to his fuller destiny which is God. To use again the common phrase of today, he is to find an amount of "self-expression" in time, but his fullest self-expression will come only after death when he possesses God Himself.

Hence from reason itself we know: (1) that man has a spiritual soul different in kind, not merely in degree, from the soul of the animal; (2) that this individual soul is created by God Himself; (3) that this soul is immortal; (4) that this soul has freedom in its will, and finally (5) that man has a destiny that transcends, goes beyond, this world.

#### Catholic Attitudes Toward Man

As our time is limited, let us go now to what are our attitudes precisely as Catholics.

We believe, first of all, that the individual man has a destiny to possess God in a manner beyond anything he could lay claim to or even hope for. Our attitude as Catholics is that God has raised us to a supernatural end or destiny, which is to see God face to face for all eternity. This is what we mean by the Beatific Vision, i. e., the actual seeing of God which will make us supremely happy. This is what we Catholics mean by Heaven and that is why our hearts are always turned towards Heaven, because it is there we shall see God Our Father face to face.

Yet we must remember that while our ultimate destiny is to get to Heaven, we have a real destiny in this world. I have a job to do here. It is placing the emphasis quite wrongly to say that "I live to die well." Emphatically I do not. The purpose of my life is not death. The purpose of my life is to so act now, to so fulfil each duty however simple, that when death is the next thing ahead of me, I shall do that as well as I have done all else. To repeat, I do not "live to die well," but "I so live that I shall die well." Think that over and the changed emphasis may mean a more vitalizing outlook on life.

#### Supernatural Destiny

Again we Catholics hold that man is actually lifted up, "elevated" as theologians say, to the level of this supernatural destiny of seeing God face to face by an interior gift we call sanctifying grace. We hold that a man with sanctifying grace is, in a way, as different from a man without grace as a man is from a dog. They are on different levels entirely. A man without sanctifying grace is as it were down in the subway station at Park Place under the Woolworth Building; a man with sanctifying grace has been elevated (note the word) up to the top story of the Woolworth Building. The flooring of that top level of supernatural life is sanctifying grace. If the top floor gives way, as it does when I commit a serious sin, I am no longer on the level from which I may enter Heaven if I die. I "fall," yes, literally "fall" into sin. All this is a crude illustration but it may help us to visualize what a tremendous gift sanctifying grace is.

A further Catholic attitude is that God of His own free goodness, in the beginning gave Adam and Eve this gift of sanctifying grace. This gift was to be their possession and the possession of every individual human being from the very first moment when the soul is created. But Adam and Eve disobeyed God. We call their sin the Fall, because they fell from the level of sanctifying grace. Through their sin, original sin came into the world. What does original sin mean? It means that whereas the soul of each indi-

vidual man according to God's designs, should come into the world adorned, gifted, with sanctifying grace, it actually does come into the world deprived of that grace. That deprivation, that lack of sanctifying grace which ought to be there, is called original sin. Precisely because the newborn infant is without sanctifying grace, we Catholics insist that the individual child be baptized as soon as possible. Then, if it dies, it is, to use our metaphor, on the level with Heaven, and will see God face to face for all eternity.

#### The Possession of Grace

We Catholics have another attitude and it is that we can retain and increase sanctifying grace or, on the other hand, that we can lose it by our own deliberate wrongdoing. We hold that a deliberately serious violation of the moral law—for example, perjury, murder, fornication, adultery—deprives a man instantly of sanctifying grace. That is why we inculcate the avoidance of proximate occasions of sin. By a proximate occasion of sin we mean those circumstances wherein most men will inevitably do wrong. And we are logical, are we not? If sanctifying grace is necessary for me to get to Heaven, then it is only the fool that will run the risk of losing it. That is why we inculcate wholesome restraint on our boys and girls, that is why we abhor all forms of so-called “self-expression” that bespeak a let-down in morals; that is why we assert that reason itself demands that there be “inhibitions”; that is why we are not fools enough to condemn a “don't”-psychology too roundly.

#### An Infallible Church

We further believe as Catholics that God has founded a Church which is infallible in its teaching and which it is each individual's duty to obey. That is the reason why we are obedient to Church authorities not as to men but precisely as to vicegerents, namely, representatives, of God. The Pope might be a very bad individual but that would not militate against the efficacy of his official acts, any more than the private vices of an unworthy President of the U. S. A. would nullify his acts precisely as President.

Within that Church and under its administering powers

we recognize seven Sacraments or channels of sanctifying grace: Baptism, whereby the infant is made a child of God; Confirmation, whereby we are made strong to defend our priceless heritage of faith; Penance, whereby through confession of our sins we obtain pardon for them; Holy Eucharist, which is to us the Sacrament of Sacraments because therein we believe Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is really and truly and substantially present; and Extreme Unction, whereby we are strengthened when serious illness afflicts us. The two other Sacraments, are Holy Orders and Matrimony: Holy Orders which makes men priests of the Most High and ministers of His Sacraments; and Matrimony, whereby the marriage contract itself is sanctified and made a channel of grace. As Catholics we cherish these Sacraments and a devotion to the Holy Eucharist, or "Blessed Sacrament" as we call it, is a marked quality of a true Catholic life.

