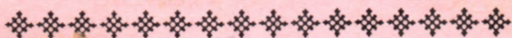


THE TWO HUSBANDS



**Of
ROMANS 7**

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OF ROMANS VII.

THIS chapter may be said to be the climax of the apostle's argument on justification and fruit-bearing. Nothing could be more *timely* than the illustration of the two husbands; and I need not say the inspired argument is answerable.

It is of great importance to notice those few words in the middle of the first verse, placed in parenthesis: "for I speak to them that know the law." This shows that the apostle was specially addressing the Jewish believers in this chapter. "Know ye not, . . . how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit

unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." (Ver. 1--7.) Here, then, we have the two husbands. The old husband the Jews had had; that is, the law. To the new husband the Christian has been espoused, that is, to the risen Christ. And just as a woman could not lawfully be married to two husbands at the same time, so is it shown that the believer cannot be married to both Christ and the law.

From verses 5, 7--24, the apostle describes the marriage-life with the old husband. Now, just suppose a married couple, whose dispositions are so entirely contrary to each other, that the more the poor wife tries to do her best, the more scolding and blows she receives; until her life becomes so miserable, that she longs for deliverance from this struggle of wretchedness—and you have the exact picture here described of the wretched condition of those who had been married to the law. It is not that the law had been such a bad husband: it was just, holy, and good. But man's nature was so utterly bad, so thoroughly carnal—sold under sin. This is what Paul and the Jewish believers had found when *they were in the flesh* under the law. "For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." I say no couple in this world ever had dispositions more contrary, than Paul had found his nature and the holy law of God.

He goes on further to describe his condition when in the flesh, married to this old husband: "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." Such was the power of sin dwelling in him, that though he fully consented to the law, that it was good,

and earnestly desired to do what was right, yet had no power: "how to perform that which is good I find not. . . . For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do." Yes, he found sin dwelling in him—yea, its power a fixed law in his nature: "I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me." Yes, if even a quickened soul, a child of God, yet in the flesh under law; however the inward man might long to keep it, yet the sinful nature was far too strong, and thus the deepest wretchedness: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

This, then, is the picture the apostle draws of married life under the old husband. Like some poor woman, who has tried long and hard to please her husband, until at last she loses all hope, and no longer says, Who shall help me to please him? but, O wretched woman that I am, who shall *deliver me*? Just so the apostle. He did not pray for help to please the old husband; but, "O wretched man that I am, who shall *deliver me* from the body of this death?" The next verse introduces the new husband: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." We shall find the marriage-state with the new husband, as blessed as it had been wretched under the old. There are two things especially in chapter viii. that mark that blessedness. Espoused to Christ, there is no condemnation, and no separation.

Let us return, then, and carefully notice how the espousal took place. The apostle was here reasoning with those who had been under the old husband; and if we carefully examine the holy oracles of God, we shall find that the Jews had been under law, or married to the first husband, 1,500 years. It is very strange, that many Christians have not noticed that

the law was not given for 2,500 years—that is, from Adam to Moses. Now, instead of angry discussion, would it not be far better to search the Scriptures and see if these things are so? Was not Adam tested by a given law when in innocence? Did he not fall by transgression? Did not his whole race fall in him, and so death pass upon all? “Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men.” (Rom. v. 12.) Certainly it is most clear, that the whole human race were thus brought under sin and death. But, now, from that point—from Adam’s fall to the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, a period of 2,500 years—can my readers find a single passage that would imply, that there was either law, or transgression, during the whole of that period? “For where no law is, there is no transgression.” And there was no law given from Adam to Moses, therefore there was no transgression. But being ignorant of Scripture, some, not knowing the distinction betwixt sin and transgression, jump to the conclusion, that if there were no law then there was no sin, and therefore no need of the atoning death of Christ. But Scripture insists on this very point—that though there were no transgressions, (Rom. v. 13, 14,) yet there was sin when there was no law. “For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law.” Surely this, and many such passages of Scripture, prove that the law was not given to all men, else how could any sin without law? Who are “the Gentiles without law,” (Rom. ii. 12,) if the law were given to all, and, as some teachers tell us, all are under law? It is of the first importance to clearly understand this point. Let me give the reader a very simple illustration. Suppose a schoolmaster has a most unruly, lawless set of boys, he well knows the rebelliousness and enmity of the school, but up to a certain day he has never given them a positive command; he now writes

