

THE CHASTE VIRGIN

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*“I am jealous over you with godly jealousy:
for I have espoused you to one Husband,
that I may present a chaste virgin to Christ.”*

2Co.11:2

REFERENCES USED IN THIS PUBLICATION

- **American Standard Version** (ASV or AV) is a version of the Bible that was released in 1901. It soon came to have other names, such as the American Revised Version, the American Standard Revision, the American Standard Revised Bible, and the American Standard Edition. By the time its copyright was renewed in 1929, it had come to be known by its present name, the American Standard Version.
- **Diaglott** is a two-language polyglot translation, of the New Testament by Benjamin Wilson, first published in 1864. It is an interlinear translation with the original Greek text and a word-for-word English translation in the left column, and a full English translation in the right column.
- **King James Version** (KJV) references are used throughout this publication unless otherwise noted.
- **Revised Version** (RV) (or English Revised Version) of the Bible is a late 19th-century British revision of the King James Version of 1611. It was the first and remains the only officially authorized and recognized revision of the King James Bible.
- **Wuest:** Kenneth Samuel Wuest (1893–1962) was a noted New Testament Greek (Κοινή) scholar of the mid-20th century...produced his own English translation of the New Testament (the Wuest Expanded Translation – abbreviated WET) based on Nestle's critical text.

Note: *Definitions of references pulled from WikipediA, The Free Encyclopedia, January 2013.*

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"This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." [Eph.5:32]

The above citation was addressed by the Apostle Paul to the church at Corinth. This church is representative of the whole of Christendom. It may be called the cosmopolitan church, because it embraces in its fold believers of all nations in their different stages of growth or development: The carnal or babes, as well as the spiritual or full-grown men. Yet, Paul tells them, that he has "*betrothed*" (espoused) them to one husband. Observe the exalted honor which was given to Paul of proposing to The Church and engaging her to Christ: he was master of ceremonies, we might say.

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." [2Co.11:2]

But this proposal of marriage was for a certain purpose and carried with it certain conditions. The purpose is stated in the above verse that he, Paul, may have the joy of presenting "**a chaste virgin to Christ.**" The conditions of such fitness are outlined in the following verses of the chapter.

Observe, as we stated, that Paul, by his Gospel, has called the whole Church to this attainment; for, attainment it certainly is despite all that unbelief and indifference may say to the contrary. Christ must have a Bride like Himself, a companion meet for Him – not an infant nor a child – a mature woman full grown in every respect, able to enter into fullest sympathy and understanding with all His desires and plans. The whole Church has been betrothed; but they will not all qualify as the "chaste virgin" who shall be presented.

Again, we urge, observe the language carefully; every word is important. Paul states that he has called the whole company into this engagement of marriage; and it is for the purpose of presenting "**a chaste virgin to Christ.**" That is, the betrothal carries reservations with it; there are qualifications which have to be met. The young woman who is engaged must be proved and tried; she must measure up to the standard—Christ, who is set before her—and thus grow up into His likeness. She must have His nature fully developed and manifested in her. This is only possible as she holds Him as her Head (she the conscious weaker vessel, absolutely dependent upon Him) in a perfect fellowship of spirit, soul, and body Divinely Equipped, strengthened, energized, and harmonized by His abundant life of which she is a partaker.

What is the purpose of betrothal? Is it not that the engaged couple may become better acquainted, that they may really ascertain whether they desire a life union or not? Their relationship is on probation, as it were. If one finds the other fickle, inconstant, or untrue, he or she is not under bondage in such cases. The engagement may be annulled. Now, this is the case in the natural; but in the spiritual, in the case of Christ and His Lady, there is this essential difference...Christ is **NOT** on probation. He cannot fail this called-out company. His love has been proven already. He left the glory to win the desire of His eyes. He stooped down to the death of the cross and the humiliation of the tomb that He might deliver her from a former lord and master, the old Adam; therefore, it is impossible for Him to fail her.

