

AMAZING BUT TRUE

(By Bro. Ted Smith, given in Bellingham Ecclesia Dec. 17, 1972.)

If a noble young woman heard certain endearing words from a young man that she knew was honorable, sincere and responsible, she would certainly listen with intense interest. And, in addition, if this young man would reveal a secret to this young woman—the secret being that he had been commissioned by his father to engage in a philanthropic work that would benefit the whole human race, and that he wanted this young woman (and only her) as his associate and confidant—her interest would know no bounds, and would reduce all other interests to second place.

And still further, if this young man would reveal the fact that his father was immensely wealthy and that there would be no limit to his father's financial backing; and that he would have unlimited power and authority to act in this philanthropic project, it would be strange indeed if this young woman would not respond with all her heart's affection to this young man.

We can fancy her saying to this young man, in the language of Rebecca, "I WILL GO!" We can fancy too, that the affection of this young noble woman, for this young man, would be so intense, that it would be a new and strange experience for her. From then on, all other affections she had for her relatives and friends, while remaining the same, would, in comparison, with her new-found affection, automatically take second place.

Our illustration is concerning the love of Christ for his body members, and concerning the love of the church for Christ, her head. We think the illustration is not overdrawn in the slightest; rather, we think it falls far short of plumbing the depths or attaining the heights of these two personal loves.

We are in the habit of expressing our regard for the importance of the truths in the Harvest Message, and we are entirely right in so doing. We think Present Truth harmonizes the Bible better than it has ever been harmonized since the Apostles' day. And we have an understanding of God's Word that is superior to all other explanations of the Bible in existence today; and we rejoice in all this, and we are thankful with all our hearts.

But we have been wondering just lately if we are fully aware of the personal love of Christ for His Church; and fully aware of the love we may have for our Beloved Redeemer. If we discuss this mutual love afresh, possibly we can increase our personal love for Christ, so that we will know that it takes precedence over all other loves in our hearts. To illustrate in a feeble way what we mean when we say that we will know that our actions are proceeding from our personal love for Christ—when we are obedient to

the exhortations of the truth, we will think in our hearts—I am doing this because Christ wants me to. His will, as expressed in the Truth, in God's Word appeals to me; and so, while I am obedient to the Truth, I am thinking all the time that this is what Christ wants me to do, and my personal love for Him is back in my mind all the time I am rendering obedience. And I will feel further that his love for me is growing stronger as I sanctify myself by the Truth.

Now let us turn to the Scriptures and feast upon the words of unselfish affection that Christ has for us—affection that is indeed personal. And as we do, we will find that our love for Christ cannot be anything less than personal, and that it will dominate our lives, and take precedence over all other proper loves in our hearts.

We now turn to John's Gospel, chapter 17: "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, The hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that

the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

Next let us consider Eph. 5:25 to 27, “Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

There are some powerful thoughts here. First He gives Himself in sacrifice unto death to redeem us from Adamic condemnation. And then, all down through the Gospel age, He works with the various members of this church class, the body members to cleanse them by the use of the water of the Word of God.

And we notice that it is not in this life that the Lord presents us to himself “a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.” No, it is beyond the veil that the Lord presents us to himself “holy and without blemish.” And what thoughts does this suggest to our imagination?—there will be great joy of mutual pleasure as we are joined to our Lord, and we own him as the one who supervised all our experiences and then introduces us to glorious positions in our new bodies in heavenly conditions. This will be a bliss never experienced before.

A very striking illustration of personal love of Jesus for his followers is found in the words of Jesus addressed to Peter after his resurrection. We turn now to the last chapter of John’s gospel, chapter 21, vs. 15 to 17: “And so when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.”

Jesus didn’t question Peter regarding his love of righteousness or regarding his love of the Truth. No, he asked Peter if he loved Him—did he love his Lord? Peter said that he did; and felt grieved that the Lord asked him three times if he loved him. Of course we know that righteousness and truth were involved in Peter’s love for the Lord, because our

Lord's character was made up of elements that were righteousness and truth in their operation: righteousness and truth are in evidence when a godly character is functioning.

