

[AccueilRevenir à l'accueilCollectionBoite_022 | Pères de l'Église.CollectionBoite_022-1-chem | Noces spirituelles \[rayé : Chair \(Antiquité\) Virginité\] Item\[photocopie\]](#)

[photocopie]

Auteur : Foucault, Michel

Présentation de la fiche

Coteb022_f0038

SourceBoite_022-1-chem | Noces spirituelles [rayé : Chair (Antiquité) Virginité]

LangueFrançais

TypePhotocopie

RelationNumérisation d'un manuscrit original consultable à la BnF, département des Manuscrits, cote NAF 28730

Références éditoriales

Éditeuréquipe FFL (projet ANR *Fiches de lecture de Michel Foucault*) ; projet EMAN (Thalim, CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne nouvelle).

Droits

- Image : Avec l'autorisation des ayants droit de Michel Foucault. Tous droits réservés pour la réutilisation des images.
- Notice : équipe FFL ; projet EMAN (Thalim, CNRS-ENS-Sorbonne nouvelle). Licence Creative Commons Attribution - Partage à l'Identique 3.0 (CC BY-SA 3.0 FR).

Notice créée par [équipe FFL](#) Notice créée le 21/10/2020 Dernière modification le 23/04/2021

Paul's words do not seem to allow that others take the place of those who fall (ἀντὶ τῶν πιπτότων ἑτέρους ἀνίστασθαι, 543). Chrysostom energetically repudiates this view for two reasons, the first of which points to the origin of marriage. As long as the protoplasts were in Paradise there was no question of marriage. They were living as in heaven, enjoying God's companionship; every kind of desire (ἐπιθυμία) was far from their soul; virginity was their ornament. But when they had been disobedient to God, He left them together with virginity; they put off the royal vestment of virginity, and together with the corruption that is inherent to death, marriage, that mortal garment, appeared on the scene. For where death is, there is marriage (ὅπου γὰρ θάνατος, ἐκεῖ γάμος 544); the latter necessarily follows the former. Virginity, on the other hand, is not subject to this necessary order (ἀκολουθία): it is always useful, and beautiful, before and after the appearance of death, before as well as after marriage. Chrysostom then moves to his second point: God could have made men without marriage; he refers to Adam and Eve, to the thousands of angels, and the tenths of archangels. It is not marriage as such that increases and preserves the human race, but the word God spoke in the beginning (*Gen.* 1, 28); he illustrates this by the example of Abraham. Without God willing marriage is unable to multiply the human race, whereas, on the other hand, virginity will not hinder its multiplication if God wants men to be many. Marriage serves the preservation of the human race only for want of something better; it has been given to us because of our weakness, and should not be preferred to virginity. Without drawing all conclusions from this text, we may at this point usefully compare Chrysostom's reply to the objection with the viewpoint developed in EvEg. According to the latter the bringing forth of children is the maintenance of the power of death, whereas virginity is meant to break it and will undoubtedly lead to the gradual dying out of the human race⁵³. Chrysostom has to cope with this conception of virginity as a "collective suicide", and, therefore, points out that there are alternative ways of procreation, and that the increase of the human race is not dependent on marriage, but on the word and the will of God. This explains why for Chrysostom, in contrast with EvEg, virginity means abstinence not so much from procreation as from sexual intercourse.

In another text (*In Gen. Hom.* 18, 4; *PG* 53, 153-154) the author develops similar thoughts. Commenting on *Gen.* 4, 1 he says that before their disobedience the protoplasts were imitating the life of the angels; there was absolutely no question of intercourse, for they were not subject to bodily needs (ταῖς τῶν σωμάτων ἀνάγκαις); from the beginning virginity had priority over marriage. In fact, it follows from our Lord's own words (His answer to the Sadducees' question concerning the resurrection) that the virgins, though being on earth and in the body, are leading an angelic life. Chrysostom here uses the same old tradition on the protoplasts' virginity in Paradise as Basil of Ancyra. But he goes further in that he calls this paradisiac life angelic. This way of speaking is obviously based on *Lk.* 20, 35-36 par.; it is, in fact, another application of the principle that the end will be like the beginning: to the eschatological superiority of virginity corresponds its protological priority; if the eschatological life will be angelic, the same must be true for paradisiac life (—the argument also works the other way round.). It was only after the verdict made man mortal, Chrysostom continues, that God, in His wisdom, providing for the permanence of the human race, allowed that it should be multiplied by intercourse. In his exegesis of *Gen.* 4, 1c (ἐκτεράσμεν ἄνθρωπον διὰ τοῦ θεοῦ) he again underscores that the begetting of children has to be attributed not to nature (τῇ φύσει), but to God. Because of recognizing this Eve was rewarded by a second baby (*Gen.* 4, 2a). The text that follows is worth being quoted in full:

