

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

A NEW YEAR WISH
God bless the work that lies before you...

RESOLUTIONS

New Year's Day calls on young men to resolve to make better use of their time to make progress in business...

Beware of the beginnings of borrowing. Do not assume that next month it will be easy for you to pay the extra indulgence of this. Live within your means—that is the only safe way to avoid the beginnings of borrowing.

The highest compliment that can be bestowed on a man is to say of him that he is a man of his word; and the greatest reproach that can be bestowed on a man is to assert that he has no regard for the virtue of veracity. Truth is the golden coin with God's image stamped upon it, that circulates among men of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues; its standard value never changes nor depreciates.

Let it be the aim of your life to be always frank and open, candid, sincere, and ingenuous in your relations with your fellow men. Set your face against all deceit and duplicity, all guile, hypocrisy, and dissimulation. You will be living up to the maxims of the Gospel, you will prove yourself a genuine disciple of the God of Truth, you will commend yourself to all honest men. You will triumph over those that lie in wait to deceive, for the intruder is usually caught in his own toils.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

A CHILD'S PRAYER
God grant that I the new year through
May strive with heart and soul to do
Those things which are most good and true.

As the gray dawn of the approaching day was diffusing itself over heaven and earth, the stars, as if ashamed of their feeble light, were fast retreating, Conlon awoke with a start, cramped and sore from his uncomfortable position. Passing his hand across his brow he rose to his feet and began to walk up and down the library.

It was Christmas Eve. All through the day the snow had been silently falling on the hills, on the valleys, on the city, and the keen frost gradually knitted the tiny snow-flakes, crusting them as with beautiful enamel, a fitting garb for Nature to assume in anticipation of her Maker's coming. And tonight a thousand starry worlds in no way abashed by the crescent moon that was hanging in the heavens, looked upon the busy people in the city below. The people themselves hurried to and fro, eager to have their work over, so that they could seek the cheering warmth of their own firesides.

Such was the scene without. Now let us enter that stately mansion standing back from the street, away from the busy mart and the roar of the work-a-day world. Before the open gate, in the beautiful and magnificent furnished library, sat Mr. John Conlon, the master, deeply buried in thought. As he gazed into the glowing coals, but one picture arose from their depths—his past life. Once more he sees himself a young man entering life, once more he is tossed upon the sea of troubles and buffeted by the waves of misfortune; and now he fights again the old fight and gains the dearly bought victory. And this is the laurel wreath, honor, respect and wealth.

But tonight his mind is not at rest. He had been a Catholic once, but what had driven him in with those who scorned religion and the song of the siren sounded sweeter and sweeter in his ears, and he went farther and farther away from God, until now he is all but a scoundrel as religion. But the spirit of unrest is working in his soul, and it seems as though the final struggle is at hand.

So absorbed was he in his own meditations that he did not notice the presence of an intruder until a peal of merry laughter, like the ripple of a silvery cascade, met his ears, and Miss Helen, of the warbling voice and the calm blue eyes, as fresh as a newborn rose and as bright as a sunbeam, came softly to his side. The bloom of sixteen summers was fresh upon her brow, and she was the acknowledged mistress and ruler of the house, the idol of her fond father and loving mother.

"Why are you so sad tonight, father? Won't you forget your business worries? You know this is Christmas Eve, and why should we not be happy?" she continued, gently stroking her father's hair.

as a rose nurtured in God's own garden. Her father, still in the strength of his manhood, was vigorous, in spite of his worried looks.

"Father," Helen continued, "do you remember that some time ago you promised to give me whatever I asked for at Christmas?"

"Yes," answered her father, smiling, "and I was thinking you had forgotten all about it, but I should have known that you would not forget."

Again the silvery laughter rippled softly from her lips. But suddenly her face became grave.

"Father," she said, "I want you to go to Mass with me in the morning. You promised me long ago; and now, will you not come?"