Again as Catholics we look on our churches not merely as meeting places wherein we meet to pray but as truly the home of Jesus Christ the Man-God as was the little house at Nazareth. And it is precisely because we believe that Jesus Christ is truly present on our altars, that we genuflect in adoration to Him when we enter the Church, or, if we pass its door, life our hats in reverence to Him within.

#### An Attitude of Reverence

The Catholic attitude, therefore, towards the individual if he be a Catholic is one of distinct reverence, for that individual's soul has been signed with the sign of Faith in Baptism, has become the temple of the Holy Ghost by grace, and has had Jesus Christ as guest after Holy Communion. Man is, indeed, as Francis Thompson expresses it:

Compost of Heaven and mire

>I< >I< >I< >I< >I<

Great armfellow of God!

To the ancestral clod

Kin,

And to Cherubin.

Man is, indeed, kin to the ancestral clod for “the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life” (Gen. ii, 7); but he is kin, too, to Cherubim because he is destined, as they, one day to see God face to face. And the Catholic attitude is always to keep man nearer the Cherubim than to the clod.



## The Catholic Attitude Towards the Family

**I**N our two preceding talks we have defined what is meant by a Catholic attitude and thereafter what is the Catholic attitude toward the individuals. We now consider the Catholic attitude toward the family.

Not to go too far afield in the limited time allotted, we may define a family as the abiding union of a man, a woman and a child, and the question for discussion tonight is what is our attitude as reasonable men and as Catholics to such a union.

First, as rational men we hold that the family is an abiding union between one man and one woman and their offspring. Why? Because, marriage, from which springs the family, is an abiding union between one man and one woman. That is the normal human relationship dictated by reason, and borne out by actual historical facts.

### O n e M a n a n d O n e W o m a n

And first of all monogamy, *i. e.*, the marriage of one man to one woman is dictated by reason itself from an analysis of the primary purposes of marriage. These purposes are the birth and education of human beings. As we look about the world we find, it is true, many unfortunate variations in marital relations. These are facts and no one can rightly deny them.

But our question at present is what does reason, through that branch of philosophy called ethics, teach us about this? What is a rational attitude toward marriage? Our answer is that reason itself teaches that marriage should be monogamous, that is, the enduring union between one man and one woman. Reason inculcates two qualities for marriage: unity and indissolubility, *i. e.*, one man and one woman, united inseparably.

## Why Any Union?

First, why any union at all? Why not promiscuity? Why? Because the whole purpose of sex is the future child. Man is man, and woman is woman for one distinct purpose, and the normal fulfilment of the function of sex is the child. (This is so true that a sure and yet safe method of birth control is not easy to find. It is hard to frustrate nature, and it is harder still not to pay the price of such frustration.) It is because the child is the end, the purpose of sex relations that there must be some union, some abiding permanence in these relations. Father and mother are both required in the training of the child. They complement each other in the spiritual realm of the education of the child, just as they complement each other in the physical order of the child's birth.

Secondly, why a union between one man and one woman? Reason answers again—because of the child, because of its education. Yes, and because of the human dignity of husband and wife. Simultaneous plurality of husbands is distinctly against nature, and is an uncommon marriage condition. Simultaneous plurality of wives lowers women as history shows, and inevitably so. Reason dictates that man and woman should be helpmates each to each in reciprocity of undivided love, which is based on the reasoned appreciation of each other and is not merely the blind attraction of animal passion.

## No Divorce

Reason, again, dictates that this union between one man and one woman should not be dissolved. Why? Again because of the child. The child must be educated, that is, its latent powers must be drawn out (e and *duco*, the Latin words, from which is derived the word *education*, mean to draw out). For this mother and father are both needed. The child must be fed, and housed and clothed. It must receive proper intellectual instruction and proper training of the will—all of which require the blended efforts of father and mother.

There we have it—the child. That is the key to the

problem of marriage. Deny that the purpose of marriage is the child you knock the proof clean out from under the whole rational attitude toward abiding monogamy. That is why our near-thinkers of today, with all their lack of logic, do become dreadfully and splendidly logical when they advocate free love, marital license, companionate marriage, etc. If sex is for itself and for its own gratification, then birth control is logical, companionate marriage is logical, free love is logical. Take the enduring child out of the picture as the purpose, the essential purpose, of marriage, then an enduring marital relationship ceases. Leave the child in the picture, and marriage becomes a sacred thing—for its purpose, its *essential* purpose, is to bring into existence a human being, who is today a citizen of this world and is destined to be tomorrow a citizen of Heaven. Marriage becomes a sacred thing, even from reason itself, because the parents are cooperators with God in the formation of a new man: the parents giving the body, God creating the soul.

#### The Curse of Animal Ancestry

It is precisely here that Evolution as commonly taught does so much harm. Young folks are nothing if they are not logical. Tell them that they have animal ancestors, tell them that passion is but the rising within them of cave-man tendencies, tell them that repression is dangerous, then you have what we have today, a license that is appalling on stage, in movie, in art, in novel—and in life.