53. Or did the virgins consider themselves as not exposed to death because they had already received the resurrection?

Paul's words do not seem to allow that when take the place of those who fall (1 Cor 15:22) and
 therefore (1 Cor 15:22) Christians eventually experience this view
 for two reasons: the first of which points to the origin of marriage. As long as the present
 state was in Paradise there was no question of marriage. They were living in heaven,
 enjoying God's companionship; every kind of desire (including sex) was far from their mind;
 enjoying His presence. But when they had been disobedient to God, the fall took place,
 together with virginity; they put off the royal garment of virginity, and together with
 the corruption that is inherent in death, marriage, that mortal garment, appeared on the
 scene. For when death is there is marriage (1 Cor 15:22) and virginity (1 Cor 15:22).
 The latter necessarily follows the former. Virginity on the other hand, is not inherent
 in this necessary order (including sex): it is always useful, and beautiful, before and after
 the appearance of death, before as well as after marriage. Christians who move to the
 second point: God could have made man without marriage; he chose to Adam and Eve,
 to the temptations of Satan, and the temptations of woman. It is not marriage in itself
 that increases and preserves the human race, but the word God speaks in the beginning
 (Gen 1:28); He illustrates this by the example of Abraham. Without God willing marriage
 is unable to multiply the human race, whereas on the other hand, virginity will not hinder
 the multiplication if God wants man to be many. Marriage saves the preservation of
 the human race only in case of something better; it has been given to us because of our
 weakness, and should not be regarded as virginity. Without drawing all conclusions
 from this text, we may at this point briefly mention Christian's reply to the objection
 with the development of the Holy Spirit. According to the letter the virginity of the
 flesh is the maintenance of the power of death, whereas virginity is meant to break it and
 will undoubtedly lead to the kingdom of glory. Christian's reply is: "Christians are
 to cope with this conception of virginity as a 'relative ascetic', and therefore, those
 men that have no alternative ways of preservation, and that the increase of the human race
 is not dependent on marriage, but on the word and the will of God. This explains why
 for Christians, in contrast with the Holy Spirit, virginity means abstinence not so much from
 procreation as from sexual intercourse."

In another text (1 Cor 15:22) the author develops further
 the thought. Commenting on 1 Cor 4:1 he says that Paul has described the present
 state were insisting on the idea of the angels: there was absolutely no question of intercourse,
 for they were not subject to bodily needs (and the angels likewise); from the beginning
 virginity had formed over marriage. In fact, it follows from our Lord's own words
 (His answer to the Sadducees' question concerning the resurrection) that the virginity
 though being on earth and in the body, was leading an angelic life. Christians have seen
 the same old fashion on the prophets' virginity in Paradise as well as in Heaven. But
 in your further in that is with this present life angelic. The way of speaking is clearly
 based on 1 Cor 15:22; it is in fact, another application of the virginity of the flesh
 and will be like the beginning in the eschatological experience of virginity corresponds
 to eschatological virginity; it the eschatological life will be angelic, the same must be true
 for Paradise on the earth. The argument also works the other way round. It was only after
 the resurrection that God, in His wisdom, revealing
 for the preservation of the human race, showed that it should be multiplied by intercourse.
 In his response to 1 Cor 4:12 (especially 1 Cor 4:12) he again underlines
 that the baptizing of children has to be distinguished not to nature (as death), but to God.
 because of baptizing this has been reserved by a second baby (1 Cor 4:12). The text
 that follows is worth being quoted in full:

11 - 15:22 Paul's words do not seem to allow that when take the place of those who fall (1 Cor 15:22) and therefore (1 Cor 15:22) Christians eventually experience this view for two reasons: the first of which points to the origin of marriage. As long as the present state was in Paradise there was no question of marriage. They were living in heaven, enjoying God's companionship; every kind of desire (including sex) was far from their mind; enjoying His presence. But when they had been disobedient to God, the fall took place, together with virginity; they put off the royal garment of virginity, and together with the corruption that is inherent in death, marriage, that mortal garment, appeared on the scene. For when death is there is marriage (1 Cor 15:22) and virginity (1 Cor 15:22). The latter necessarily follows the former. Virginity on the other hand, is not inherent in this necessary order (including sex): it is always useful, and beautiful, before and after the appearance of death, before as well as after marriage. Christians who move to the second point: God could have made man without marriage; he chose to Adam and Eve, to the temptations of Satan, and the temptations of woman. It is not marriage in itself that increases and preserves the human race, but the word God speaks in the beginning (Gen 1:28); He illustrates this by the example of Abraham. Without God willing marriage is unable to multiply the human race, whereas on the other hand, virginity will not hinder the multiplication if God wants man to be many. Marriage saves the preservation of the human race only in case of something better; it has been given to us because of our weakness, and should not be regarded as virginity. Without drawing all conclusions from this text, we may at this point briefly mention Christian's reply to the objection with the development of the Holy Spirit. According to the letter the virginity of the flesh is the maintenance of the power of death, whereas virginity is meant to break it and will undoubtedly lead to the kingdom of glory. Christian's reply is: "Christians are to cope with this conception of virginity as a 'relative ascetic', and therefore, those men that have no alternative ways of preservation, and that the increase of the human race is not dependent on marriage, but on the word and the will of God. This explains why for Christians, in contrast with the Holy Spirit, virginity means abstinence not so much from procreation as from sexual intercourse."