the following law; and gives the strictest command, that no boy shall be allowed to make a mark on the wall. There may have been marks on the wall before, but (if I know anything of human nature) the first time the master turns his back, there will be ten times more scribbling than ever there was before. There was *the sin* of marking the wall before, but now the command is given, sin becomes *transgression*; conscience would tell them it was wrong to have such enmity as to deface the wall before, but when the commandment comes the scribbling abounds, and this is transgression. Now the law entered for this very purpose—"That the offence might abound." (Rom. v. 20.) It was added because of (or, for) transgressions till the seed should come. (Gal. iii. 19.) Examine carefully the context of this passage. I am not aware that any one truth is more clearly taught in Scripture than this—that there was neither the law, nor transgression of the law, until God gave it, to one nation only, for the special purpose of proving man's sinful nature in open transgression, and thus, every mouth being stopped, all were proved guilty. Man's need was shown of that great and wondrous gift, the Saviour Jesus Christ the Lord.

It is marvellous what ignorance prevails on this truth. I asked a christian brother the other day, if he could give me any reason whatever, from Scripture, for the opinion he held—that we in England and all men were under the law? Well, said he, "I should say because we are all the children of Moses." I was somewhat startled, I confess, by this reason, but I do not know that I ever heard a better. "What do you mean," said I, "by our all being the children of Moses?" "Well," he replied, "I mean that we are all of the religion of Moses." I felt there was sadly too much truth in this last sentence. I endeavoured to show him that the Scripture teaches, distinctly, that we who believe are of the same religion as

Abraham. But he seemed to have never read that the law was not given to Abraham at all; no, not even until 430 years after him. Look carefully at Gal. iii. 16, 17, and see if this was not the case. Then if the law were not given to Abraham, or to any of the nations in his days, or during the 2,000 years before him, or to the nations for 500 years after him; how can it be shown that it was given to all nations? Surely, my reader, there must be great ignorance of Scripture on this subject.

Let not, however, the adversary say, that because there was not the law, and therefore no transgression of the law, that that also proves there was no sin and no need of the atoning death of Christ. There was the same need from Adam to Moses. "For until the law, sin was in the world;" (Rom. v. 13;) and though sin was not, could not, be imputed as transgression, like Adam's transgression, of a positive law; yet DEATH REIGNED, even from Adam to Moses. And thus was shown man's need of that which alone can meet his case—the death of Christ, the Substitute. It is also true that when the law was given to that self-confident nation at Sinai, the black catalogue of offences in open transgression made man's condition still more manifest. But grace abounded, when these boasting law-keepers had murdered the Son of God: even to them, grace proclaimed forgiveness of sins in His name. The boasting law-keepers ever have since then, as at this day, hated and slandered the children of grace. May the blessed God of all grace keep us from returning railing for railing, but rather show them that grace that was first published at Jerusalem. But let not one point be misunderstood. Whilst speaking of righteousness and man's standing before God, let it not be supposed that we doubt, for one moment, the righteous principles of the government of God, either before or since the law. Take the Book of Job. The law was not given then, and of

course it is never named in it, or the Book of Genesis; and yet how distinctly we see the principles of right and wrong written on the conscience; and yet the law was not given, and therefore was neither the principle nor power of righteousness, nor rule of life, as it is sometimes strangely called.

The plain facts, then, of Scripture are these. For 2,500 years of this world's history the law was not given, from the fall of Adam to the giving of the law on Sinai. That as there was not the law for that period, there was no transgression of the law, after the similitude of Adam's transgression. There was, however, sin. Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. And from the days of Abel downwards, the Scripture clearly teaches the impossibility of man's approach to God, except by the death of the Substitute.

