

# THE CASE FOR CHASTITY

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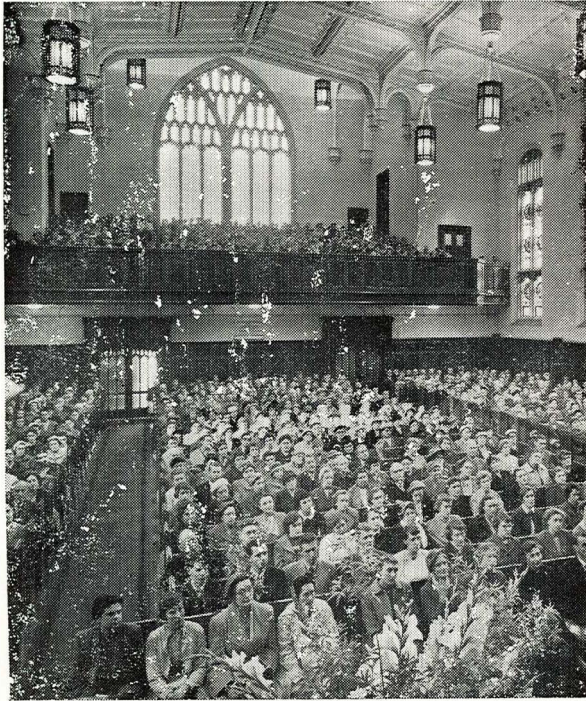
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This is a sermon delivered in St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church, Macquarie Street, Sydney, Australia, on Sunday, 26th July, 1964, and repeated at the Lunch-Hour Service on the following Wednesday.

## THE CASE FOR CHASTITY

A young man I once knew fell in love with a girl and she reciprocated his love. He had been brought up in a good Australian home, but at his university he fell in with a crowd who scoffed at Christian standards of morality. He acquired the idea that "everybody does it" and he persuaded the girl to go all the way, even before they were formally engaged, let alone married. In due course he discovered that he was not the first one with whom she had been intimate. This news came as a considerable shock, but he told himself this was all in the past and it didn't really make any difference. True love never runs smooth and after one or two tiffs, which were not serious in themselves, but created considerable tension for several days, the girl went out with another boy. Possibly their behaviour was perfectly correct, but you can imagine what the young man began to think. He was in such torment his health broke down and he seriously thought of suicide. In the end that romance broke up and it was several years before he found and married somebody else. Then he went into marriage feeling shop-soiled. His sense of guilt created difficulties in his own psychological life, and in his relations with his wife for years after.

### THE FORCES BREAKING DOWN CHRISTIAN STANDARDS

This is an unpleasant subject, but the Church is failing in her duty if she does not proclaim to the world the reasons why libertarianism in morals is so disastrous and why the Christian standards in every century have preserved the happiness and integrity of individuals, homes and nations. The present obsession with sex seems to have arisen from several factors.

1. CONQUEST OF VENEREAL DISEASE. Since penicillin and other wonder drugs have to a large extent knocked out the awful "social diseases" so-called, people who formerly were kept chaste and faithful in their sexual life by fear of loathsome disease for themselves and/or their children don't have to worry about this quite so much.

2. THE PILL. The free and frank discussion concerning the development of the contraceptive pill has put temptation in the way of many who previously would not have erred from the straight and narrow moral path for fear of bringing an illegitimate child into the world.

3. THE PROFIT MOTIVE. Unfortunately in our Western Civilisation, if something produces a financial profit sooner or later people will find reasons for producing it regardless of the evil impact it may have on others. As a result there is far too much literature, books and magazines, not to mention some films and recordings, produced only to make profits from the prurient-minded. In Britain and the U.S.A. today the publication of obscene literature is a multi-million pound industry. In New York in 1963 I passed many of the 169 bookstalls in down town Manhattan which specialise in obscene literature, some of them selling nothing else. This is what happens when you make the Almighty Dollar your god. Public opinion must be built up to prevail on governments to control this evil thing. It is ridiculous to pretend that these things do not tend to deprave and corrupt. Such people have never listened to the stories ministers hear in their counselling rooms. Moreover, why is it that sex crimes have increased four-fold at the same time that we have allowed this greater liberty to publishers of books, magazines and newspapers?

