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CHAPTER IV

TEMPERANCE

INTRODUCTION

Virtue and the sensitive appetite

The purpose of all moral virtues is the perfecting of man's operative faculties in order that they may regularly and with ever increasing ease put acts that are humanly speaking or rationally or morally good. To act morally right means to do what human reason when judging correctly, deems to be right. When doing so, reason itself can at times rely on natural insight, it may however also be enlightened by faith. In the latter case reason will move along a more simple and a safer road even regarding knowledge of natural ethics.

The virtue of prudence is the perfective of reason itself. The will, as the rational appetite of this individual man, strives of itself after what reason, through prudence, indicates as good for this man personally. Of itself however it does not strive after what is good for others. It needs therefore a special virtue (viz. justice and its dependents) to perfect it regarding what is reasonable and good because it is 'giving to others what is their due'. There are however, as we have seen, two more appetites in man, the two sense appetites, which do not play a leading rôle in human activity. They are subject to the will which predominates and which normally always has it within its power to dominate. If man does not will, the sense appetites cannot bring him to do anything. They

are however in their own peculiar way subject to the will, differently e.g. from the members of the body, which of themselves have no striving, no motive power. My hand only moves if and in the way my will moves it. The hand will therefore of itself never do wrong things. The members are therefore perfectly subject to the will. The sensitive appetites however have motive power of their own and also their own good viz. sensible good, after which they of themselves and in accordance with their nature strive. Both in animal and in man these sense faculties strive of themselves and unrestrictedly after what pleases the senses. For this reason again they are differently subject to the will from the members of the body. Not only do they strive and move when moved by the will but also when the will permits them to go their way. We all know this. We know we need not rule our hand but we must rule our passions.*

Whilst the will therefore of itself spontaneously strives after what is rationally, personally good, of themselves the sense appetites often strive after something totally different viz. unrestricted sensible good, beyond the limits therefore of what is rationally and morally good. The vehemence of these passions (strivings) makes it difficult for man to strive exclusively after what is morally good and to realise this good in his actions i.e. so to keep the sense appetites in check by his will that they do not strive after their own object beyond the limits of what is rationally and morally good, e.g. that they do not seek the sensible good (pleasure) of sexual intercourse outside legitimate

* Because the fall the sense appetites in Adam were by the perfect natural gift of integrity perfectly subject to his will as our bodily members are.

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wedlock; that they do not indulge in the sensible pleasure of eating and drinking in a measure which is detrimental to health or which disturbs the use of reason.

The cause, which drives man to ignore the exact norms in such actions and which makes him therefore act wrongly, is as a rule the urge (passion) of the sense appetite to strive after its own good unrestrictedly and to escape unrestrictedly any harm that may come to it. The means therefore necessary to overcome these human imperfections must be a perfective property inherent in these potencies viz. a disposition in each of these two sense appetitive faculties whereby they regularly and spontaneously strive after their own good in a better and in a different way than without this disposition. Better and differently i.e. no longer unchecked but in harmony with what man recognises to be rationally and morally good in that sphere. To foster virtue therefore does not mean suppressing or wholesale weakening of the sense appetites but a regulating of their activity. Under the influence of grace and through practice under the guidance of reason and will they must become accustomed not to strive of themselves after things which reason either by natural insight or as enlightened by faith or in other ways acknowledges to be contrary to man's good. The more one succeeds in perfecting these sense appetites, the more virtuous one is in this sphere. In this connection we must remember two things: first that one person may through natural, bodily disposition find things much easier than another; secondly, that there are other, more important, fields for virtuous activity, especially that of justice and of the supernatural virtues among which charity ranks first.

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However every part has its value and virtue remains virtue even though it may have been easily attained. The person who possesses a good property only in small measure because it is, beyond his fault, difficult for him, should not for that reason despise himself, neither should he minimise the good he sees in others just because they find it easy. On this point man is at times very narrow-minded, causing thereby much harm, especially to himself, in all sorts of ways.