Then for 1,500 years the law was given to one nation, fully to show out what man was in open transgression. All have sinned: the Jews have transgressed. The moment the law was given, sin became transgression: "and they danced around the calf." That text in 1 John iii. 4, may be quoted as contradicting the statement of the apostle as to the 2,500 years, when there was neither law nor, of course, transgression. But a reference to the Greek will show the passage to be in perfect harmony. It just shows this—when the law is given, *then* sin becomes transgression. "Who-soever committeth sin, transgresseth **ALSO** the law: for sin is lawlessness"—in our translation, "the transgression of the law." It is most true, since, and to whom, the law was given, sin becomes the transgression of the law; but this does not contradict other scriptures, and say, sin *was* the transgression of the law during all those ages before it was given.

Very well, then, it may be said, if the law was not given for 2,500 years, and then was given to Israel for 1,500 years, what about the 1,800 years since? Does

the Scripture teach that all men have been put under it by Christ, or by the Holy Ghost, since Christ arose from the dead; or does it teach that it was then abolished, as regards believers who had been under it? Most solemn question. May the Lord give both writer and reader, entire subjection to His word; and this will never be, if this great subject is entered upon in a mere controversial spirit. Let us really wait on God in prayer, that the Holy Ghost may bring before our souls the clear light of Scripture.

The blessed Lord was born in that nation which was under law, and in Him and by Him every jot and tittle of the law was fulfilled. For them that were under the curse of the broken law, He became a curse;—surely not during His spotless life, but only when on the cross—"For it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Not only did He thus bear the curse of that nation, but He was "made sin for us." Oh! what love and righteousness was this! The Son of God! the Holy One! the Creator and Upholder of all things, hanging on a tree! accursed of men; but, ah! for my sins accursed—forsaken of God. O, my Lord, was ever love like thine! My spotless Substitute, I worship and adore thee for ever!

It is exceedingly profitable to trace in the epistles, the application of the atoning death of Christ, both to the Jews, who were under law, and to the Gentiles, dead in sins without law. Two passages may suffice, many others are equally explicit. Speaking of the Gentiles, the apostle says, "And you, being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." Then of the believing Jews, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." (Col. ii. 13, 14.) Again, of believing Jews, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for

us." Then of the Gentiles, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." (Gal. iii. 13, 14.)

But, to return, now as to these 1,800 years since the death and resurrection of Christ. Are we, as believers, under the ministry of law written on stones, or is it abolished, even as to those who had been under it? The apostle calls it, "the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones." He declares it "done away." "That which is abolished." Man calls it the rule of life, and says we are under it: shall I believe man or God? (See 2 Cor. iii.) I would most carefully limit these remarks to believers in Christ. They are led of the Spirit, and therefore not under the law. As the expression of God's righteous government in the world, the law surely is not abrogated. The claims of God as Creator remain the same, and thus the law is for the sinner out of Christ. (See 1 Tim. i. 9.) As I said at the beginning of this tract, the chapter before us, Rom. vii., is the climax of the apostle's argument. By the allegory of the two husbands, he shows the utter impossibility of the believer being joined to Christ, and still under the law. And we must not forget the apostle is combating the strongest error of his time, viz., That it was not enough to be justified by Christ, but it was needful also to keep the law. I need not say, that this is still the strongest error of our times. Well, says the apostle, the thing is impossible, and appeals to the Jews who knew the law. Under the law, a woman could not be married to two husbands at the same time. If she be married to another man whilst her husband liveth, she is called an adulteress. See the force of this: if man is looked at as still alive in the flesh, under law, he cannot be espoused to Christ. It would be as great confusion as adultery. The apostle then may well be so vehement in opposing this doctrine. The two states are so different, that it is im-

