

THE WORD

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MOMENTS WITH FRIENDS.

Is it best that a man should suppress his sexual desires, and should he strive to live a life of celibacy?

That must depend upon the motive and the nature of the man. It is never best to try to crush or kill out the sexual desire; but it is always best to restrain and control it. If a person has no object or ideal superior to that of sex; if man is ruled by animal nature; and if one lives to get and to enjoy, to linger in thought on the pleasures of sex, it is impossible for him to try to crush or kill out his sexual desires—though he can “live a life of celibacy.”

According to the “Standard Dictionary,” celibacy means, “the state of an unmarried person or celibate, especially of an unmarried man; abstinence from marriage; as, the celibacy of the priesthood.” A celibate is said to be, “one who remains unmarried; especially, a man bound to single life by religious vows.”

One who is physically and mentally qualified to marry, but who lives a life of celibacy in order to escape the ties, responsibilities and consequences of marriage, and who has not the will nor the desire to control his sex nature, is usually a scourge on humanity, whether he is or is not free from vows, whether he has or has not taken orders and is under the shelter and protection of the church. Chastity and purity of thought are essential to a life of celibacy in one who would enter the spirit of that life. There are few celibates, the unmarried, who are less addicted to the thoughts and acts of sex than are those who live in the married state.

Persons who feel at home in the world and who are physically, morally, mentally fit to marry, often neglect duties and shirk responsibilities by remaining unmarried. The reason for one’s living a life of celibacy should not be: exemption from ties, duties, responsibilities, legal or otherwise; vows, penance, religious orders; to acquire merit; to get reward; to attain ascendancy in temporal or spiritual power. The reason for living a celibate life should be: that one cannot fulfill the duties he has made his own and wishes to perform, and at the same time be faithful to duties incumbent to the married state; that is to say, that married life would unfit him for

what is his work. This does not mean that some work of fancy or a fad is reason to keep one unmarried. No occupation or profession is a warrant for celibacy. Marriage is no deterrent to what is usually called a “religious” or “spiritual” life. Religious offices which are moral can be filled as well by the married as by the unmarried; and often with more safety to the confessor and confessed than when the confessor is unmarried. One who is married is usually more competent to give advice than one who has not entered the married state.

Celibacy is necessary to one who is determined to attain to immortality. But his motive in so living should be, that he will thus better serve his human kind. The confessional is not the place for one who is about to enter the road to immortal life; and when he is far along the way he will have more important work. The one who is fit to live a life of celibacy will not be uncertain of what his duty is. One who is fit to live a celibate life is not free from sex desire; but he does not try to crush or kill it. He learns how to restrain and control it. This he learns and does with intelligence and will. One must live a life of celibacy in thought, before he can in fact. Then he lives for all, without injury to himself or others.

A FRIEND [H. W. Percival]



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