

“RELATIONSHIP OF THE CHURCH AND JESUS CHRIST”

(Discourse below by W. Knox of Glasgow, Scotland. 1913 Convention Report, page 382)

Our study is upon the relationships of the Church and Jesus Christ. We see clearly the various illustrations in the Scriptures under pictures of the Vine and its Branches, the Body with its Head, the Temple and its Priesthood. We shall now consider the illustration of the Bride and Bridegroom.

Our Lord has given us a wonderful symbol in the Bride. It is one which appeals to our minds and hearts, and we know that from the heart emanates the Love of God. We see in this picture of the Bride and Bridegroom, the mutual Love which exists between Christ and the Church. We have here the unity of purpose, and a unity of sentiment, filling the hearts of the two beings. We see the same unity of purpose and sentiment which exists between the Father and the Son. There is the same will and purpose, as our Lord says in praying for the Church, “that they may be one, even as we are one.” We believe that this unity which is manifest in the symbol of the Bride and Bridegroom, plays a very important part in God’s glorious plan.

Many beautiful and precious thoughts are suggested by the symbol of the Bride. In the 45th Psalm, 10th verse, we find the *Invitation* to be partakers in the Bride class. We here have the intimation that this relationship which existed between the Bride and Bridegroom is closer, even than that which exists between a father and his son. What a wonderful thought! We are invited to be, collectively, the “daughter” of Jehovah. It is well, however, when we get this invitation or call, that we consider well not only the glory attached to it, but also the conditions. “Consider and incline thine ear.” This is a very beautiful picture of the Bride inclining her ear to catch the faintest whisper of the Bridegroom. We should also be looking into the Father’s face at all times, to catch every sign and whisper of His will for us, that we may find out what He has for us to do. “Forget also thine own people.” This is one of the first conditions after receiving the invitation and hearing the call to be partakers in “the Bride.” We have heard the voice of Jehovah and we have responded. We have now inclined our ear to the message to forget our own people, and have obeyed. We have quit our “father’s house.” Our “father’s house” is the House of Adam; we were members of the Adamic Family. In proportion as we forget our earthly relationship, and look into the face of our Heavenly Father, and look for our Bridegroom’s face, we realize the full extent of the beautiful relationship which exists between the Bride and the Bridegroom. We may say, then, that the first step is a separation. We are separated from the world, and are brought into the “Secret Place” of the Most High. When the waiting Church received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, this was the evidence of Her betrothal. When we receive the Holy Spirit, this is our indication that we are betrothed as individual members of the Bride of Christ. We have been separated from the world unto God and unto our Bridegroom. This is taught by the

Apostle in 2 Cor. 11:2, where he uses the word “virgin,” implying separateness from the world and its spirit. It means that we are a people separated unto all good works, and must look unto our Heavenly Father for every indication of His will concerning us. We must endeavor to keep ourselves separate from the world.

Notice the *Preparation* of the Bride. In the 60th chapter of Isaiah, the 10th verse we read: “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord.” It is only as we are rejoicing in the Lord that we can be in the correct attitude to accept and appreciate the blessings of God. “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord.” “He hath clothed me in the garments of righteousness.” Since we are separated from the world, we are clothed upon with the garment of Salvation, and covered by the Robe of Christ’s righteousness. This is the first *Gift* which we, as the Bride, receive from the hands of our Bridegroom—the Robe of His righteousness. We receive the garment of Salvation, and are clothed upon with His righteousness. But we have a further step: we must prepare ourselves for the Marriage. We must diligently seek to win the approval of our Bridegroom. The earthly bride employs her time in preparing her trousseau. The spiritual bride adds to the “robe of righteousness” the graces of the Holy Spirit; she embroiders her robe with all the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. She catches something of the character of the Bridegroom. This is one of the gifts which we receive when we are brought into the secret place of the Most High. When we receive of His Holy Spirit we are enabled to see something of the depth of meaning of the symbols in God’s Word. Only as we are begotten of the Holy Spirit are we enabled to appreciate the depth of meaning in these wonderful symbols. So we purify ourselves. Not only have we to embroider our garment with all the beauties of character, but we have also to cleanse our hearts, purify our hearts; we read: “the king’s daughter is all glorious within.” So WE have to be all glorious within, having the pure love for our Bridegroom, having the pure desire for His honor and our own, and ever seeking to do His will and His only, making His will ours. Only in this way are we able to develop His character; and only in this way can we demonstrate the fullness and strength of our Love for our Bridegroom. We cannot over-estimate the stimulus which is to be derived from a clear understanding of this glorious relationship which exists between the Bride and Bridegroom.

Notice, also, the condition of *Expectation*. The bride is always full of expectation toward her bridegroom, and the more so as the day of the marriage approaches. It will be seen that the expectation is from two standpoints. The expectation is from the standpoint of the bridegroom, and also from the standpoint of the bride. “The King greatly desires thy beauty.” The King greatly desires the beauty of the Bride. The Bridegroom is intensely interested in the development of the Bride. The Bride is also full of expectation looking forward to that time when she shall be forever joined to her Bridegroom. The Bride is weary and tired at times, for we know that the Church has been traveling these many centuries since the Call went forth. Rebecca traveled far from her father’s house, until she came into the presence of her bridegroom. What joy it is to know that we have now

come into the actual presence of our Bridegroom! The Presence of the Bridegroom was made known to the “pure virgins” in 1874. We are now in “the presence,” in the Ante-chamber, waiting to be called into the King’s chamber. We see all around us the sure signs that we are in the presence of the Bridegroom.

God has called a class to be, collectively, the Bride of His Son Jesus Christ. We are looking now to the Heavenly Father as His Daughters, and, because of that wonderful and glorious relationship, God is revealing Himself to us. What wonderful knowledge we have received of the character of our Heavenly Father, through our Bridegroom (for only through Him do we get an intimate knowledge of our Heavenly Father’s character). We begin to be accustomed to the environment as the Bride of the Lamb, and when we are called to enter in through the Veil, we will be enabled to enter into that environment because we have been living in it for a great many years. Then we will understand these words: “I am My Beloved’s, and My Beloved is Mine.” This will be our joy, if we have the true desire to be the “Beloved” of the Bridegroom. Then we shall be able to say that we are the Bride of Christ in very truth. Let us be ready to enter fully into the joys of our Lord, and realize that our Bridegroom is the “Second Adam,” and that the Church is the second Eve. Only thus can we realize the great work which is before us, and only thus can we take a maternal interest in the world of mankind around us, realizing that the “Second Adam” and His Eve are to be the means of blessing the whole race of mankind, and that the “Second Adam” is to be the “Father” of the whole race, and that the Second Eve the “Mother.” Let us now, therefore, see that we make it our aim and purpose at all times and in all things to keep on our Bridal Robe, and, having made sure that it is on properly, let us seek, with the Lord’s help, to embroider it with all the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Amen.