4. "THE NEW MORALITY". One of the most insidious factors of all in breaking down old standards of morality is the misinterpretation of what is called the "New Morality". This received a great deal of publicity from the chapter with this title in the Bishop of Woolwich's now famous book, HONEST TO GOD. Now as I understand it, the Bishop faces the fact that many people today insist on being free of rules and regulations. They have rejected the law of Moses and they have rejected the new law as given in the Sermon on the Mount. The Bishop agrees that Jesus came to do away with the religion of a law imposed from outside. His religion is the religion of the heart. He did not come to impose a new law. To quote the exact words of "Honest to God". "If we have the heart of the matter in us then love will find the way, its own particular way in every individual situation." "Love alone has a built-in moral compass, enabling it to 'home' intuitively upon the deepest need of the other". A sub-heading reads "NOTHING PRESCRIBED—EXCEPT LOVE."

Now it seems to me that if you read the Bishop's book carefully and understand that he is talking about Christian love (Greek 'agape') and not the romantic love of the world (Greek 'eros') you find he is expressing a truth Jesus often taught and lived. But unfortunately worldly people have interpreted this in their own way and they virtually say, "Well it doesn't matter what you do as long as you love. You can have intercourse before marriage, or outside marriage with somebody other than your wife as long as you love them. If love ceases in marriage then you may consider divorce, in fact you should." Now all this is an utter travesty of the truth. Real love considers the highest welfare of the other person. It certainly does not seek to use them to satisfy one's own lust. If a



young man loves a girl with a true and Christian love, he will reverence her body as "the temple of the Holy Spirit"; he will realise that the sex act involves the total personality and outside marriage it can have vast emotional and spiritual repercussions which can, and often do, bring untold misery years later. It is far too high a price to pay for a few moments' extra pleasure, moments which are often immediately followed by self-loathing and disgust any way. No, the "New Morality" at its best is the old morality of Jesus which accepts all kinds of self-discipline and self-sacrifice for love of other. The "New Morality" as it is so often twisted by those who lack a true understanding of Christ is nothing more than dishonest casuistry to justify immorality.

### THE ARGUMENTS FOR CHASTITY

I want now to consider some of the many arguments for Chastity under the three heads, Physical, Psychological and Spiritual.

(a) PHYSICAL. Years ago I was on a ship travelling through the Suez Canal. We had on board 30 or 40 young sailors going to join their ship in Britain. At Port Said they all went out to a famous night club and when they returned several of them were telling with some relish of their first experience of a night with a prostitute. I remarked on this to a much older friend who had had considerable experience as an Army Padre. He looked in horror and said, "Did no one warn them of the awful diseases they could have picked up there?" So far from warning them I regret to say their officers led them into it. Now, admittedly syphilis and gonorrhoea are no longer the devastating scourges they once were, bringing dreadful disease to those who incur them and blindness or other afflictions

to their children. Modern antibiotics have proved wonder drugs in this respect. But we must remember that these dreadful viruses are developing an immunity to the drugs and there is more of this danger to the physical health of the promiscuous than many seem to realise.

Those who treat sex as a purely physical thing and as an end in itself are in for a life of frustration and boredom, because God did not make us that way. Sigmund Freud was considered a great authority on sex and he once said, 'No one has an entirely satisfying sex life'. That is very true for those who make sex their god. But we know of scores of happily married Christian people who find their deepest joy in expressing their love for one another in an act which certainly involves the physical, but far more involves the emotional nature and the highest spiritual elements in the personality. Sex is always unsatisfactory until two people are prepared to commit themselves to one another completely in marriage and have done so without any reservations.

(b) PSYCHOLOGICAL. Under the heading of psychological I think mainly of the mental and emotional factors. No two young people can go all the way without being profoundly changed in personality ever after, particularly the girl. During the war when I was an Air Force chaplain a fine girl came to me quite broken up. She had had an affair with a pilot. He had only a few days of leave before going up to the battle area again and she yielded to his persuasion. Now she bitterly regretted it. Nobody else knew anything about it, but she felt unclean. She felt shopsoiled. As it turned out he was not really in love with her and by the time he returned he had found somebody else who was no doubt yielding to the same blandishments. It is a

strange thing that a man often despises a single girl who yields to him. He transfers to her the contempt he really feels for himself. The first lass who was trying to be an idealist now felt she wasn't worthy to marry a man of the quality she had always dreamed of marrying. Is it any wonder she crashed in a nervous breakdown? I have counselled hundreds of people facing this kind of problem. Far more than most people realise, a cheap attitude to sex is at the bottom of a vast amount of emotional ill-health.