He has already met all the conditions. But, with her, it is different. This is her day to be proven and found faithful. She has conditions to meet to win Christ, even as He had to win her. Paul, as the foremost of the Bridal company, said, ***"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ"*** [Col.1:24]. This ***"chaste virgin"*** learns obedience by the things which she suffers, even as her liege Lord [Heb.5:8].

Paul feared for The Church that some might lose, not their souls, but the opportunity of the attainment of the chaste virgin whom he must present. Moreover, we are informed of the reason for his fear—because of the **SUBTLETY** of Satan. He knew the power and craft of the foe with whom they would be in conflict; therefore, he warned of the danger. He showed the net (trap) that the enemy would set for the unwary; but ***"surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird"*** [Pro.1:17]. But unfortunately, The Church as a whole did not see the trap, because they failed to read and heed the warning; hence, Christendom has fallen into the very snare of which Paul warned—the very same one into which Eve was beguiled. Let us as individuals look closely into these things, that our eyes may be opened and the net visible; for then it loses its cunning.

EVE IN THE NET

"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" [Gen.3:1]

The subtlety of Satan was expressed in the fact that he addressed himself to ***"the woman"*** instead of to her husband. God had spoken to the man only; therefore, the responsibility was on him alone. Eve was only responsible to heed Adam's voice. Satan knew this. She was the weaker vessel. She was beguiled. But Adam could not have been beguiled. He was not deceived, but the woman was [1Ti.2:14]. Immediately her weakness was apparent. She answered the tempter instead of referring him to her husband who would have been able to cope with him. Here is where the woman failed. She took the matter into her own hands, became independent of her head, and consequently she fell an easy prey to Satan.

Now for the application: The Church, like Eve, is the weaker vessel. She is only responsible to heed the voice of her Head, her Husband. He is the responsible part. He has met and defeated the enemy at the cross; therefore, she has but to depend upon Him. Just here is where she, like her prototype, has woefully failed. She does not refer the serpent to her Husband and let Him settle the question, but endeavors to answer him herself and overcome him with carnal weapons. But, alas, she is not able to resist the craft of the serpent. He beguiles her instead. She becomes independent of her Lord, and thus is ***"corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ"*** [2Co.11:3]. By simply holding the Headship of Christ, the Last Adam, The Church could have escaped the snare of which Paul warned. To leave the responsibility upon Him and be subject unto Him, even as a Christian woman is taught that she be subject to her own husband in everything, is her safety and assurance that

Christ will undertake for her in every problem and hold the place that she gives Him [Eph.5:24].

Here is our safety as individuals, learning our weakness—our helplessness—and leaving all the responsibility upon our sufficient Head whom Paul preached. He insists that we listen to his Gospel, as he says, “***If he that cometh preacheth another Jesus***” [2Co.11:4]. This implies that there would be those, even as there were at that very time, who would be strong and able in themselves; therefore, would not be preaching the same Jesus whom Paul preached. He preached a humble lowly Man who was rejected by the world and whose affianced wife goes the same route; they put a cross upon Him and they will put one upon her if she follows in His footsteps. Hence, the Spirit whom Paul’s converts received was not the spirit of this world (which is proud, boastful, and self-sufficient) but the Spirit of God who had come to guide The Church into all the Truth. He came to take of the things of Christ and show them unto her, that she might enter in and become a partaker of her Husband’s glory. When received, Paul’s Gospel brings Paul’s experience of suffering and also of victory.

But he wants it distinctly understood, that, although he went this rejected way, he did not glory in the flesh in any measure as others; yet it was not because he did not have one word in which to boast. For he says that he came “***not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles***,” Peter and John, as to natural pedigree [2Co.11:5]. Later he goes further and states, as to his labors, that he was not only not behind but much further ahead of them all.