"What a shock this was! He who five minutes ago had almost resolved to forget God was now assailed by the child he so loved. A mighty struggle was going on within. But he answered in an agitated voice.

"Come, daughter we won't speak of that tonight. Some other time will do, won't it? Yes—yes—some other time."

A grieved look crossed Helen's face for she loved her father dearly, and his religious carelessness troubled her. "But I am going to sing my first solo tomorrow," she said, struggling to check her tears, "and I had hoped to give you a surprise. But you will come, will you not?"

"There, there, we will not speak of this any more," he said; and rising to his feet he began to pace the room. After calming himself sufficiently he returned to the fire, and kissing Helen he said quietly:

"There, we won't trouble ourselves more, but you will leave me now, as I have business to attend to."

No business for Conlon that night, for there was a struggle going on in his soul. A vivid picture kept flashing before his eyes. He saw two forces arrayed against each other. On one side were the sweet faces of his wife and daughter praying, ever praying for his return. On the opposite side he saw the world, with its cruel countenance and smug smile, and a scornful finger pointed at him, a weakling, who could not withstand the tears of those whom he loved.

"What a wretched state I am in," he muttered, as he threw himself into the chair before the fire. "How long will this torture last?"

He could feel the waves of remorse slowly rising and threatening to overcome his resolution. At last, with his head buried in his hands, he dropped into a troubled sleep.

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THE NEW YEAR

New Year's Day is a time for retrospection. The old year with its countless cares, its wasted opportunities, and its bitter disappointments has gone. A new year bright with promise of better things lies before us. As we survey the year of the past we see much to regret. No man is so perfect that he can pass twelve months without seeing many things to correct. Looking back we see a pastime is often vain and useless, but looking backwards to see our faults with a view to correcting them is an important element in the spiritual life.

This is the psychology that underlies the practice of making New Year's resolutions. A cynic has described New Year's Day as the day on which people make resolutions which they spend the other days of the year in breaking. But the good Christian sees the fallacy of this maxim of the worldly wise man. He knows that resolutions are made to be broken, not to be kept. The reason why so many New Year's resolutions do not last over night is because they are not taken seriously.

Spiritual writers tell us that our resolutions should be taken only after serious and prayerful consideration. When we have laid the axe to the root of the tree and discovered some sinful habit which is the cause of our repeated failures, we make a resolve to try to correct that fault in the future. This is the true New Year's promise to God. He is pleased with any serious effort on the part of man to avoid evil and to do good and will not fail to bestow upon him the grace necessary to carry out his good resolves. Prayer for light to know our faults is the first step; prayer for God's grace to persevere in well doing is the next.

Catholics have an unflinching refuge in the matter of making resolutions. It is the tribunal of penance. There they have the benefit of the wise and prudent guidance of God's minister in recognizing their faults and the help of sacramental grace to live up to their prudently taken resolutions.

Our new virtue acquired each year is sufficient to transform an ordinary Christian into a saint. But perfection is acquired not merely by rooting out evil habits but by building up new good habits. In the words of Saint Paul, "forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth myself to those that are before, I press toward the mark, to the prize of the supernatural vocation of God in Christ Jesus."—The Pilot.

NEED OF RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

We stand in need of instruction of many matters. All through life we are seeking it. When in school over our books it was the teacher who instructed us; as we were in upper grades, high school, or college, the professor pointed the way; in the various trades the more experienced workman shows the others what to do; even the athletic world has "coaches" to train athletes. If it is important to know and be taught what to do in affairs of the world, certainly we admit the need of instruction in the affairs of our soul and its salvation.