By saying that the virtues of temperance and fortitude are perfectives of the sense appetites and that therefore their proper field of activity is made up of the urge (passion) for sensible pleasure and the aversion to the sensible unpalatable, we do not in any way imply that there are no cases when other factors (a mistaken intellectual notion, apart from all sensuality) can be the cause of sinning against these virtues. One example would be that of the unmarried woman who seeks after motherhood by one act of carnal intercourse not because she is after sensual pleasure but exclusively in order to give one healthy child to the Fatherland. Such cases are, no doubt, exceptions. The virtues of temperance and fortitude are perfectives of what is **by nature** imperfect and therefore as a rule the cause of evil doing. It is precisely as human potencies that the sense appetites are of their nature imperfect i.e. of themselves they do not strive sufficiently after what they as human potencies ought to strive viz. after reasonable, moral, human good.

CHAPTER V

Temperance in general

Temperance is the virtue that perfects the simple conative faculty (see supra). This perfecting does not consist in atrophying this appetite, which would be a defect, the other extreme. The virtue of temperance sees to it that the simple conative appetite in its striving after sensible good does so within limits i.e. in accordance with a certain norm or measure, **temperately**. It is worth nothing that also this virtue holds the balance between two extremes as one can have too much or too little inclination to sensual pleasure. The person therefore who either feels no urge at all or very little for sexual pleasure and, who, for that reason, does not marry or does not make use of his marital rights lacks the virtue of temperance as regards this kind of pleasure. This negative extreme, however, occurs but seldom. Consequently the virtue chiefly tempers and corrects the passion for an overdose of sense pleasure. In common parlance therefore 'to temper' and 'temperance' have acquired the exclusive meaning of 'restricting the too much'. Temperance as virtue has two meanings, one general, one special. As general virtue it comprises all the virtues that are operative in the sphere proper to the simple conative faculty, i.e. temperance proper (i.e. temperance to be practised in eating and drinking); chastity; meekness; discretion; humility; true desire of knowledge; modesty. There are two among these various, special virtues, which cover an aspect of human activity, where temperance is most needed and where it takes on special meaning viz. the passion for sensual pleasure experienced in the sense organ of feeling (touch). This

urge after pleasure is very strong. The Creator has ordained it so because the acts that are the source of this pleasure, the desire for which brings man to put them, are of the greatest importance for man.

There is question here of the preservation of the primary and most important goods belonging to the natural order viz. of the life of the individual and of the maintenance of human kind, the human race. Independent of any reasoning man experiences through his natural appetites a very potent urge for food and drink and for the reproductive act, a passion therefore to feed and propagate himself. It is in these matters therefore that man finds it particularly difficult to keep within bounds and not to seek after pleasure in a way that is contrary to reason and the moral law. It is also in these matters therefore that temperance finds its special sphere of activity. In accordance with the two clearly distinct zones of this sphere, we distinguish between two separate virtues, one of which we just call **temperance**, the other one **chastity**.

CHAPTER VI

I. Temperance in eating and drinking

We eat and drink, as we all know, for the purpose of maintaining and promoting bodily health. It is man's duty. In accordance with the general rules of morality man is absolutely speaking bound to strive after this good provided no other more important factors intervene. Should this latter be the case, man is bound to strive after the lesser good whilst taking into account other, perhaps more important goods.

After all, bodily life and health are not the **only** good, especially to man who is called to a higher, a supernatural life. The pleasure of feeling (of well-being) and of taste is by nature attached to the act of taking food for the purpose of inducing man to eat and drink willingly, which is important for his health.

Consequently of itself it is not wrong to strive after this pleasure. It is wrong only, if sought after in a measure and in a manner that conflicts with the purpose of it. This happens, when, for the sake of the pleasure he derives from feeding, a person puts actions that are either harmful or useless to his health a.v. that are not conducive to good health. It is necessary however to apply this norm correctly; certainly, no undue restriction must be put on it.

