

THE HOME

An Oration

by
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Until a few years ago the family was a close-knit group and the home was self-contained. It was shelter, it was security, it was a kind of school where life's basic lessons were taught. It was a kind of church where God was honored. It was a place of wholesome recreation and simple pleasures. It was a factory where cloth, apparel and the basic necessities of life were made. But then came the industrial age, the building of great industrial centers, the independence of women, the new child psychology, the rise of secularism, new mediums of entertainment; and our home life as a result of all this has experienced shock and change. The modern automobile takes Junior away to college, takes Dad to distant points on business trips, and Mother rushes around madly in her convertible.

Gadgets now perform the services that people used to do. Refrigerators make cutting ice from the pond unnecessary. Modern automatic furnaces have replaced the open fire, and wood no longer has to be stored for the winter. A bakery truck delivers bread to the door, the television and movies offer cheap entertainment. Our food comes in cans or in ready-to-eat frozen form in our deep freezers. Dad shaves with an electric razor, Junior cruises in his hot-rod, and the girls spend their leisure at the teen canteen doing the "rock and roll."

We have developed modern substitutes for resourcefulness, honest labor, inner integrity and true love. Even our estimate of the home and its ideals is changing. We used to pity the bachelor; now he is considered free and fortunate. A bachelor women is no longer scorned but is called in modern society a "career women." Divorce was once frowned upon by the community and couples asked themselves, "What will the neighbors say?"--but this is no longer true. There was a time when a divorced man would have no chance in American politics, but with our shifting ideals, that seems to make little difference today. A rather well known man on the West Coast runs for public office and is elected in spite of the fact that his personal life is filled with scandal. A movie star, who had been divorced twice but is still lifted up as an idol to our young people, is written up in several magazines. No wonder Mr. J. Edgar Hoover... said: "The home is the citadel of American life. If the home is lost, all is lost." No wonder an American theologian urges the church to win the family for Christian living, and the world is won. Thoughtful spokesmen the world over agree that if society's health is to be maintained, the home must be preserved. Only the Communist Manifesto disagrees. It says: "The claptrap about the family will vanish with the vanishing of capitalism." Though none of us are in accord with his concept, we are yielding to pressures which are eroding away our home life. When will we learn that houses are not homes, money is not security, gadgets cannot bring happiness, and that there are no substitutes for faith, hope and love in our home life?...

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