Think of a ship sailing out to sea, with no compass or chart. What will happen? Will it not be tossed about at the mercy of the waves? Will not the lives of those on board be endangered? Without religious instruction our condition would be like that ship. Are we not on the sea of life? What is our destination? How do we get there? The Church which has guided souls across the treacherous waters of life for nearly 1,900 years comes to our aid. She gives us the chart and the compass. She tells us there are two courses open for us, one easy the other somewhat hard. She tells us if we go along life, giving full reign to our passions, neglecting God, even though we amassed great wealth, that in our souls we are leading a life of darkness and leading to destruction. The other and safer course is to follow her guidance, keep the commandments of God, and of His Church, make use of her sacraments, and we will be safely conducted over the sea of life to the harbor of eternal happiness.

RELIGIOUS INDIFFERENCE ABOUT US

We need definite, clear cut instruction in religious matters, because around us there is such confusion, such indifference, such fog. Ascend the roof of a modern high building, cast your eyes over the city. Suppose God gave you vision not only over men's bodies, but over their hearts as well. Notice the way they live. Notice their hearts' desires. Although by their birth and preservation they owe God innumerable debts, yet how many make no pretense to acknowledge them to God by any religious observance? Through a mere habit of going to church or to a foot inside a church or to a church, minds, bodies are given to the world. Their knowledge of amusements is vast, but of religion it is very scant. Numbers know little of the place from whence they have come, and the place whither they are going. What is more astounding, knowing little, they appear to care less. To overcome this atmosphere about us, not to succumb to its easy way of living, and to get the help we need to keep on the proper path, religious instruction is found to be necessary.

HOSTILITY TO OUR FAITH

Not merely is there indifference to our holy faith, but there also exists

great hostility to it. Openly and in secret are found many who are pleased in discrediting her glorious history of activities for God and fellowman. At every possible occasion some will be found to blacken the fair name of Christ's Spouse. This is as we expect, for it was expected that if they persecuted Me they will also persecute you, since the Disciple is not greater than the Master. To meet and repulse these attacks we must be prepared to give a "reason for the faith that is in us." For this, instruction is necessary. Further, we should not wait till attacks of our faith, and it will be found that while there is prejudice, there is also a large amount of ignorance of our teaching, in the minds of many who, otherwise, are well informed people.

OUR COUNTRY NEEDS RELIGION

Religion is the only solid basis of society. The social edifice rests not on this material foundation. It will soon crumble to pieces. Religion is to society what cement is to a building—it makes all the parts compact and coherent. Convince me of the existence of a Divine Legislator, the supreme source of all law; convince me of the truth of the Apostle's words, "There is no power but from God, and they that are ordained of God," convince me that there is a God Who sees all my thoughts and actions, and that there is an incorruptible Judge, Who will reward virtue and punish vice; convince me that I am endowed with free will to observe or violate the laws of the land; then you place before me a monitor who impels me to virtue without regard to earthly ornaments, and who restrains me from vice without regard to civil penalties; you set before my conscience a witness who pursues me in darkness and in light, in the sanctuary of the home, as well as in the area of public life. To get this we need religious instruction.

These are a few reasons why at the Masses every Sunday you hear plain instructions on the truths of our faith and not elaborate sermons. Read Catholic literature, and help develop what we need; that is, an intelligent, zealous laity, able to give a reason for the faith that is in them.—The Tablet.

EVILS TO AVOID

A child taught in youth to love God, and who is fed by our Lord's Body and Blood in Holy Communion will never, in after-life, treat its parents ungratefully. It will be noticed that even in this life people are generally punished for their sins, and by the very means which they themselves used to offend God. The holy prophet David says: "Before I was humbled, I sinned." Humiliation is often brought about by one's own sins. Parents often teach their children to disobey the priests and nuns, and as a punishment these same children, in after years, will treat these same parents with disrespect and disobedience. Some will carry favour with the great people of the world, and will turn against the Church of God, and as a punishment these same so-called great people throw them off—they end their days in misery. Some people through meanness, will give no support to the Church, and as a punishment, God allows them to become poor, and to lose their property. Some people will enter into mixed marriages, and will even marry outside the Church, to gain a comfortable home, or for some worldly advantage. In these cases it generally happens that instead of comfort and peace, they sooner or later meet with misery and strife. Our Lord is never outdone in generosity, and any sacrifices made in His service will be rewarded in time and eternity.—Selected.

