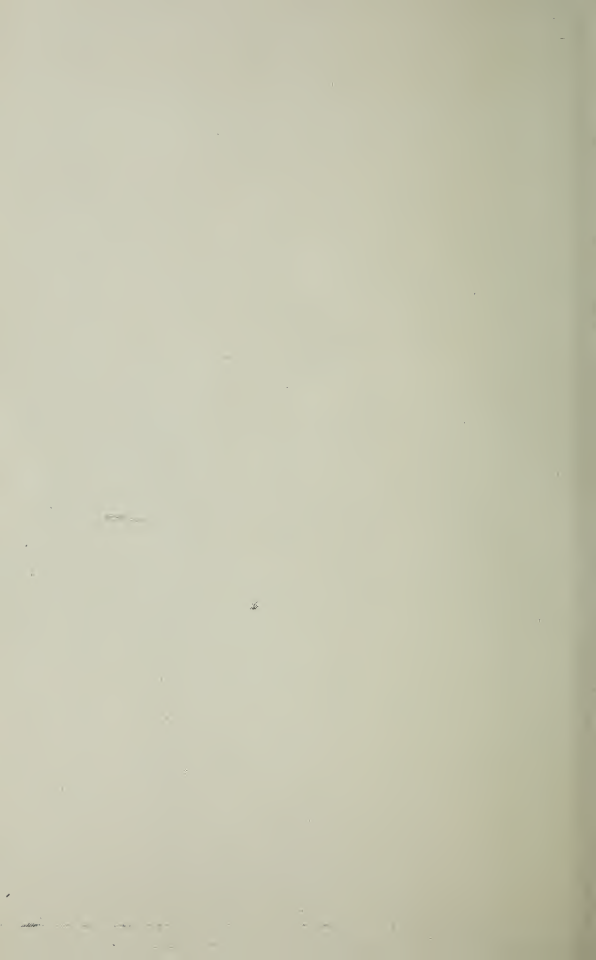


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Sex and Marriage

Ginder, Richard
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SEX AND MARRIAGE



by

RICHARD GINDER



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WOULDN'T this world be a strange place if we did away with all restrictions on the use of sex? Things seem to be drifting in that direction already—so much so that, at the rate we're going our ideas on the problem will soon be completely upside down. But just imagine what sort of world that will be! Would you want to live in it, or your children?

In our renovated society there will be no such thing as a sex-crime. Degenerates, perverts, exhibitionists, masochists, sadists, all the "queers", will be allowed to glut their instincts unchecked, as long as the partners to their actions give their free consent. Old psychotics will no longer be arrested for tampering with children, as long as the children themselves make no complaint. (What is sauce for the goose

is sauce for the gander, and if it is good for the grownups, it must be good for the kiddies.)

We shall have polygamy. A man will be allowed to keep as many women ("wives" will be old-fashioned) as he can support; or a woman will be permitted to keep as many men as she can feed and clothe.

Lewd post-cards will be moved from under the counter to open display. Aphrodisiacs will be advertised in the national weeklies, together with contraceptives, and every kind of erotic stimulant. Abortifacients will be in drug store windows. No longer will manufacturers have to hide behind the coy requirements of "feminine hygiene."

There will be no modesty. People will discuss their reproductive and digestive goings on over the radio; high-school students will prepare their term papers on "My Mother's Sex-Life," or kindred subjects. There will be no need of segregating the boys and girls into separate showers, locker-rooms, and lavatories.

No babies, of course!—except for the

few who will gratify some strange curiosity to see what their children might look like. But even then, they will have only one child, or at most, two, a boy and a girl.

Won't it be wonderful! We shall have sex morning, noon, and night; for breakfast, dinner, and supper. We shall start young and keep at it until we have burned ourselves out.

Bars Being Let Down

I have reduced it to the absurd. But there is no logical reason why such a reduction should not be practiced once it is granted that the sex-urge may be satisfied at any time, anywhere, and with anyone.

My picture, sickening as it is, was a little hard to sketch. So much of what I meant to say by over-statement is already in effect, covertly of course, but then not so covertly at that. We have polygamy when a woman allows herself to be handed from one bed to another: marriage, divorce, remarriage, divorce, remar-

riage, divorce, and so on. Magazines and movies are not doing all badly as vehicles of filth. Contraceptives may be had anywhere. Our government has become practically the greatest distributor in the world of these filthy items. Abortion is booming. Modesty was abandoned years ago and people stopped having babies after the last war—to start again just before the present one in order to avoid the draft.

