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FIDELITY TO EARTHLY AND HEAVENLY BRIDEGROOMS.

Dear Mr. Russell:

Since appreciating the light of present truth and endeavoring to walk in it I have been much restrained in my reading, and have several times been forbidden to attend any meetings held, or to hold any communications with any of the dear brethren.

For a while I quietly submitted and never had any reading matter around, except the Bible, when my husband came home. Then I grew bolder, and began to leave a tract about again. But each attack was worse, and finally my husband said: "If I see any more of those books or tracts about I'll burn them." My son has a Leeser, a Diaglott, etc.; they as well as the "*Dawns*," were all taken care of by my oldest son who is not in the truth.

I find I must read the "*Dawns*"; they are more to me than my daily food, yet when I surreptitiously get one and am reading, I tremble and hide it if I hear a footfall. I am not happy, especially since it was shown to me that we should obey God, rather than man. Ought I to obey my husband [R3089 : page 303] in this, seeing that Christ is my Head? I feel like a coward in this.

OUR REPLY.

Dear Sister:

Your favor of the 22nd is before me. I am glad that you have expressed yourself freely, and am glad to note that you have the spirit of a sound mind on this important subject. Your husband, probably a strong-minded man, has not fully recognized to what extent his attitude toward you on this subject is unreasonable and tyrannical. We

are fully in sympathy with the Scriptural injunction that wives should obey their husbands; but this does not, as you have perceived, imply that the wife should obey her husband in matters contrary to the admonitions of the heavenly Bridegroom. No reasonable earthly husband will make such requirements, and we will trust that yours will consider the matter differently ere long. He will be helped, however, in seeing the right way by your kind and loving treatment of him, and your earnest endeavor to please him in all legitimate and proper ways, but by your positiveness, your firm decision and resolute conduct in the matters which appertain to your proper liberties of conscience. I would readily agree to keep my books and papers out of sight during my husband's presence in the home; but I would neither agree not to think nor to read, nor would I agree to absent myself from the meetings of those of like precious faith.

I would tell my husband plainly that it is our duty to obey the heavenly Bridegroom first, and that when he says "Forget not the assembling of yourselves together," I considered it duty to follow that admonition at any cost; that I hoped this would appeal to him as a reasonable and correct course; that I had no thought of neglecting legitimate, proper, home obligations and duties toward him, and the other members of my family, but would be as faithful or more faithful, than if under the influence of any other than my present convictions. I would tell him that this much liberty at least was thoroughly understood by me when entering the marriage relationship; that if in his marriage vows he did not intend to accord liberties of conscience he had misled and deceived me, and that in any event I would not submit to that kind of bondage, and that the quicker the matter was decided the better; that under no circumstances or conditions would I move one iota from this position, so long as I considered that my position was according to the will of the Lord; that if this led to any breach between us the fault and the change were certainly on his side, as I had never given away my liberty of conscience and never intended to do so, and would not ask him to violate his; that I believed that my

view of this would not only stand the test of the Scriptures but also of all men and women possessed of sound common sense.

In harmony with this I would assure my husband that the truth, so far from making me less careful of his interests and my obligations as a wife, should make me more careful; and that I believed that if he took a right view and stand upon the subject, as I was determined to do, it would mean an increase of blessing to us both and to the household.

If after a reasonable season of patient, loving remonstrance against such attempts to fetter my conscience there was no change for the better, I would consider that I had been *deserted* by my husband; – that he had ceased to be a husband and become an oppressor and was not treating me as even a slave might hope to be treated in respect to his or her conscientious convictions. Taking the matter to the Lord I should look for relief – for the liberty wherewith Christ makes free. Not liberty to remarry, however; indeed even aside from the divine law making marriage perpetual (except upon one condition – Matt. 19:9) such an experience should be sufficient for anybody.

I will remember you at the throne of grace, that the Lord will guide in your affairs.

"THE GREAT COMPANY."

Question. – When and how did the class that fails to keep its consecration get "before the throne"? I understand that this class is to pass through the tribulation and "wash its robes and make them white in the blood of the lamb."

Answer. – This class seems to be located most particularly at the present time – altho there may have been some throughout this age, who, because of failure voluntarily to suffer, have been forced to suffer either with Christ in tribulation experiences, or to deny him and thus be condemned to the Second Death. In the tribulation time which will

follow the Church's glorification we anticipate crucial tests upon all the Lord's true people, and faithfulness then will mean "great tribulation" ending in death, which to these will signify change to spiritual conditions. On the other hand failure to meet the trials devotedly will mean full, intelligent rejection of Christ, and will bring the full penalty of such a course; viz., Second Death.

