

and doubtless as representing His mercy. The verb translated in the Douay (Vulg.) "I will set" (natatti: literally: I have given) carries with it no implication of creation. It is employed rather of something already existing which is now appointed to serve a new purpose. Thus it is used in Exod. vii, 1, of the appointment of Moses as God's spokesman before Pharaoh; in I Kings xii, 13, of God's confirmation of the people's choice of Saul as king; in Jer. i, 5, of the appointment of Jeremias to the prophetic office.

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*What is the exact translation of the original Hebrew word of the sixth commandment rendered as "adultery"? Does it refer to the conduct of married persons only, or does it specifically include the loose conduct of single persons?*

The sixth commandment is recorded twice in the Old Testament, Exod. xx, 14 and Deut. v, 18. The verb used in both cases is the same and is correctly translated in the Douay Version as "to commit adultery." The word is normally used of men elsewhere in the Bible, and always of intercourse with another's wife, e.g. Levit. xx, 10, Osee iv, 13—14, Isaias lvii, 3. Sometimes it is applied to women, e.g. Levit. xx, 10.

Violation of the marriage rights was regarded predominantly as an injury to property and honour. Thus intercourse with another's wife or even with his betrothed was punished by putting to death both the guilty parties, Levit. xx, 10, Deut. xxii, 22—24, John viii, 5. The man has "humbled his neighbour's wife." [It is interesting to note that the death penalty for the same offence is prescribed in the Code of Hammurabi, section 129, but if the injured husband was willing to pardon the guilty parties this pardon was ratified by the law.] Since a man could take more than one wife he did not belong to his wife in the same exclusive way in which she belonged to him. Hence intercourse with another (unmarried) woman by a married man was not regarded, in Israel, as adultery properly so-called, and there was no penalty for it comparable with that for adultery in the sense given above.

Insofar as intercourse with an unmarried woman is punished in the Law of Moses it is because it is a violation of another's rights. In Exod. xx, 16 the man who seduces a virgin is commanded to endow her and take her to wife. If, however, her father is unwilling to give her in marriage to the man, the latter must still pay the dowry (verse 17), cf. also Deut. xxii, 28—29. If the woman is a slave, relations with her are forbidden on the grounds of her belonging to someone else, Levit. xix—xx, Exod. xxi, 7—11. In Deut. xxii, 21, loose conduct before marriage on the part of the woman is to be punished by death, but the penalty supposes that the woman was already betrothed. Hence this is no more than a reiteration of Deut. xxii, 23—24, cf. Clamer, *La Sainte Bible* (ed. Pirot), in loc.

The wide difference existing between the Old and the New Testaments is thus apparent. Our Blessed Lord points out that the relaxations sanctioned by the Law of Moses were made because of the hardness of men's hearts, but from the beginning it was not so, Matt. xix, 8. As originally instituted, "the marriage of one man and one woman is to form the fundamental, indissoluble relationship before which all other ties, even the most sacred, must give way. The woman is created as an help meet for man: not to be an idle plaything of the moment, but to share his labours and his joys . . . Thus marriage is thought of ideally as monogamy, which it manifestly was to all intents and purposes in Israel, although the liberty of the man was not restricted by the law," Schulz, *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. II, p. 50.

Christ both restored marriage to its original status and gave the grace for the observance of its obligations. But he did more than restore monogamy. He condemned the desire for adultery as being itself adultery, Matt. v, 28. Of course internal sins were no doubt forbidden implicitly in the prohibition of external sins in the Old Testament, but the point was not stressed. It is true that the desire for a neighbour's wife was forbidden by the ninth commandment, but this was because of its possible social consequences. In general, the scribes and Pharisees did not regard evil thoughts and desires, which were altogether internal, as sins. In so doing, they erred. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you make clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but within you are full of rapine and uncleanness," Matt. xxiii, 25.

Does Christ, in Matt. v, 28, forbid only adultery, or does He also condemn fornication? Some commentators, noting that He merely refers to "woman" without any qualification, hold that He here explicitly condemns the desire for fornication as well as the desire for adultery. They explain His use of the term "adultery," by saying that other sins of impurity lead to adultery. Others however, take "adultery" in the strict sense and hence understand "woman" as meaning a married woman. Whichever be the explicit meaning of the text, the Church has always understood Christ's teaching as condemning both, at least implicitly. But we are not confined to this text. St. Paul puts the matter very succinctly, "Do not err. Neither fornicators nor idolators nor adulterers . . . shall possess the kingdom of God," I Cor. vi, 9—10.

With the coming of Christ the full Revelation of God was unfolded, the full meaning of God's Law made plain. Hence the Catechism teaches us that the sixth commandment, besides forbidding all sins of impurity with another's wife or husband, also "forbids whatever is contrary to holy purity in looks, words, or actions."

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