More in particular the concept 'health' should be generously interpreted e.g. what a person does to remain fit here and now, to relieve tiredness, loss of energy or pain is promoting health in the wider sense of the word. To eat or drink something for good cheer as all good people often do is not the same as eating and drinking exclusively for pleasure's sake, because to do something now and again for good cheer (also therefore eating or drinking) is good for man; it makes him fit to do his work well, which is the very purpose of eating and drinking.

In general therefore we must take as the norm of temperance: so to eat and drink that the body is a serviceable instrument to the soul exercising its vital activities. It is impossible to determine down to the ounce what this precisely entails. To be virtuous does not mean that for every trivial act we must pause and weigh up the pros and cons. As a matter of fact the

virtue itself makes this unnecessary since it is an abiding disposition which inclines the appetite to a fixed and customary way of acting. A virtuous person will also in this matter normally do what is right and go even beyond what is strictly speaking demanded of him. Whosoever adopts a robust and healthy Christian attitude in this matter and is temperate, need not at every turn ask himself whether to eat or drink here and now or eat or drink this or that agrees with the virtue of temperance.

A lot is required before such a person can be said to have gone beyond what he is allowed to do. A temperate person, who does not grab at everything that can give him pleasure may rest assured to act aright when on special occasions he eats and drinks because it does him good on account of conviviality or festivity, etc.

It remains possible however to give some particular rules. Obviously the first is that it is contrary to temperance so to eat that it impairs one's health. The gravity of the sin depends on the harm done. This will be serious when it causes a disease or aggravates an existing disease. Also the eating or drinking of particular things like intoxicating beverages or narcotics can seriously impair a person's health since their effect on some of the bodily organs is such that the body remains no longer a serviceable instrument to the soul in the exercise of its highest, vital activity viz. that of the mind. Drunkenness would be an example of this.

We distinguish in fact between the common sin of intemperance (gluttony) and that of drunkenness, caused by excessive drinking of intoxicating beverages. The part of temperance as a virtue bearing on the use of

such drinks is called 'sobrietas' in Latin. One can practise this virtue even when making moderate use of liquor. The teetotaler practises the virtue in one particular way. A man is "sober" (in the English usage of the world) when for the moment at least he is free from the influence of intoxicating liquor but he may not be temperate.

2. Fasting and mortification

The scope of this booklet being rather to explain virtue than sins against it, we must say something about another important point viz. the relation between the supernatural or Christian virtue of temperance and mortification, fasting and abstinence.

When we say that the object of the virtue of temperance is 'to make us so eat and drink as is necessary and useful for the body to be a good instrument to the soul,' it is not the same as saying 'to be as healthy and as robust as possible.' Man's purpose in life is not to be as healthy as possible but to lead a well-spent life and thus reach his final destiny. When determining what this entails the supernatural goods also count and they do so with that degree of importance they have as interests of the highest order, by far superior to the natural good. A person is therefore temperate if he so eats and drinks as to be able to live a good Christian life. He will be the more advanced in this virtue the more he strives by regulating his eating and drinking to lead a more perfect Christian life, which latter includes also natural goods as e.g. bodily health. Christian morality does not permit a person to neglect his bodily health without sufficient reason. A comparison with what people do to attain a natural good will clarify this doctrine. Drivers of

the Swiss postal service abstain from all alcoholic drinks, although in general the consumption of a little wine far from being against the virtue of temperance may indeed be very conducive to health. These drivers act correctly when taking special precautions to avoid even the slightest chance of not being 100% fit for the profession they have chosen. Correctly seen this is for them practising temperance.