Paul, the star of greatest magnitude in this glorious galaxy, did not glory in anything that he was in the natural (whether religious or otherwise); but, he gloried in things from which the flesh shrinks: Labors, trials, afflictions, weaknesses, infirmities, necessities. He recounts his sufferings on account of the Gospel:

- Stripes above measure,
- imprisonments,
- deaths often,
- shipwrecks,
- stonings,
- journeyings,
- perils,
- weariness,
- pain,
- watchings,
- hunger,
- thirst,
- fastings,
- nakedness; and,
- lastly, the incessant care which he bestowed upon The Churches which he had established and for which he travailed in spirit again and again [2Co.11:23-28].

Ah, what language of love, only out-measured by Christ; for it was the same unselfish constraining love manifested again in Paul. How different from the proud boastful language of the day...the vauntings of the flesh, "the lowing of the cattle"...that one hears on every side. How few are traveling the way of rejections, of sufferings, and of toil. How few are following Paul in this unpopular way, because they refuse to preach his Gospel. It cuts back the flesh too deeply; it puts the old man out of business; it shuts his mouth. Yes, it leaves him in the grave; hence, the new man is absolutely dependent upon God, even as helpless as Christ was when he was in the tomb.

But these things, which bring reproach from which others shrink, were Paul's credentials. He held his helplessness, his sufferings, his toil up for inspection rather than his influence, his achievements, his prowess, because God thus got all the glory for his useful life. These necessitated His coming to Paul's help. Christ's sufficiency therefore, was made manifest. The Spirit of God spread a tabernacle over this humble instrument, whereby he was covered altogether; and his words and speech were "*in demonstration of the Spirit and of power*," therefore, effectual [1Co.2:4].

Thus he, like the worthies of old who obtained "a better resurrection," "*out of weakness*" was "*made strong*" [Heb.11:34-35]. Even as Christ, "*though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of God*" [2Co.13:4]. So Paul too, in this place of dependence which he chose, called forth the mighty display of God's power in his behalf. Sometimes even this display was in such a hidden despised way, as he intimates in the closing verses of 2 Corinthians 11, that none but those enlightened would realize that it was God. But Paul appears to delight to tell of these things of which men are ashamed. These are his credentials to the Bridehood. That is the reason he exults in his weakness and infirmities; therefore, he ends the great category with no thrilling escape from the garrisoned city of Damascus in a great chariot of fire. But in the most commonplace manner his exit was accomplished in a basket let down over the wall in a frail temporary receptacle (apt figure of the fragile earthen vessel in which he journeyed here), and he escaped from the power of the enemy many times.

Therefore, we see our calling, brethren. We who aspire to this coveted place to which Paul has espoused The Church. A calling to a service of love, to a path of reproach and affliction, a route of suffering and shame, unknown by the world, and unloved except by those who are traveling the same narrow way. But, the toil of the journey seems nothing, when we look to that glorious day when this glorious assembly shall be caught up without "*spot or wrinkle*" to meet the Bridegroom in the air. That will be before the great bulk of believers who do not qualify for the place or do not choose to go outside the camp unto this Man of destiny. Remember, it is written, "*If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him*" [2Ti.2:12]. All who are begotten of God are heirs; but only to such as suffer with Him is the promise of jointly sharing in Christ's glory and His inheritance. Let us choose the best.

CHRIST, MY ALL IN ALL

O CHRIST, MY ALL IN ALL THOU ART,
MY REST IN TOIL, MY EASE IN PAIN;
THE BALM TO HEAL MY BROKEN HEART;
IN STORMS MY PEACE, IN LOSS MY GAIN;
MY JOY BENEATH THE WORLDLING'S FROWN;
IN SHAME, MY GLORY AND MY CROWN.
IN WANT, MY PLENTIFUL SUPPLY;
IN WEAKNESS, MINE ALMIGHTY POWER;
IN BONDS, MY PERFECT LIBERTY;
MY REFUGE IN TEMPTATION'S HOUR;
MY COMFORT 'MIDST ALL GRIEF AND PAIN;
MY LIFE IN DEATH, MY ENDLESS GAIN.

