

# The Best Match



# The Best Match

## The Soul's Espousal to Christ

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# THE BEST MATCH

“I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you a chaste virgin unto Christ.”

2 Corinthians 11:2

## Chapter 1

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*Wherein an introduction is made into our intended discourse, the foundation thereof laid, and the matters to be inquired into in our procedure therein proposed*

**A** new covenant relation to Christ is certainly a concern of the greatest weight and highest importance to the sons of men of any in the world; it is what lies at the foundation of all true happiness, both in time and eternity. Without it, as a learned divine has well observed, we are not Christians; we are only the carcasses of Christians. Nor may we expect any saving advantage by anything that Christ has done or suffered for poor sinners. And this relation, of so much weight and importance to us, the Scripture represents under various notions and expressions. It is represented to us sometimes under the notion of a king and subjects; hence Christ is called “King of Saints.” Sometimes it comes under the notion of a father and his children; hence He is called “the everlasting Father”; and they are His own words unto God the Father: “Behold I,

and the children which Thou hast given Me.” Sometimes it is represented under the notion of a head and members; hence Christ is said to be the Head of the body, the church; and, on the other hand, believers are said to be the body of Christ and members one of another. And to mention no more, sometimes, as in my text, and frequently elsewhere, it is represented to us under the notion of Husband and wife, Bridegroom and bride, or the soul’s espousal to Christ as its own and only Husband. And under this notion I shall, God assisting, speak a little of it, and but a little, no more than to make way for a practical design I have in my eye, which is to woo and allure poor souls into an espousal or marriage covenant with this blessed husband, the Lord Jesus Christ.

That, then, which is before us to be treated of is the marriage or espousal between Christ and believers; and, the better to make way hereunto, you may observe that there is a threefold marriage as relating to Christ and us:

1. There is the personal marriage, and that is between the Person of the Son of God, the second Person in the Trinity, and our nature. This Calvin calls *Verbum Incarnatum*, the Incarnate Word; or, as the evangelist expresses it, “the Word made flesh.” This we generally call the hypostatic union.

2. There is the mystical marriage, and that is between the Person of Christ, God-man, and the person of believers, as militant here on earth; the whole Christ and the whole believer being made one. This the apostle calls being joined to the Lord and being one spirit with Him. And this we usually call the spiritual union.

3. There is the heavenly marriage, and that is be-



tween Christ and the Church triumphant above; which, indeed, is the consummation of the two former, and this I would call the glorious union; and what that is I cannot tell, but do hope I am going to see. In the first of these lies the foundation of all our happiness; by the second we are brought into an initial participation of it; by the third we are put into the full possession and enjoyment thereof forever. Now it is neither the first nor the last, but the second of these the apostle here speaks of when he says, "I have espoused you to one Husband, even to Christ"; which accordingly I shall make the subject of my ensuing discourse; which, as also the sum of the apostle's intendment, you may take in this short position: There is a blessed espousal or marriage relation between Christ and believers; or that believers are married or espoused to Christ as their only Husband.

"I have espoused you," says the Apostle, "to one Husband"; not to many but to one, and who is that? Why, Christ, God-man; so the next words declare, "I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." The same is also held forth in other Scriptures. "He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom," said John the Baptist concerning Christ and His Church. And again, "Come hither," says the angel to John, "and I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife," that is, the Church, which is the wife and spouse of Christ; but I forbear.

What this espousal or marriage relation between Christ and believers is, as also how it is made up and accomplished, are the principal things to be inquired into for the clearing of what lies before us, which, therefore, I shall address myself unto.