possible to be in both. The Jew, who had been reckoned alive in the flesh, was now reckoned dead by the death of Christ; yes, dead to the old marriage state. The Gentiles were found dead in sins, and raised out of that very state and espoused to the risen Christ. (Eph. ii. and v.) I do not speak of that now. But of the Jews the apostle says, "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom. vii. 4.) Hence, do not you see, my reader, the passages that follow, instead of being the proper experience of the Christian, really are the strongest possible contrast. "For when we were in the flesh"—now does he not clearly here refer to a previous state? that is, the Jews' experience under the first husband, the law. "*When we were in the flesh* the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death," and hence all the misery of poor old I, when in the flesh under law. But does the apostle plainly show, that those who had been in this miserable state were delivered from it? To be sure he does, the very thing he states in the next verse; and also shows *how* they were delivered. Do not miss the *how*. "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead," or as the margin more clearly expresses it, "being dead to that wherein we were held," &c. Thus they were dead to the law by the body of Christ, and married to another, even the risen Christ. Now what a complete deliverance this was to be sure. Had they been left under the old husband, not a Jew could ever have formed part of the joint body, the bride of Christ. Oh! the perverse blindness of the heart of man! Only to think, after this amazing deliverance of those that had been under law, that now Satan should have so far deceived the greater part of Christendom, as to persuade them that they are in this miserable bond-

age. Most probably this is the state of my reader. Like a poor woman tied to a husband she cannot please, so with you; the more you have tried to keep the law, the more you have failed; year after year you have hoped to be better, but the more you look at yourself, the more carnality and sin you find. The question is, are you to look at yourself as alive, or dead? I mean your old sinful self. What saith the word of God? Reckon yourselves dead—dead to sin—dead to law. Now, of what use can the law be to a dead man? Can it be the rule of life to a dead man? But this is not all, my fellow-believer; you are risen with Christ; married to Christ risen from the dead. Not one with Christ from His birth during His life, this could never be; He must die or remain alone. (John xii. 24.)

Properly speaking, A.D. 1863 is not correct; it should be A.D. 1830. That is, the true christian era dates from that blessed moment when Jesus arose from the dead. He had first fully answered for our sins with His own precious blood. Yes, and more; God was first fully justified in His righteous judgment, passed on our sins. That judgment fell first upon our adorable Substitute, in all its infinite weight. The atoning work was done, before Christianity could begin. May God give thee understanding in this great fact, my reader! Ponder it well. In God's salvation there is no confusion. The predestined bride of Christ lay dead in sins, under the sentence of the wrath of God. And when He became man, who in the beginning was with God, and who was God, well did He know the righteousness of God in passing sentence on man's sin. An infinite atonement proved the infinite righteousness of God. But all must be accomplished before one soul could be married to Christ, raised from the dead. O the depth of the meaning of those words, "It is finished!" The cup was drank. In infinite love the wrath was borne. Thy sins — ah!

more, He was made *sin* for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. We cannot hold too fast this foundation-truth, that alone, before God, in His own body on the tree, He bore the full judgment of God, due to our sins, and all *first* before He arose from the dead, and hence before Christianity began. It was a complete work, never to be repeated. We are not married to Christ, and the question of sin still has to be settled and re-settled. No, that question was settled on Calvary *first*, and then we were made one with Christ in resurrection after. Thus if Christianity be really understood, if we know what it is to be married to Christ, risen from the dead, the question of sin before God can never be raised again. If once thus sanctified, by the offering of the body of Christ, for ever perfected is the assured result. (Heb. x. 14.) So perfect is the finished work of Christ that sins can never be remembered against the fellow-believer again.

Thus risen and justified is the Church, and the Church is the joint body, and the joint body is composed, first of Christ, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; and secondly, of all believers in this dispensation, joined to Him the living and glorified Head. This is not the subject of Rom. vii., but this is the for-ever-justified place and standing of the believer, married to Christ, risen from the dead. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." To the Jew married to the first husband there was nought else but condemnation; to the Christian married to the second husband there is no condemnation. Is it not dreadful to confound these two states together, as the manner of some is; nay of many? Married to Christ, raised from the dead—all is new, a new creation. Sin, the law, death, condemnation have nothing to do with the new creation. They do not attach to it, do not belong to it. They are passed away. "If any man be in Christ, he

is a new creature: old things are passed away, all things are become new, and all things are of God." What a state! One with Christ! What a justification! No condemnation.