WHAT HUMANITY NEEDS

Page Benedict XV., in his encyclical on the re-establishment of Christian peace, gave us the sovereign remedy for the grievous ills of society the precept which St. John had learned on the breast of his Master—that we, like little children, should love one another.

"Never, perhaps," said the Holy Father, "as today, has humanity so needed that universal benediction which springs from the love of others and is full of blessings and zeal." More and more it is becoming apparent that only this heaven will ever lighten the whole mass. Futile regrets will accomplish nothing. What have the churches of multiple-creed Protestantism to offer, now that their pews are empty and the men and women of today will not darken the doors where their parents were taught that Protestantism is the champion in the name of liberty the godless chaos that have so inevitably produced a godless generation?

Clearly discernible is the path of duty before the Church that refused her assent to this robbery of her little ones. Inspired by the charity of her Master, she sends her sons and daughters along the highways and byways of our national life to spread the Gospel of good will and of justice followed by the laws of love. Her children, if true to her teaching, will be found, whether in the camps of labor or of capital, maintaining positions founded in the

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eternal principles of their faith and viewed in the light furnished by the application of those same saving principles. Let us hope that these Catholics, men and women will be successful in carrying the message of our Holy Father to a practical usefulness in the minds and lives of our non-Catholic fellow-citizens.

To declare that Catholics are the one hope of the nation in these grievous hours may seem a far cry to any one considering that they are but one-sixth of the nation; yet take away this defense, and where is this nation to look for a power that can soothe the hearts of men as to make possible their living as brothers in friendship and peace? The ancient Church gives another example of that unerring mission of which poets have sung and with which master minds have always been occupied. Out of her centuries of experience she offers, at the beginning of the twentieth, the same salutary advice that fell from the lips of the beloved disciple in the first century: Men and women of the world, as little children of the one Father in Heaven, love one another.—Catholic Standard and Times.

A PROTESTANT DEFENDS CATHOLIC POSITION ON MARRIAGE

Dunedin, Dec. 10.—A vigorous defence of the duty of Catholics to oppose legislative enactments which strike at essential doctrines or practices of the Church was made recently in connection with the Catholic protest against the attempt in New Zealand to interfere with the rights of the Church in the matter of marriage.

The attempt to amend the New Zealand Marriage Act, directed against the "No Temere Decree," has brought forth strong opposition, and the case has attracted wide attention.

tion, not only in New Zealand, but among Catholics elsewhere. The attempt would make it illegal for the Church to pronounce freely her teaching on marriage. The issue is a clear cut one, and the position of the Church in the matter is too definite to require explanation for those who understand the sacred character of marriage in Catholic teaching.

Sir John Findlay, who represented Catholics before the Statutes Revision Committee, made an impressive speech on the matter. The conclusion of this speech was as follows:

"With all respect to this committee, I say that, if I were a Catholic, as I am, a Protestant, I would never lay down my arms against a deliberate State attack on the cherished religious beliefs of my Church. I would seek to maintain them against a temporal power that sought to crush them to the dust, until I had reached the last ditch; and I earnestly and respectfully beseech you to conduct no more to the great social and political bitterness so rampant at the present hour by adding to those deplorable differences, the antagonism, resentment and revolt of a determined Church."

As we get deeper into the slough of life, most of us learn to be thankful that the future is hid from some of us; we recognize the wisdom and mercy which deem that even in the present his only partly revealed.—Merriman.

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"More convincing than Synge and Lady Gregory, perhaps because the poet knows better and sympathizes more deeply with the people of whom he writes," was the comment of Joyce Kilmer in "The Literary Digest."

In the pages of this book religion and art are mingled with happiest results.