All this has been accompanied by very necessary adjustments in the social attitude. The community is still its own policeman and public opinion is an agency mightily to be feared. Hence if one would do wrong one must justify oneself before the community. Therefore one does not admit wrong in oneself; one simply puts the Ten Commandments at fault. The technique is simple. A few test cases cause scandal and excite wide comment in the newspapers. Occasion is offered for a strong sales-talk by the defenders of the innovation. The public is slowly made used to it, interest subsides, and the matter is taken for granted. It was so, to name

a minor instance, in the case of topless bathing suits for men. We can imagine similar suits for women being introduced in the same way.

Purity: Desirable and Necessary

This battle of ideas goes on under two assumptions: it is impossible to keep chaste; or it may be possible, but it is physically and mentally dangerous.

Both notions are taken shamelessly for granted, and the Catholic Church makes a flat denial of each. Men can keep themselves splendidly chaste. She has seen them do it in millions, especially those to whom she gives a normal education and whom she keeps apart from the defeatist prattle of curbstone culture, until a vigorous self-control has been established.

Keep telling a boy he can't do a thing, and he'll come to believe it. He won't even put up a fight. In another matter let some shallow physician tell a woman her next baby will be troublesome and the chances are that she won't even have another baby.

This self-control is useful even in mar-

riage. One can tell almost by instinct the persons who are making an intelligent use of their union. The others are so gross, selfish, sharp, and taken up with themselves. They know of nothing that goes on outside their bedroom. They live for food and lust. Nothing else occurs to them.

Chastity is strength and all the world admires it. The crowd may scoff outwardly but inwardly they applaud; they see it as an ideal which can't be reached by their own standards. And being itself unable to keep chaste, paganism accuses Christian chastity of hypocrisy, as though nuns had lovers and priests keep women behind their parlor doors. Paganism does not know the strength given by Holy Communion and the counsel of the confessional. It has never met the Blessed Mother. It does not know how to draw a rosary between lust-fevered fingers.

But isn't it worth it? And who is there, in whom young people confide, who does not feel that something irretrievable has vanished when an adolescent comes and confesses his first big lapse in the matter

of purity? The youngster has lost the simplicity of Nathanael and the charm of John. Now he is wise. He has tasted of the forbidden fruit. Boyish curiosity has given place to mature lust.

“Keep Chaste or Go to Hell”

The Catholic Church, in praising chastity, does not just recommend it as a fine thing whose practice is optional. “Keep chaste or go to hell.” It is the word of Christ. We have no other choice. Marriage provides for the legitimate satisfaction of the sex urge. There is no other outlet.

“Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? By no means! Or do you not know that he who cleaves to a harlot, becomes one body with her? . . . Flee immorality. Every sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your members are the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you

have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought at a great price. Glorify God and have Him in your body.”¹

“But immorality and every uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becomes saints; or obscenity or foolish talk or scurrility, which are out of place; but rather thanksgiving. For know this and understand, that no fornicator, or unclean person, or covetous one (for that is idolatry) has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God.”²

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that you abstain from immorality; that everyone of you learn how to possess his vessel in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God.”³

“Let marriage be held in honor with all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled. For God will judge the immoral and adulterers.”⁴

1. I Cor. VI, 15-20.

2. Eph. V, 3-6.

3. I Thess. IV, 4-5.

4. Heb. XIII, 4.

One Husband to One Wife

Everyone knows the lofty dignity of Catholic-Christian marriage. It is a contract, binding until the death of either party, by which each gives to the other and pledges lifelong love and fidelity. It is the normal state of persons in this world. No one has ever thought more of the contract and of the resultant family than the Catholic Church. Unfortunately, she has in these latter decades been deserted by the heretical Christian bodies who once fought with her for the permanence of the marriage bond; still more recently have they abandoned their defenses against "mutual masturbation," as G. B. Shaw, himself a pagan, terms artificial birth prevention: witness the decision of the Anglican bishops at the Lambeth Conference in 1930, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America in 1931, the United Church of Canada in 1932.

And yet the Christian-Catholic idea of marriage goes all the way back to the days of Adam and Eve and rests on God's words to that first couple:

"Male and female He created them. And God blessed them, saying: 'Increase and multiply; and fill the earth . . .

"Wherefore, a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be two in one flesh."⁵

Our Lord quoted that at the Pharisees, and concluded: "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."⁶

We Catholics stand pat on those words, as we have from the beginning. We lost England to the faith rather than yield on the principle.

Marriage is a perpetual and exclusive contract by which a man and woman bind themselves together for the begetting and educating of children. For Christians, our Lord made the contract a sacrament so that they might have a special claim on His help during their common life.

The Right Use of Sex

And our teaching on sex is simply that the act of generation and the related sen-

5. Gen. I, 27-28; II, 24.

6. Matt. XIX, 3-6.

sations are to be confined to the marriage state. Every use of sex outside the relationship of husband and wife is impure with a peculiarly foul kind of guilt. One can lie, or steal, or get drunk, and still not stir up the aversion, the loathing contempt incurred by the "dirty" fellow, the one who has been picked up in the park on some morality charge.

