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Crux

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them like Christ loves the Church. Similarly, wives should not be submissive on the basis of societal constructions but on behalf of the church's exemplary subordination to Christ. Thus, Ephesians elevates the Christian marriage in that it is supposed to mimic the divine relationship between Christ and the church.

Furthermore, the Ephesian notion of marriage also adds a burden for individuals to seek marriage, and this is not present in First Corinthians. Commenting on the marital passages in Ephesians, one scholar notes, "A woman without a husband is incapable of existence, just as the church is incapable of existence without Christ, who redeemed her and sustains her life."³³ Therefore, a woman needs a husband so that she can live the elevated Christian lifestyle. Similarly, men are also obligated to marry as they should strive to imitate Christ, the prototype of the loving husband.³⁴

Thus, the inferred obligation to marry and exalted status of married individuals is very different from the notion of marriage offered by First Corinthians. Whereas First Corinthians stresses that marriage results in anxieties and distress, Ephesians asserts that marriage allows Christians to take part in the "unselfish sacrificial love of Christ."³⁵ The single life is praised in First Corinthians in that it allows humans to focus on God. However, in Ephesians, being single would not allow Christians to participate in Christ's relationship with the church to the same extent that a married couple could. Furthermore, the author of Ephesians never comments on how the apocalypse impacts marriage (or even mentions it in the same context) and this was a prominent influence on Paul regarding marriage. If anything, the author of Ephesians seems to believe that the apocalypse is not imminent due to the fact that the author provides married couples with instructions on how to raise children.³⁶ However, as noted earlier, raising children would be of little importance if the world was about to end. Therefore, the Ephesian view of marriage diverges from the conception of First Corinthians in that the marital relationship is both exalted and preferable to the single life.

Realized Eschatology

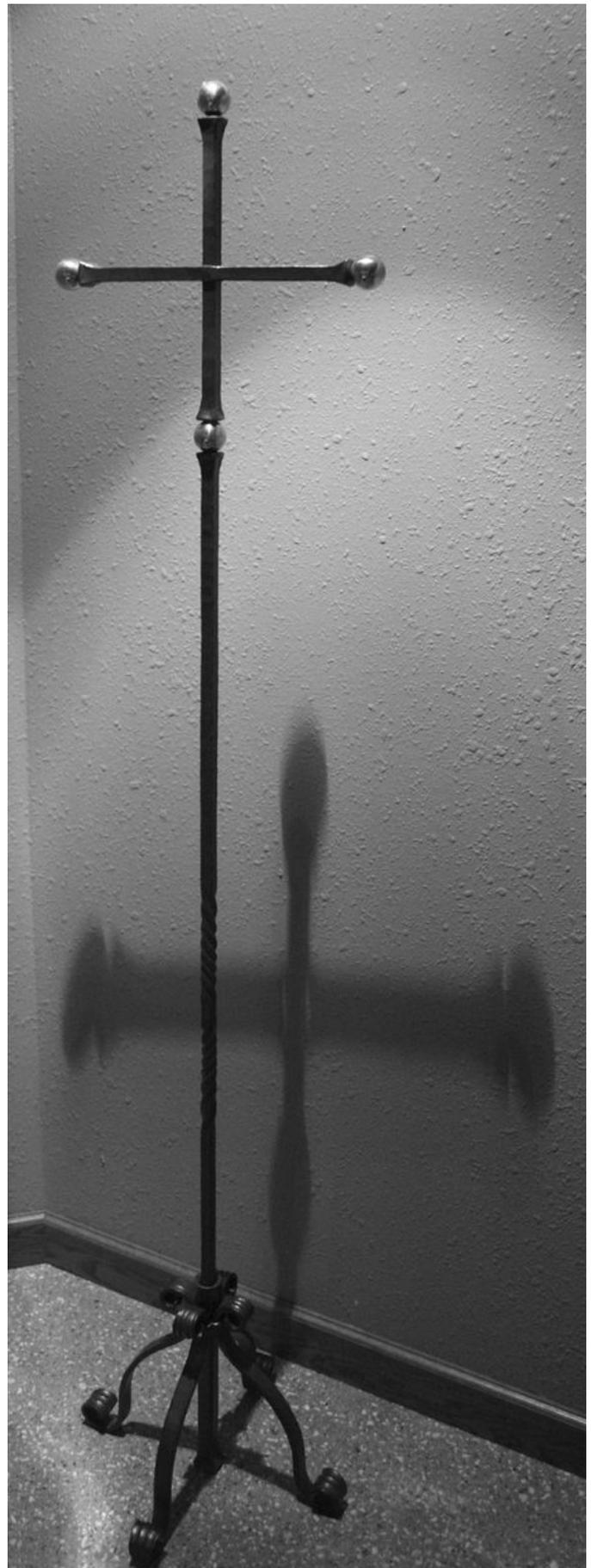
Unlike the Pauline notion of an eagerly anticipated resurrection, Ephesians portrays a realized eschatology in which

³³ Annette Merz and Brian McNeil, "Why did the pure bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11.2) become a wedded wife (Eph. 5:22-33)? Theses about the intertextual transformation of an ecclesiological metaphor," *Journal For The Study Of The New Testament* 79 (September 1, 2000): 137. ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost (accessed December 13, 2011).

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ "Commentary on Ephesians." In *The Oxford Bible Commentary*. Oxford Biblical Studies Online, <http://www.oxfordbiblicalstudies.com/article/book/obso-9780198755005/obso-9780198755005-div1-891> (accessed 12-Dec-2011).

³⁶ *The Harper Collins Study Bible*, Ephesians 6:4.



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