And what a figure for the Spirit of God to use. Marriage! Nothing on earth is so expressive of perfect oneness. "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." (Gen. ii. 23.) And the Spirit of God applies these very words to us: "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph. v. 30.) Now we know that when a person becomes a bride, she enters into a new relationship—the old passes away. She signs her name for the last time on that very day—her very name ceases to be. True, she is the same person, but in a new position altogether. A relationship so permanent that death alone can dissolve the tie; and surely we may say, where there is sincere affection, no relationship so blessed.

But when we think that all this is true of the believer—joined to Him who is raised from the dead—what an entirely new relationship. Ah! this is not man's work; this is wholly of God. God raised up our Lord from among the dead, and God has raised us up with Him, and made us sit together with Him in heavenly places. Could man have raised himself from being dead in sins to such a place? Do not forget, the apostle shows clearly the impossibility of even the Jew being both in the old state and in the new. The whole old state passed away by the death of Jesus. Therefore to go back to that old state—under law—is to make the death of Christ of no avail. Like the person married, the Jew ceases to be a Jew; the Gentile ceases to be a Gentile, and both become one, joined to Christ in resurrection. And, oh, how permanent this blessed relationship! Death can never dissolve this tie. Will Jesus, risen from the dead, ever die again? Oh, no. "Christ being

risen from the dead dieth no more." And we are risen with Him—have the same resurrection-life. Eternal life can never die. Our life is as imperishable as His, nay, it is the very same. I do not speak of His Godhead, but of His risen manhood. And I ask, can Christ die again? Neither can they die who are dead with Him, and risen with Him, and one with Him. Then I boldly say, once married or joined to Christ, nought can sever the blessed and everlasting tie. Oh! that the permanency of this everlasting relationship were better understood. O believer, awake to this wondrous truth! You are not married to Christ for a few days, and then forsaken. Well did He know all your unworthiness and sin, but all was borne first on the cross; and now nought can sever you from the risen Christ. It is one of the unspeakable blessings of this marriage, that there is *no separation*. What a union! Nay, more; perfect unity. I cannot ask, Is there sincere affection in Christ; nay, words cannot be found to express the love of Christ." "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it." "He that loveth his wife loveth himself even as the Lord the church." Did you ever enter into this thought—that Christ loves the Church as He loves Himself? Oh, can you thus say, Precious risen Lord, thou lovest me even as thou lovest thyself! What peace, what joy to think of the love of Christ; unchanging, never ceasing love.

There are two more points very strikingly illustrated by this subject. Both, in a sense, are one—I mean justification and righteousness. The apostle, after showing the complete deliverance from the miserable marriage state under the first husband, the law, by being dead to it by the body of Christ, and being married to Him raised from the dead, he says, "There is therefore now, no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Further in the chapter he says, "It is God that justifies," and asks who shall condemn.

I thank God for all the opposition and controversy of late: it has had the effect on my own mind of taking every subject before God, and occupies my soul, with His character, in reference to such subjects. Now let us pursue this inquiry in reference to God.

Suppose a son in a family takes a young person to be his wife. Now if the father approve, defend, or justify the marriage, he will justify both the son and his bride. Surely he will receive the one as the other to his home. If that son be ever so rich, and if she were ever so poor before the marriage, I say if the father justifies the marriage, he will never upbraid the bride with her former poverty. They are no longer twain, but one flesh. If he is rich, can she be poor? And if the father defends, who shall condemn? I scarce need apply this. It was God who sent His Son. In redeeming us to Himself, He did the Father's will. Therefore the Father loved Him, because He laid down His life for the sheep. Do you say, My sins? God laid our sins on Him. "How can I be justified from my sin?" "It was Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again"—do I want full, clear, certain evidence of my justification?—"who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." And it is God, I repeat, that has raised us up with Jesus. Yes, God defends the marriage—God justifies the marriage. Man may despise and reject—may kill and crucify; but has not God approved? Does He not defend and justify? Then "there is, therefore, now no condemnation." Christ hath loved us and given Himself for us. He took our sins and guilt. He bore our judgment. God approves. He raised Him from the dead for our justification from our sins—washed in His blood. It is God that justifies. Now in resurrection-life; married to Him that is raised from the dead—one with Him. And God defends the marriage. And oh the righte-

ousness of God. God is just, in justifying the marriage. His righteousness is maintained in all its integrity. Both as to our sins, by the blood of Jesus, and as to our present and everlasting life, as one with Christ. For our new creation in Christ Jesus is in righteousness and true holiness.