And yet, despite this crystal-clear word of God, divorces in the United States numbered 160,338 in 1932; 165,000 in 1933; 204,000 in 1934; 250,000 in 1937. The ratio of divorce to marriage was 6% in 1890, and 16% in 1925. (The Federal Census Bureau no longer bothers with statistics on marriage and divorce, but in 1941 it was estimated that there was one divorce to every five marriages.) One could do no more than suggest the broken hearts, the dismal childhoods, and the misery implied in those figures. In each case, parents have set their own above the interests of the children, forgetting that marriage is nothing more than a prolonged state of self-sacrifice.

The Catholic Church would be adulterous herself if she did not remain faithful to the teachings of her Founder. We find the late Pope Pius XI in 1930 writing an encyclical of 15,000 words, restating and vindicating the traditional, the Catholic philosophy of matrimony.

“‘What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder,’ he writes. ‘And, if any man, acting contrary to the law, shall have put asunder, his action is null and void, and the consequence remains, as Christ Himself has explicitly confirmed: ‘Everyone that putteth away his wife and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.’”

Only the Chief Bishop of Christendom could have written those words. He speaks with an authority above that of civil legislators. It is with assurance that he declares any attempted act against the marriage bond to be null and void.

The Catholic Church fights a lone battle in her defense of chastity and the sacred character of marriage. She is the only one

who still raises her voice in denouncing the action of civil magistrates who divorce, physicians who abort, and individuals who frustrate the effect of the marriage act.

Sex and Marriage

Sex need not and should not dominate marriage. Matrimony is the union of a man and a woman, centering their lives on the living embodiment of their love in the form of children. In loving the children they love each other. The children cement the bond. The love of the parents and desire for union leads to reproduction. There is some pleasure attached. That is the right order, reproduction following love, with pleasure entering as a by-product. All of this emphasis on sex is in bad taste.

St. Francis de Sales advises married people in the matter of cultivating a right attitude:

“Persons of honor never think of eating except when they sit down to table, and after dinner wash their hands and their mouth that they may neither keep the

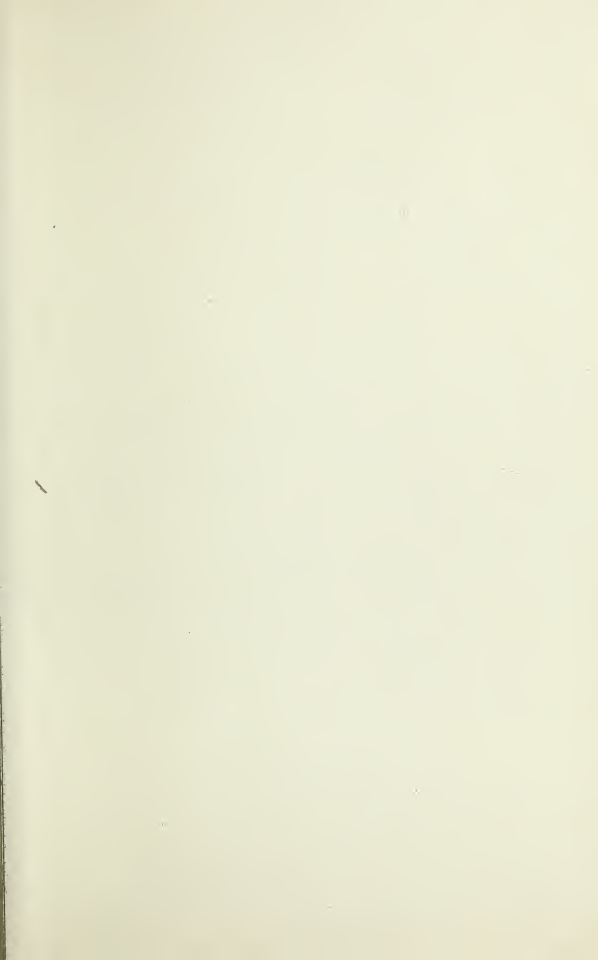
taste nor the scent of what they have been eating.

“Let this serve as a lesson to married people not to keep their affections engaged in those corporal pleasures which, according to their vocation, they have exercised, but when they are past, to wash their heart and affection, and purify themselves from them as soon as possible, that they may the more freely and readily practice other actions more pure and elevated.”

That no one may say self-control is impossible, the Church holds up to her children the example set by an unmarried priesthood and by thousands of religious men and women, monks and nuns. Not that she intends to disparage the married state. No, for marriage is a sacrament. But, going back again fifteen centuries to St. Augustine: “Marriage and continence are both good things, whereof the second is better.”

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