In this case the norm is not directly health as such but the exercise of a profession, an interest therefore for which health is necessary. Athletes do likewise. They live at times much more soberly than other, virtuous people. They deny themselves a lot of things, which other people can make use of without causing any harm to their health. They may be even good for them. This generally accepted doctrine is also applied in Christian life. Comparatively speaking what the athlete does, the Christian also does, each in his own sphere. Just as life devoted to sport demands particular inhibitions, a special practice of temperance, or makes it at least desirable, so does the Christian life. And so we see Christians in various ways practise temperance in eating and drinking, the basic norm always being that food serves to maintain and promote good health; maintain it however in a way which at the same time sufficiently, and at times much more so safeguards and promotes the higher good. No one can deny that even for the minimum of Christian life a certain amount of mortification is necessary, e.g. to eat and drink a little less than what is good for one's health. The ecclesiastical authority, appointed by God to guide us in our Christian life, has for this reason enacted laws of fasting and abstinence. These laws are at least some certain

direction, from which we may not exempt ourselves without special reasons. These laws indicate what the minimum is we must do to be temperate. In the end these laws are only a means to give us guidance in the practice of temperance. Since, as Christians, we are bound to strive after special (higher) goods, we are, independent of Church laws bound to practise temperance in a special way. It is therefore wrong to think that one has done enough as regards temperance by obeying to the letter the positive law whilst at the same time doing one's level best to escape every possible inconvenience i.e. real mortification. A meatless dinner on Friday can be such that the absence of meat means nothing at all as far as mortification is concerned. It is for the same reason wrong to say that since because of ill-health I cannot fast, I have no further obligation. On the other hand it is a very laudable custom, if one cannot fast or is not bound by the law, to practise some form of mortification as regards eating and drinking on fast days. Also children could be taught not to eat sweetmeats on fast days. It is equally wrong to interpret the general laws, equally applicable to all therefore, as a pronouncement by the Church that anybody doing this is sufficiently temperate and practises sufficient mortification as regards eating and drinking. Obviously in her general laws the Church can only impose relatively light burdens that are within everyone's power. She must leave it to the conscience and the prudence of the individual faithful to decide whether a little more mortification might not be desirable or perhaps even essential, whether he is therefore not bound to do more. Also in the matter of eating and drinking every Christian ought so to mortify himself that he acquires and maintains the virtue of temperance to a degree whereby he not only acts rightly in his

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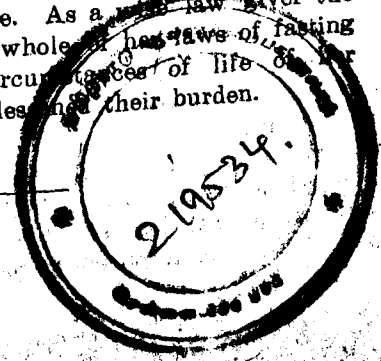
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present circumstances but is normally also protected for the future against the dangers that are inherent in an appetite not perfected by virtue. The life of grace is the Christian's supreme good, which he must guard as a treasure. This is not an imposed obligation, it is one that arises from the very nature of things, because the loss of grace entails the loss of man's most complete happiness. All are therefore obliged to take measures not to make the preservation of it so difficult that a momentary and unforeseen danger (dangerous occasion) becomes too much for us and makes us forfeit grace through sin. In no field of human activity can all possible, contrary factors ordinarily be known beforehand. It is for this reason that one must be strong. As we all know, through mortification in general and therefore also through that regarding eating and drinking, man fortifies himself against a lot of evil, not only against the sin of gluttony but also against other types of evil, especially against the sin of impurity. Virtues and sins are indeed distinct one from the other but man being a unit all powers within him interact and influence one another for good or for evil.