And this leads me to pursue a little further the illustration for the other point—Righteousness. Some do not understand what we mean by showing the unscripturalness of the modern doctrine, of the imputed righteousness of Christ during His life under the law. To such this illustration may be helpful.

My reader will not have forgotten the marriage of England's beloved prince; neither the honour everywhere given to the chosen of his heart on her journey from Denmark. Now did anyone suppose that the honour shown her was the imputed honours of the prince's school-days; or was it honour, in any sense, taken *from* the prince, and imputed or reckoned to her? Surely not. What then? What was the honour thus shown her at every step of her journey? She was reckoned the future bride of England's prince, and, if the Lord tarry a little longer, of England's king. He was her honour. Yes, when the swelling thousands shouted their joyful welcome along the streets of London, it was not a little honour taken from him and imputed to her. She was received as the joint sharer of England's throne. This is but a faint picture of our marriage with Him who is raised from the dead. The beloved prince did not shed his blood for the Princess of Denmark; but our adorable Lord redeemed us with His own blood.

But as, in the one case, it was not the prince's school-day honours that were imputed to the princess, so with us, it is not the mere righteousness of Christ's life, whilst under the Schoolmaster, that is imputed to us. Oh this would be far short of the glory given to us. Truly did He keep the law, and far more than

the law, in laying down His life for His enemies; but it is not this, or anything else, that is taken from Him and imputed to us. *He, HE HIMSELF*, is one with us, and we are one with Him. He is our honour; He is our righteousness; He is our glory. Yes, "God hath made him unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.) Surely this is far more than the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ. Yes, as different and as great a contrast as there would be, suppose a rich landowner were to marry, and reckon a field to his wife, instead of making her joint inheritor of all his estate; nay, perfectly, as she would be one with himself.

Yes, fellow-believer, we are on the wedding journey—we are going to meet our precious Lord. We have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace. We are justified from our sins, and from all that attaches to our old nature and standing; but far, far more than this. We are raised from the dead—brought into an entirely new state; no remodellings of the old, but a new creation; and in that new state, *ONE WITH CHRIST*. Our old life fully forfeited; but now a new life—risen life. Now it is as thus risen, as thus possessors of this new life, that God justifies us. Oh! who can be against us, since God is thus our everlasting defence? And all of God. What could give more peace than this? And shall we give all this up, and go under the old husband—the law? Do remember, we cannot be married to both. If under law, we are not married to Christ; if married to Christ, we are not under law. How clear this makes the whole subject.

Do you ask, then, what is the rule of the Christian's life and walk?—Surely, Christ. Wives obey your husbands. Is not this the principle of obedience to Christ—the obedience of love, not of law; and yet

the law of love? Do I know Christ in this wondrous, everlasting relationship? Do I know His constant, unchanging love? With this principle I open the whole Bible; and, surely, every intimation of His will should be my delight. And this will be the case in proportion as I know His love.

I was struck with a remark from a beloved brother; he said, "Christ never took a journey but to do the Father's will." Blessed Jesus, be thou my pattern, my rule of walk. When we speak of being delivered from the law, and of not being under law, do not suppose we mean lawlessness, which is the very essence of sin. What we mean is this: We are not *on probation*, the principle of *do this and live*. It is no longer the trial of man. It is not now, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," &c. I say it is no longer probation, but pure grace. When lost and guilty, God has loved me with all His heart, and nothing can separate me from that love. I do love Him now, because He first loved me: and love delights to do His will.

But what of power.

Now we have seen that man under law has no power against sin, but law rather brings it out in multiplied offences. If under law sin has the dominion—hence the great effort of Satan at all times to put Christians under law. Grace is the very opposite of this, even as to sin and walk. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace." (Rom. v. 14.) Yea, we are "married to him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Chap. vii. 4.) "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, (or by a sacrifice for sin,) condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of

the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Chap. vii. 2—4.) There may be failure, evil may break out, but if under grace, sin shall not have the dominion. There may be fierce conflict, hateful lusts at times, but the Spirit lusteth against the flesh, so that we might not do the things that we should otherwise do. (See Gal. v. 17.)

