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The Doctrine of Paul
Concerning virginity
Explained.

[The Banquet of the Ten Virgins, or Concerning Chastity — Methodius](#)

I have now brought to an end what I have to say respecting continence and marriage and chastity, and intercourse with men, and in which of these there is help towards progress in righteousness; but it still remains to speak concerning virginity -- if, indeed, anything be prescribed on this subject. Let us then treat this subject also; for it stands thus: [\[2599\]](#) "Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress; I say, that it is good for a man so to be. Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you." Having given his opinion with great caution respecting virginity, and being about to advise him who wished it to give his virgin in marriage, so that none of those things which conduce to sanctification should be of necessity and by compulsion, but according to the free purpose of the soul. for this is acceptable to God, he does not wish these things to be said as by authority, and as the mind of the Lord, with reference to the giving of a virgin in marriage; for after he had said, [\[2600\]](#) "if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned," directly afterwards, with the greatest caution, he modified his statement, showing that he had advised these things by human permission, and not by divine. So, immediately after he had said, "if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned," he added, "such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you." [\[2601\]](#) By which he

means: "I sparing you, such as you are, consented to these things, because you have chosen to think thus of them, that I may not seem to hurry you on by violence, and compel any one to this. [2602] But yet if it shall please you who find chastity hard to bear, rather to turn to marriage; I consider it to be profitable for you to restrain yourselves in the gratification of the flesh, not making your marriage an occasion for abusing your own vessels to uncleanness." Then he adds, [2603] "But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none." And again, going on and challenging them to the same things, he confirmed his statement, powerfully supporting the state of virginity, and adding expressly the following words to those which he had spoken before, he exclaimed, [2604] "I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord: [2605] but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. There is a difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband." Now it is clear to all, without any doubt, that to care for the things of the Lord and to please God, is much better than to care for the things of the world and to please one's wife. For who is there so foolish and blind. as not to perceive in this statement the higher praise which Paul accords to chastity? "And this," he says, [2606] "I speak for your own profit, not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely."

Footnotes:

[2599] [1 Corinthians 7:25-28](#).

[2600] [1 Corinthians 7:28](#).

[2601] [1 Corinthians 7:28](#).

[2602] Which I[recommend.

[2603] [1 Corinthians 7:29](#). [Nobody can feel more deeply than I do the immeasurable evils of an enforced celibacy; nobody can feel more deeply the deplorable state of the Church which furnishes only rare and exceptional examples of voluntary celibacy for the sake of Christ. On chastity, see Jer. Taylor's Holy Living, Works, i.[p. 424.]

[2604] [1 Corinthians 7:32-34](#).

[2605] A clause is omitted here in the text.

[2606] [1 Corinthians 7:35](#).



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