Besides this necessary practice, necessary to avoid sin, there exists a more generous practice of mortification which serves to make more virile progress in the spiritual life, to liberate the spirit ever more fully from the inhibitions of the flesh, to make it more completely the ruler of the flesh. There is relation between the degree of mortification practised, also as regards eating and drinking, and the intensity of one's spiritual life. Most of the Saints have therefore practised mortification to a high degree, at times even to an exceptional degree. It was not sought after as an end but as a means to perfection. For the same

reason religious always have definite rules obliging them to practise special mortifications as regards eating and drinking. However, just because mortification is a means and not an end, a means employed by all sorts of men differing much both as regards personal disposition and as regards manner of living, identity in the way of mortifying themselves and in the measure of it cannot be correct. Even with great difference existing as regards the measure in which people may mortify themselves, they may all act rightly. When we look exclusively at the Saints we already observe a great difference: one went much farther in mortifying himself than another. Religious who lead a purely contemplative life can practise much greater mortification as regards eating and drinking than those who are fully occupied with apostolic labour, which demands more of their physical powers.

The same holds good for all Christians: one is physically more robust than the other; one may have to practise much more mortification in his work, through cares and poverty than another. Even as regards the whole of the Church circumstances have changed. That is why formerly, when people lived much more quietly and were in better health, the general laws of fasting were considerably stricter than they are in these days of nerve-racking haste. As a result the Church has adapted the whole of her laws of fasting to the much changed circumstances of life of her children and considerably lessened their burden.



CHAPTER VII

CHASTITY

1. Man's reproductive life

The created world has been so ordered by God that the individual, living beings and among them, individual human beings, are not permanent. Their period of existence may be short or long; after it they die. Yet these living beings occupy a place of their own in the order of creation, a place they must continue to occupy in virtue of the Creator's intention as long as the Universe lasts.

They must therefore continue to exist **in the manner peculiar to them** i.e. according to their kind. This is guaranteed by the process of propagation, for which the Creator endowed these living beings, and man among them, with reproductive organs.

Among the higher types of living beings, and man among them, propagation is brought about by the collaboration of two individuals, which for the sake of the reproductive action differ considerably from each other viz. one being a male, the other being a female. Both man and wife possess the faculty to propagate, each however in his own peculiar way, the difference between them being such that they fit together and are meant to **collaborate** in the use they make of the faculty.

The faculty of reproduction is an operative potency which has a very valuable object viz. the reproduction and therefore the preservation of the human species, which is a very important factor in God's creation. Both the possession therefore of this faculty by man and

his making use of it are of great importance. In order to induce man, without coercion from without, to make actual use of it God has attached a certain natural satisfaction (pleasure) to the working of the propagative potency so that man should feel a spontaneous natural urge from within as regards this vital operation. The use of it is now for man a thing he naturally does with pleasure. With normal people the passion for this pleasure is even very strong, the reason being that there is question here of an important good, to the realization of which also burdens are attached which might keep people back from striving after it.

2. Subject to laws

Consequently the making use of the propagative faculty, as also the striving after and the experiencing of the bodily pleasure attached to it are in no way something evil or low. On the contrary it is something good. However just as feeding is good, but not **every way** it is done, so also making use of the propagative faculty is good, but not necessarily **every way** it is used.

The use made of these reproductive powers must be done within the framework of the laws, which too are not imposed from without but derived from the very nature and the purpose of the actions they are supposed to rule. Good use must be made of these powers i.e. the human action must be so put that it can attain its purpose viz. impregnation, which is the beginning of the new human being to be brought forth. The person who puts these reproductive acts and seeks after and enjoys the sensual enjoyment that is part of it, does what is in itself something good, something of high moral value. When there are at the same time

no accidental circumstances, which are able to vitiate any act, also this one therefore, the act is a perfectly good deed.*

Non-Catholics often think that the Catholic Church looks upon sexual life as something sinful and inferior. This misunderstanding is mainly due to wrong ideas they have of the Catholic doctrine on the superior value of the state of virginity.

However, sex life is something that essentially belongs to man's sensual life. Hence the pleasure that goes with it is of a sensual nature, something of itself worth striving after by the sense, here the simple concupiscent appetite (concupiscible) of which it is one of the objects. This strives after this pleasure with great vigour without however observing the limits set to this activity by the purpose of human reproductive life *a.v.* without observing the norms of a good sex life worthy of a human being, which in addition to the production of a child comprise also his upbringing and education in family surroundings by parents.** The moral human being, bound therefore by the moral law, may strive after and perform the enjoyable reproductive act only within these limits. The will must therefore see to it that it happens thus and in no other way.

