THANKS, DAD

By Mrs. Paul E. King

Kenneth looked over the rows and rows of Father's Day cards, searching for just the right one. But nothing he looked at and read seemed quite what he wanted. Not that there weren't some beautiful cards there; ah no! There were. And some of them had exceptionally nice scenes and extremely sentimental and straight-from-a-son's-heart type of greeting messages too. But none of the cards seemed to say all that he felt his father
deserved. He had "earned" so much more than could possibly be expressed in one single card, no matter what its contents, the young man felt.

He walked out of the store and hurried down the street to a special greeting card shop. It wasn't a large place, but it had quite a few more cards than the store out of which he had just come.

"May I help you?" a smiling clerk asked as he entered the cleverly decorated card and gift shop.

"Father's Day cards, please," Kenneth answered.

"This side," the clerk said, leading him down a red-carpeted aisle to the vast display of Father's Day cards. "Enjoy yourself," she added, starting away.

"Thank you, Ma'am, I will."

Once again, Kenneth looked and read, read and looked. There were serious-worded cards, sentimental ones, and even those with wit and humor. Many were exactly what he wanted, to a point, but failed to say everything that he felt for and about his father. He finally picked one out, paid for it and left, deciding that it was the best he could do.

Walking home in the beautiful June sunshine, his mind still on the incomplete messages on the many cards . . . so far as his feelings were toward his wonderful father . . . Kenneth decided that the only way to get the full message across would be by way of his pen. He was not a writer, as such, he admitted with unabashed candor and frankness. But did one have to be an avowed writer-author-editor to express one's feelings? he asked himself. His thumping, excited heart gave him the answer and, with the answer, came courage.

The house was still and empty when he let himself inside. His parents had gone to make their usual Saturday calls on Sunday School absentees. Each taught a class in the church. It seemed lonesome without them, Kenneth thought. Especially since Walter had only recently married and left home and he, Kenneth, was alone; the last of six children.
He hurried into his bedroom, signed the bought greeting card then sat
down to express his own sentiments on paper.

"Dear Dad," he began.

"I have so many things I want to say to you that I'm afraid I'll forget half
of them before I can put them down on paper. But here goes:

"Thanks, Dad, for being you! That may not sound like a great deal to
you, but to me it sums up all these other things I feel and want to thank you
for.

"First and foremost, thanks for bringing me . . . along with the other five
children . . . into a home where Christ was, and is, honored, revered, loved,
obeyed, served and respected: A home where Christ is both Head and
Guest. And, too, a Constant Dweller. Because of this, I am blest indeed. For,
you see, with Christ as Head in your life, (Mom's too, only this is Father's
Day) you showed me early in my life, by example, how very blessed it is to be
dead to self and alive unto Christ. You made it easy for me to become a
Christian, Dad. Desirable, may even be a more proper adjective; for my heart
actually hungered for and desired after God: The God whom you served and
loved so devotedly and ardently all the days of my remembering life, which
has been always.

"Thanks, too, Dad, for being the head of our family. Your love and
gentle manners and your kindnesses coupled with the strength of your true
manliness and your wisdom as executed by your strong headship, without
being ruthless, dogmatic and hateful, has marked itself indelibly upon the
tables of my heart. May God help me to execute, display, and put into daily
practice the same sweetly-firm kind of headship when He sees fit to send me
a mate and we begin our home.

"You have led, always, without being harsh. You have never once had
to remind any of us that you were the head of your home. In God's beautiful
order-pattern for the family and the home, in your sweetly saved and
sanctified but effective and firm way, you executed your God-ordered office in
a priestly manner; a God-pleasing way. Because of this, I have learned
(again by example) what God requires and expects out of me, as a man.
Perhaps this in-the-future role (God willing) would frighten me, were it not for
you and the Biblical role which you have displayed and carried out to the strictest letter of the Word. Thanks, Dad, again.

"Then, too, I must say thanks, Dad, for always being here when I needed you. I guess you'll never know just how much, nor what, this means to a gangling teen. But to me it has meant, and will always mean, security. Security, and the feeling that, to you, I am extremely important and very much loved.

"I think of so many of my school friends and my heart nearly cracks open with pity and grief for them. They know none of this that I am writing to you about and thanking you for! None, Dad! They are left to make their own decisions and, believe me, some of these decisions can be pretty hard and tough on a teenager! They must wrestle through their emotional upheavals alone! I can't begin to imagine what this is like. But they're doing it all the time. Some of them never see their father. (Divorce is such a cruel thing on children, isn't it?)

"Dad, you have always been here. You have been my compass when I lost my way; my guiding star when the storms of life darkened my sky and I didn't know which way to turn nor what to do; my supporter when I felt weak and helpless and my encourager when I felt discouraged. Besides all this, you have always been, and will continue to be, my ideal. I pray that God may make me a man like you (in every way) when my time comes to assume this all-important role of husband and father.

"Thanks, Dad, for the many times you came out and played with us. I'll never forget the time when you hit that home run by sending the ball all the way over to the Heller's yard. You brought me home from second base with that great hit and scored victory for our side.

"And those wonderful evenings of skating down on the ice-locked pond at Kaffeys! Weren't they super! They will always remain memorable and cherished to me. Never before nor since, has a hot dog tasted any better than when you'd help us build that fire along the pond's rim and we'd roast hot dogs and toast marshmallows.

"Dad, you deserve a medal! You always seemed to know how to build a cherished memory in your children's mind by the exciting, family-building things you "decided" we could do. Like Mother, with her inside-the-house
pleasant surprises, you constantly made or found wonderfully exciting outside games or things for us to do, always participating in them yourself. I guess this giving of your time . . . of yourself . . . was the biggest bonus of all. I know that it made everything we did far more exciting and pleasurable. You were the head of the family who could (and did) stoop to the level of his children and have fun with them and in their activities. To me, this constitutes a truly great man, You!

"Thanks, Dad, for being such an excellent provider for your family. You have worked long, hard hours to accomplish this, but you have accomplished it. Never once can I recall having gone to bed feeling hungry. How the Lord has blest me! All of us, really.

"You have provided us well with the necessities of life, cutting out our "wants" that were to the extreme, to teach us that, like God's Word declared, all our needs would be supplied but not our wants, necessarily. You have been a wise father. Today, because of your careful training and your day by day example, I am completely satisfied with such things as you provide. Less and less do I desire a lot of needless "wants." You have taught me to be truly thankful for my daily bread and water which, God's Word tells me, will be sure. All these many extra blessings which have been sent to me I consider, and look upon, as bonuses from God's beneficent hand to an unworthy but thankful soul.

"Once more, let me say, thanks, Dad, for being you. Have a blessed Father's Day. You deserve every good thing that may come to you, and much more besides.

I love you --
Kenneth."

"There! That's how I feel," he remarked aloud as he folded the paper and slipped it into the greeting card then sealed the envelope and taped it onto the gift-wrapped package for his dad.

Mission accomplished, he went whistling outside and began mowing the lawn.