The so-called "New Morality" in a wrong and worldly sense is ardently promoted by those who have abandoned Christian standards. Their guilt feelings make them seize on anything that seems to justify their actions. They are all too willing to drag others down to their own so-called 'sophisticated' level. Similar motives lie behind some of those who fight so hard in these days against censorship. They say "It's bad to suppress sex. You only force it underground and make things so much worse. We should be adult and face the facts of life." Yes, a decomposed dead dog in a back alley is a fact of life but you don't haul it into the sitting room. The other day some cement broke away from the top of a main sewer near our home. The stench was appalling and I imagine the threat to health was considerable. We don't say, "Take the lid off sewerage and bring it to light. It doesn't matter if some children fall into it or a few people contract disease". No, we keep it in its proper place. We cover it up and get rid of it as quickly as we can. Just as you have filthy sewer rats running about in the darkness, so you have morally sick human sewer rats who purvey pornography. They trade on freedom of the press but they will destroy this privilege for many other responsible people if they are not eradicated.

Before we leave the psychological area may I point out that married people who are unfaithful to their partners often give themselves away psychologically? Both show immaturity. The man is unconsciously seeking for a mother to comfort him. The woman is often one who has been deprived of the normal love of a father and feeling an unconscious anger against her father is driven, by deep psychological forces she does not understand, from man to man to humiliate them physically. Of course other factors can be involved, but all are working towards their own disintegration of personality.

## SPIRITUAL

As Herbert Gray has said, the Church "preserves the stored up wisdom of the ages". We can learn about sex by trial and error but if we lose our purity and chastity nothing can ever restore them again. The price of trial and error is too high. Far better to listen to the wisdom of the Son of God, and the inspired teaching of the New Testament. Jesus came to fulfil the Law in the highest spiritual sense. The Ten Commandments say "Thou shalt not commit adultery". Jesus went further and said, "Since adultery begins in the heart you must not even look at a woman to lust after her". "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God". The impure in heart cut themselves off from God. The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and according as we use the body, the Spirit of God dwells in us. Let us then reverence the body of another as the Temple of the Holy Spirit and we will never then do anything to make us ashamed when one day we look into the eyes of Jesus Christ.

Here is Phillips' translation of part of Galatians

Chapter 5: "The activities of the lower nature are obvious. Here is a list; sexual immorality, impurity of mind, sensualities . . . envy, drunkenness, orgies, things like that. I solemnly assure you that those who indulge in such things will never inherit God's kingdom. The Spirit however produces in human life fruits such as these: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, fidelity, tolerance and self-control."

I conclude with a story for which I am indebted to Dr. Bryant Kirkland of New York. A suburban couple who prided themselves on being modern, and who had agreed to permit one another to practise extra-marital relationships, read a story in a newspaper about a young married couple who were walking home one moonlit evening when they took a short cut across a railway bridge. As they tried to negotiate the sleepers the young wife's foot slipped into a narrow space and became jammed. Try as they could it was impossible to get her free. Then a train came roaring down the line. People nearby saw her try to push her husband clear, but he came back and held her tightly in his arms so that they died together. As the modern couple read this story in the newspaper the wife said to her husband, 'Our trouble is that I don't really know if you would do that for me, or if I would have the courage to do it for you'. You see, once you lose faith in one another you have lost everything that makes marriage that glorious and wonderful experience God meant it to be.

In Christian marriage each partner thinks of the body of the other as a temple of the Holy Spirit. Founded on spiritual love and not animal magnetism, such marriage is the basis of the greatest happiness to be found on this earth. It is worth waiting for. Hold on to your chastity.

## **FURTHER READING FOR TEEN-AGERS AND ENGAGED COUPLES**

The Father and Son Welfare Movement, 15 Goulburn Street, Sydney, has published an excellent series of "GUIDE" books, of which 1,000,000 copies have now been printed in Australia.

## **FOR NEWLY MARRIED COUPLES THE SEX FACTOR IN MARRIED LIFE**

by Dr. Helena Wright

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Extra copies of THE CASE FOR CHASTITY may be obtained from St. Stephen's Church, Macquarie Street, Sydney, Australia. Price 3d. per copy. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

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