* Prayer is good but it ceases to be so when we spend so much time on it that we cannot attend to other duties. And so it is with sexual intercourse. It may be all right from the point of view of propagation considered by itself therefore, but owing to circumstances it may be wrong. It may e.g. give scandal to others or do harm to the bodily health of the other party.

** These laws are well-known. The one comprehensive, principal rule could be worded thus: the reproductive act is only permissible as sexual intercourse between two humans of different sex, tied together by marital bonds, when it is so put that the male sperms can reach the place where they can naturally meet the female ovum.

The virtue of chastity serves to perfect the sense-appetite in order that under the guidance of the will it may strive after the pleasurable reproductive act in the right way, i.e. not any way, but whilst observing the moral laws. The virtue of chastity is a selective disposition inherent in the sense appetite whereby this potency under the guidance of the will strives after the good acts of propagation with greater ease, with greater submissiveness, less haphazardly and without causing trouble by its vehement passion and urge after all sexual pleasure.

3. Value of chastity

From what has just been said it will be evident how great the value of the virtue of chastity is, more so when we bear in mind that whilst on the one hand propagation is such a capital good, on the other no single passion and urge is so strong and therefore so difficult to control by the will than precisely the passion and urge for sexual enjoyment.

There is no need to prove this as everyone knows. It both with regard to himself through experience and with regard to the world at large. Contrary to reason and morals no other passion is allowed, in such measure and so generally, to run riot in the world as sexual pleasure. Even willing souls, who wish to respect God's law and those of nature, do not feel the power and the rebelliousness of any single passion as strongly as those of the sexual one. It is a formidable power in man and in no other sphere did the breaking away of the sensual from the absolute subjection to reason and will (owing to original sin) cause such a fatal disturbance of the harmony among human tendencies.

The virtue of chastity is terribly necessary even in the man who lives on a purely natural plane if the natural good of propagation is not to suffer great harm. The virtue is much more indispensable for the man who, through grace having been raised up to a supernatural mode of living, strives therefore after the supernatural and the spiritual as his highest and ultimate good. The Christian indeed leads a life, in which, together with and over and above the natural good, an all-important supernatural, spiritual good is being pursued. This requires much attention and application and therefore much effort on the part of mind and will. It stands to reason that considering to what great extent these rational faculties have to worry themselves about necessary natural things, there will be but little or none of their energy left to be spent on the supernatural if they have also continually to fight against and are being harassed by the vehemently rebellious and the illegitimately striving and urging passions of the flesh. The more however sensual desires and particularly the exceptionally strong desire for sexual pleasure are perfected by the virtue in order to strive with greater ease and spontaneity after their object within the limits set by reason, the less will reason and will have to bother about them and more energy will be available to strive after other goods and particularly the supernatural ones.

The virtue of chastity is therefore not bent upon killing or suppressing the sexual in man; its object is rather to rule and to perfect the same so as to make it accord with the dignity of a human being and the Christian. Anything which of itself is not subject to a higher norm needs to be perfected by something else precisely in relation to the desired subjection. By

nature a horse is not amenable and willing to serve man, though it ought to be because it was created to be useful and serviceable to man. We therefore perfect the horse by fostering a disposition in it, whereby it now willingly and without great difficulty allows itself to be led by man: we train it in other words. The horse becomes better over it in as much as it becomes a thing useful to man. So also is the sense appetite precisely as man's sense appetite a better thing after a perfection viz. virtue has been fostered in it. A person who has to deal and work with an untrained horse will either continually see things happen that are not what he wants or, if it does not get so far, will be able to prevent them only by unremitted exertion. So it is with the man who does not possess a due measure of the virtue of chastity. He will continually be brought to actions which he really does not want, because he knows them to be contrary to God's law, not in keeping with his conscience and not furthering his true happiness. Even if matters do not get so far, he will be able to check himself only at the cost of great difficulty and exertion.