Thus, as espoused to Christ, there is not only delight to do His will, but also power, the power of the Spirit of life. So that we do not break the law, but, whilst not under it, its righteousness is fulfilled in us.

Under the old husband, nothing was made perfect—all was misery and bondage. Espoused to Christ, all is divinely perfect. In whatever aspect you view this blessed oneness, whether as to justification or walk, all is divinely perfect. Perfect justification—no condemnation. Perfect pattern and rule of walk—Christ. And perfect power for walk—the Spirit of life.

Oh! if our hearts did but enter more into these things. What is this world's wealth to us, who are on the wedding-journey. What want we with the world; what its honours; what its politics. and, we may say, what its religion to us? If dead with Christ, why touch, or taste, or handle? If risen with Christ, let our affections, our thoughts, be there. Ah! let us read our rules of married life in Colossians i., ii., iii.; and, oh! that marriage settlement, the Epistle to the Ephesians. But to go through these, would swell my little paper into a large volume. But do read it for yourself, and may you read it as you never did before. Oh, read what God has settled upon us in Christ; how He chose us in Him; how He predestinated us; how He hath made us accepted in Him! What praise, what glory, what redemption and forgiveness of sins, what wisdom, what prudence, what riches of His grace! What a seal, the earnest of our inheritance! But read on, and learn what God secured to us when He raised Christ from the dead. Let faith

follow Him up far above all principality and power; raised above every name, and all for us, the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. And then read through the second chapter of our marriage settlement. See what we were—see what we are: and all of grace—all of God. Then read in chapter iii. of this mystery, kept hid for ages; and, we may now say, lost again for ages. And then comes most blessed instruction for our marriage behaviour. And then, in chapter v., the wondrous love of Christ to the Church, His Bride.

As with redemption, so with our marriage. We have redemption, and yet we wait for it; that is, for its full accomplishment. We are espoused to Christ, and we hasten on to the marriage of the Lamb. Ah! what was the crowd that thronged the streets of London, at the marriage of the prince, compared with that vast multitude who shall shout for joy and gladness at the marriage of the Lamb, when they cry with a voice like “the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, “Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints?” (Rev. xix. 6—8.)

What a day of unclouded joy, and so certain! For this joy He endured the cross, despised the shame, and is sat down on the right hand of God. O! shall we not *wait* for His return? Can we not say, Lord Jesus, come? What will it be to meet those eyes—that untold welcome? O glorious triumph of unspeakable grace! Mercy from first to last—love that could not be quenched. And then for ever with the Lord. The jarring discord of a wicked world heard no more. All hushed in calm, eternal peace. Not a stain of sin; not a wrinkle of imperfection; not a

thought unholy. Gaze, gaze, my soul, on the scene of unmingled bliss. All is thine. Yes, He who is the centre and source of it all is thine, and thou art His. What canst thou want beside?

Blessed Lord, awake thy Bride! O call our hearts away, away to thyself! "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

C. S.

BRIDE of the Lamb, awake! awake!

Why sleep for sorrow now?

The hope of glory, Christ, is thine,

A child of glory thou.

Thy spirit, through the lonely night,

From earthly joy apart,

Hath sigh'd for one that's far away,—

The Bridegroom of thy heart.

But see, the night is waning fast,

The breaking morn is near;

And Jesus comes, with voice of love,

Thy drooping heart to cheer.

He comes—for, oh! His yearning heart

No more can bear delay—

To scenes of full unmingled joy

To call His Bride away.

This earth, the scene of all His woe,
 A homeless wild to thee,
 Full soon upon His heavenly throne,
 Its rightful King shall see.

Thou, too, shalt reign—He will not wear
 His crown of joy alone.
 And earth His royal Bride shall see
 Beside Him on the throne.

Then weep no more—'tis all thine own—
 His crown, His joy divine,
 And, sweeter far than all beside,
 He, He Himself, is thine.

