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held that the *priestly benediction* was an essential of marriage, others as firmly denied its absolute necessity for the validity of marriage. Certainly after the first few generations, it was the ordinary accompaniment of marriage, but, says Watkins, in his work on Holy Matrimony, it was not for many centuries required by either the ecclesiastical or secular law, as a condition of valid marriage. This is shown by the *Constitution of Theodosius and Valentinian*, which recognized the consent of the parties as sufficient. The seventy-fourth *Novel* of Justinian A.D. 537, after laying down what is required of persons of noble and gentle standing, enacts "that the common people generally may continue to contract valid marriages without any external solemnity." The *Eclogue* of Leo, the Isaurian, enacts that the written or verbal consent of the parties and their parents is sufficient. So, that we can safely say, that prior to the Council of Trent, priestly solemnization was not required by the Canon Law as a condition of such validity, though the Christian marriages were usually solemnized in the Church, and the benediction of the priest followed, as a matter of course.

*The ministers* of the sacrament are the two persons who are being married, who minister in valid manner before proper and appointed witnesses.

The Church holds that the proper witness is the *priest* of the Church, who can give the blessing of the Church. "Yet a marriage between persons with no Canonical bar, who are duly married with in a Registry Office, or before a Magistrate is valid, and the Church must recognize the validity of such even though she deplores the omission of religious ceremony and priestly benediction," says Canon Knox-Little.

We may conclude that the essentials of Christian marriage are *first*, Baptism, without which they cannot be regarded as Christians; and *second*, Consent; and many would add a *third*, the Copula.

There are other marriages than Christian. For *non-Christian* marriages, of course, Baptism is not required. It is obvious that the Church could hardly give the blessing in the Triune Name to one who did not believe in the Trinity, nor could such persons say, "with all my worldly goods I thee endow, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Where both are not Christian we have nothing to do, as a Church, though we have as citizens.

The Church in the West has prohibited, from the days of Justinian, all marriages of Christians with non-Christians. The rigour of this system in the Roman Communion has been minimized by the system of Papal Dispensations.

In other ages, as now, the controversy has raged, as to whether the Church could recognize the marriage of non-Catholics with Here-