The chaste man is therefore a person who has perfected himself with regard to the most vehement of all his passions, owing to which his attitude to the lofty ideal of reproductive life is one of calm, of strength and of balance. Chastity creates a man who is noble and perfect as man i.e. as a superior and rational being, who uses his reproductive faculty not like the animal but as a rational creature, in accordance with the high purpose for which this power has been given to him by the Creator. By grace this is all lifted on to a higher plane without however upsetting anything.

It is therefore wrong to think that chastity means to be insensitive or indifferent to sex life and sexual pleasure. On the contrary Catholic moral doctrine teaches with St. Thomas that this sort of coldness is a defect and a deviation from chastity. The person who would show either no inclination or abnormally little towards the use of the reproductive potency and the accompanying delight does not possess a high degree of virtue but suffers from a defect which, like the other extreme, might lead to sinful acts. However, since this extreme condition is both relatively rare and does not often lead to actions that are gravely contrary to the virtue, but little is said of it. It is only mentioned here as proof that the virtue of chastity is not something negative i.e. a virtue that opposes and disadvises as much as possible the use of the reproductive faculty and at the outside only permits marital life as something unavoidable.

4. Degrees of chastity

The virtue of chastity is therefore a disposition perfective of the appetite whereby the latter, under the guidance of the will, with ease and calm and without opposing or making it difficult for the will, remains as regards the desiring for and striving after sexual pleasure within the limits of what is morally allowed. It is evident from this description that there are degrees of this virtue. Not everyone, who possesses the virtue of chastity, has it in equal measure. Everyone must have at least a minimum of it. Without it, a person would continually commit sins of impurity; he would be like a ship without rudder, a low sort of individual. Although of itself the lower in man, the sensual is not bad or degrading, it is both these things if it domineers the higher, man's morality, whatever there is of him.

Everybody realises this. Such a person does great harm to himself as regards his highest interests both spiritual and temporal. He is often insensitive to the noble values of life. He is moreover a continuous danger to others.

However, the person who possesses the virtue of chastity, may possess it to a greater or lesser degree. It may be that a person has at least that much of the virtue that whilst the passion does not domineer him and his will avoids everything on this point that is deliberately sinful, the passion is as yet rebellious and is only with difficulty kept on the right track. Such a person lives chastely, but at the cost of continuous, great difficulty, whilst every occasion means struggle and danger. It will but rarely or never happen that a person possesses the virtue in such a way that all struggle has ceased and that even in difficult circumstances the passion is not roused and calls for no special effort. In between these two extremes, however, there are degrees. The person therefore, who possesses this virtue can always fortify it i.e. grow in this virtue.

This holds good for everybody, for the unmarried to whom every use of the reproductive organs is forbidden and who may not therefore in any way seek or consent to sexual pleasure; for married persons, who are allowed to do all this, but within the limits of the morally good, marital life.

5. Chastity of married people

The willing, the seeking after and the enjoying of sexual pleasure being good and permitted to people in legitimate wedlock, marital life facilitates in a certain sense the avoidance of sins against the virtue of chastity. Of old the Fathers of the Church, as the moralists, called marriage a remedy against the unruly passion. It would however be a great mistake to think that a person has become virtuous or more virtuous as sole reason that, being now married, he no longer falls into sin as he used to or he more easily

avoids sins and fights temptations. Virtue is an interior disposition and growth in it entails therefore an interior change, whereas the change, from the unmarried to the married state is but an external one. True, the Sacrament gives both sanctifying and actual grace i.e. an internal enhancement of the soul's condition, inclusive of the virtues also that of chastity, but as a rule this is not such as to cause a sudden and considerable change in man. When therefore a married person suddenly leaves off sinning against purity or finds things have become much easier for him, there are other reasons to account for this. The passion is as strong and as little subject to the will as before but an opportunity now exists to satisfy it in a legitimate manner, which obviously lessens the struggle and the most serious occasion to sin. However, a person has not thereby become more virtuous, more chaste.

