

the whole chapter is taken up with this subject, we will first offer a few general remarks. It appears that the Corinthians had written to the apostle and propounded a number of questions regarding marriage, and to all their questions he rendered clear and distinct answers; but nowhere laid the smallest restriction on the freedom of choice, and Peter in his first epistle, third chapter, confirms the same doctrine that Paul "ordained in all churches" verse 39, "but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will." There is no ambiguity in this language, and it is in harmony with what precedes it in this chapter. "Only in the Lord." It is contended that these words convey the idea that the person (the widow) is permitted to be married to, must be in the Lord. Now there is no construction that can be put upon these words that can make them have any reference to the man the widow is at liberty to be married to, no not even by inference.

Now beyond all dispute to be married "only in the Lord" is a spiritual marriage, and the apostle throughout this chapter is giving commands and advice concerning temporal marriage, so that the words "only in the Lord" is unconnected with any part of the chapter; but these words as they stand alone cannot convey to us the information the apostle intended. We must therefore examine some other part of his writings, where he is treating of the same subject. This we will find in Rom vii: 2-3, in these verses we have the same subject, the same reasoning, and the same decision as in Cor. vii: 39. In the fourth verse of this chapter he shows the necessity of being dead to the law, before we can be married to him who is raised from the dead. When we are thus married we are in a state that we can "bring forth fruit unto God." This important doctrine the Apostle inculcates throughout his writings. In scripture language to "put on Christ" or to be "married to him who is raised from the dead" is synonymous with being married "only in the Lord," none will dispute. In 1 Cor. vii: 40, the apostle's judgment is that if the widow would remain unmarried she would be happier; and we have his reasons for thinking so in the 32, 33, and 34th verses of this chapter. Here the apostle shows that the unmarried are in a better state for bringing forth fruit unto God than those that are married. By giving the above quotations due consideration, I think that none need be at a loss to know what the Apostle means by the words "only in the Lord."

In Gen vi: 2 it is showed that the antediluvians were at liberty to be married "to all which they chose." In Num. xxxvi: 6, when the case of the daughters of Zelophehad was brought before the Lord, the response was, "saying, let them marry to whom they think best" and in 1 Cor. vii: 39, "she is at liberty to be married to whom she will." Here are three creditable witnesses, and they are decisive in the absence of all opposing testimony that the whole of Adam's posterity have the liberty of being married to whom they will, and this harmonizes with the law and the gospel; if they make a judicious choice they will be happy, but if they make an injudicious choice misery may be the result.