Outlaw the spiritual soul and deny God, then you are splendidly logical, if you follow the Russian economist, L. M. Sabsovitch, who recently recommended to the Soviet Government the complete separation of parents from their children immediately after birth. Thus, as Sabsovitch is reported to have said, the children when grown up, will have no false ideas about the obligation to their parents and relatives. Indeed, quite so, no more than the calf has obligation to the bull and cow that bred it.

Again John B. Watson, who invented the almost-outworn theory of Behaviorism, was interviewed on the subject of parents and children. The interview was con-

tained in the *New York World* "Women's Section," December 29, 1929. It is always a bit difficult to trust the reporting of these interviews, but what Dr. Watson is said to have said has all the earmarks of authenticity. He advocates at least two childless years, at the start of married life, brought on deliberately by birth-control methods. Moreover, there must be five or six years of further adjustments of "collateral habits," i. e., of social life at home, outside the home, etc. There must be no emotional attachments either to people or to things. He says:

Adjusted married couples, where the woman is over thirty and has just completed an intensive course of training, should be given, if she wishes it, three children of varying ages, one just born, one between six and nine, one between nine and fifteen. The residence of such children should be changed every month or oftener if an attachment is being formed for the foster mother or father.

His views are summed up in one sentence: "I believe that parents are usually bad for their children." What a horrible doctrine, a veritable travesty on human nature. If the ordinary man-of-the-street got off such dribble, he would find himself in Bellevue in the psychopathic ward. But Watson and others are Ph.D.'s., and their ravings are tolerated, yes, gaped at admiringly.

#### Claptrap About the Primitives

It has been, indeed, the cheap claptrap of many sociologists that primitive man was as promiscuous in his sex relations as the animals are. This is what is so often taught in our secular universities and colleges, and yet any one at all well read in modern research rejects absolutely such an assertion. Westermarck in his well-known book, "The History of Human Marriage" (Vol. I, Ch. IX, p. 121), says:

It is not of course impossible that among some peoples the intercourse between the sexes may have been almost promiscuous. But the hypothesis according to which promiscuity has formed a general stage in the social history of mankind, instead of belonging, as Giraud Teulon puts it, to the class of hypotheses which are scientifically permissible is, in my opinion, one of the most unscientific ever set forth within the whole domain of sociological speculation.

Lowie, too, in his standard work, "Primitive Society" (Ch. III, p. 62), says: "To sum up. Sexual communism as a condition taking the place of the individual family exists nowhere at the present time; and the arguments for its former existence must be regarded as unsatisfactory."

It might be well for the editors of the magazine sections of some of our Sunday newspapers to note what these authors say, and it might be worth while mentioning that neither Westermarck nor Lowie are Catholics.

So much for my attitude as a rational man toward the family.

#### The Catholic Attitude

And now, what is my attitude as a Catholic. Precisely the same, only intensified and spiritualized. We regard the family as essentially bound up with the very first fact in the human race. We turn back the pages of the Bible until we find in the very second chapter of Genesis (21-24) these words:

And the Lord God said: It is not good for man to be alone; let us make him a help like unto himself . . . then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam, and when he was fast asleep, He took one of his ribs and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which He took from Adam into a woman. And He brought her to Adam. And Adam said: This now is bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she is taken out of man. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be two in one flesh.

And we read in St. Matthew (xix, 3-6):

One day there came to Him the Pharisees tempting Him saying: Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? Who answering said to them: Have ye not read that He who made man from the beginning, made them male and female? And He said: For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be in one flesh. Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

Our Catholic attitude toward the family is that of husband and wife united together undyingly "for better, for

worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part." Sanctified at the foot of the very altar of God, their mutual pledging is itself one of God's high Sacraments. The music and the flowers and the pealing of bells are joyous things but they pass and are stilled. But the grace of God remains and sanctifies them, and brings them closer each to each when the long years come—and maybe the lean ones, too.

#### Symbol of Christ and the Church

And this Catholic attitude is further that marriage is a symbol of the love of Christ for His Spouse the Church and His union therewith. He Himself chose the love of husband and wife as this symbol. Why? May we suggest a reason? No other human love is fruitful—neither the love of parent for child, nor brother for sister, nor friend for friend. But the love of husband for wife is fruitful, bearing rich fruit in their little ones. And so Christ Our Lord took this fruitful love as a symbol of His love for the Church which is ever fruitful, bringing forth daily more and more souls through the sacred waters of Baptism. And we may here add that birth control in Catholics carries with it an added sinfulness since the deliberate barrenness of their marriage destroys its symbolism of the love of Christ for His Church.

#### Back to Bethlehem and Nazareth

Lastly, the Catholic attitude to the family looks a long, long way back to Bethlehem and Nazareth. There it sees the Holy Family—Jesus and Mary and Joseph. There it sees that the Child, indeed, was in all truth the very reason for the existence of this Family. And in the light from that sacred group it shows us the family of today, and with reverence for the sacramented love of husband and wife and the offspring of this love, it cries: "Come, let us adore."

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# Thought

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