Married people therefore cannot conclude from the fact that they no longer sin or that they avoid sin with greater ease that they now possess the virtue of chastity in sufficient measure. Nor should people, who before their marriage did not find it very difficult to be chaste and who therefore possessed the virtue to an adequate degree, forget that by satisfying the sexual passion in actions permitted to them the virtue of chastity will be seriously weakened unless moderation and self-control is sufficiently practised. It stands to reason that it cannot be stated with mathematical precision how far a person can go. There is however one rule as regards this virtue which newly-wed people particularly should heed viz. not everything is permitted to married people and to do everything unrestrictedly what is of itself permitted is not the right way to be and to remain good and virtuous. In no other sphere is this rule as true as it is in the matter of sexual life, and this for two reasons: (1) because of their nature this passion and this desire are exceptionally strong and a regular, though legitimate, giving in to the desire only makes the need for satisfaction greater and thereby increases the desire for it; (2) because circumstances may easily arise, when the permission

action of this desire becomes, for a shorter or longer period, impossible. There is no need to think of exceptional circumstances as e.g. the premature death of one of the parties. In the course of every marriage it normally happens that intimacy between the parties must for some time be interrupted. A person is then truly virtuous when he is capable of doing without at once being exposed to danger, without encountering great difficulty and also without at once being affected by it as regards health, nerves, humour

It is also virtue when the parties know how to get on with each other, to be considerate and accommodating even if this demands a bridling of their sexual passion, continence therefore. Ultimately this is only the application of a rule that applies to all virtue viz. whoever wishes to possess the virtue of chastity (to acquire, preserve or perfect it) must not permit himself everything that is allowed a. v. which is not so in the present and now, wrong. He has regularly to deny himself also in matters that are permitted. The person who thus exercises himself in the virtue and keeps his strength so that in the matter of sexual passion he is capable of doing what rises above the ordinary when on account of circumstances it is demanded of him.

It is only in the context of what has been said that we will understand why moral doctrine acknowledges the married state to be a remedy against concupiscence. Marriage is not a remedy for the person who looks upon it exclusively as a means to give legitimate satisfaction to his passion. To give in to the sensual desire cannot be a means of curing it of its unruliness. The grace, the Sacrament of matrimony gives, is no doubt also medicinal and acts as such on the passion. This grace indeed strengthens the virtue of chastity as a supernatural virtue. However, provided a man does so order his married life that it has of itself a medicinal efficiency, viz. by imposing upon himself the above-mentioned moderation whilst seeking

after a certain measure of satisfaction, grace a not going to effect much. The norms ruling moderation and even the motives for practising not all derive from factors extraneous to the state. The very marital laws of conjugal fidelity, mutual love and solicitude; the chief and noble of marriage viz. the child, also impose a check on the parties if they are sensitive to lofty and noble motives and allow themselves influenced by them. Married life will only the remedy against concupiscence, a training school, virtue, including chastity, *if* genuine, lofty and interested love for each other, *if* also reverence, tender solicitude for (the born or yet unborn) *if* this mutual love dominate the life of the parties, as ought to; *if* this love, whilst not excluding the sensual, assigns, to it its proper subordinate place and does not allow it to dominate, *if* this is primarily bent on making the other party and seeks its own happiness only along this very and sure way; *if* finally this love, which is the true and genuine love, and not disguised sensual hard selfishness therefore, exercises its tender sway is the ruling norm of married life. It stands to reason that the parties cannot manage to do all this without supernatural help, which God gives us for the reason that we are naturally so weak.

Since in the Christian life natural and supernatural virtues mingle and form one total, we must employ both natural and supernatural means to make virtues grow in us.

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