Again, our Lord's tender personal love for Peter was shown right after our Lord's resurrection—the angel, in speaking to the two Marys instructed them to inform the disciples that Jesus would go before them into Galilee, and that they would see him there; and the angel added the name of Peter—“tell his disciples and Peter.” Why did the angel do this?—doubtless because of Jesus' love for Peter; for our Lord would know that Peter was saddened and disappointed because of his denial of the Lord, and He would need this special encouragement from the Lord to come to Galilee to meet the Lord after His resurrection. Otherwise, how would Peter know but that the Lord might have cast him off as a punishment for his denial of the Lord? But the shedding of bitter tears by Peter was proof of his godly repentance; and Jesus would know all about this.

What a lesson this is to us to let our personal (pure Christian) love be known in a character-crisis of this kind, and not wait for the erring one to overcome his depression of spirit all by himself—he might be so crushed that he couldn't possibly make it.

The 45th Psalm is another striking example of deep interest in all of us personally. There is the love of the Heavenly Father for us, and the love of the Heavenly Father's Son for us. Here is how the 10th vs. is worded, “Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.” Bro. Russell in commenting on the 10th verse says this, “Was ever a proposal of marriage couched in more delicate and beautiful phrase?”

It is the Heavenly Father that makes this proposal to us, to become the bride of his son—we are his daughter: “Hearken, O daughter”—listen—“consider and incline thine ear. Forget also thine own people”—rise above all human relationships in your thinking and see and accept this proposal of the Heavenly Father to become the Bride of His Son. “Forget thy father's house”—we are exhorted to think of setting aside all hopes of Adamic restitution and accept the hope of a change of nature to be like and with the Heavenly Father's son to a change of nature, the divine nature.

“So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty.”—Ah yes, he works on his bride class for 2,000 years to cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word so, beyond the veil, He can present this church to himself—“holy, and without blemish.” “For He is thy Lord, worship thou Him.”—yes, he is far above us, that it is appropriate that “we worship Him.”

Now down to the 13th and 14th verses and 15th verse: “The king's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold.”—how this speaks to us of nobility and

growth of character through great trial and testing—“all glorious within.” And “her clothing is of wrought gold”—she will be clothed upon with the divine nature to be like her Lord. “She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework”—all her lifetime here on earth she must painstakingly work on her garment to embroider the graces of the spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness. This is what will be pleasing to her heavenly bridegroom, and this is precisely what she must have in mind when she is engaged in this needlework—she must do it in personal love of Christ—love to Christ.

“The virgins, her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee”—yes, this heavenly bride (the five “wise virgins”) will have the “five foolish virgins” as her companions. That is interesting, don’t you think? “With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king’s palace.” Then the long 2,000 years of the Gospel Age will be over—all the persecutions, the oppositions, testings and trials will be in the past, and there will be unrestrained “gladness and rejoicing.”

Turning again to the book of John, we read, John 14:1-3: “Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” If somebody in this life would say this to us, we would be thrilled beyond words and would live in anticipation of this great change that would come into our lives at the return of our friend. And as it is our Heavenly Friend that has said these things to us, it is no wonder that his second advent is of thrilling interest to us, and it is made the object of special study of the Lord’s people who love his appearing. It seems to me that our Christian religion takes on an entirely different meaning, than the ordinary concept, when we grasp the thought of a love story at the very center, and that the Lord’s people are the intended bride of the Son of our Heavenly Father. A personal love relationship is very appealing to our social natures.

Some years ago, as I was looking through the photo Drama book, I happened to note the expression the artist portrayed upon the face of Rebecca after she had decided she would accompany Eliezer to the far off land to be the bride of Isaac—the man she had never met, had never known and had never seen his picture. I invite you to turn to page 27 of the Photo Drama book and study the expression on the face of Rebecca.

We have been told that the favorite hymn of Bro. Russell was #273—the sentiments there denote a very personal attachment between Bro. Russell and the Heavenly Father. Let us read the verses and note their sentiments:

Sun of my soul, my Father dear,
I know no night when thou art near.

O! may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide thee from thy servant's eyes

Shield of my soul, though tempests rage
And 'gainst me hosts of foes engage,
My refuge and my fortress thou
Before thee every foe must bow.

Thy grace and glory thou dost give
To those who near thee ever live;
And no good thing dost thou withhold
From sheep which stray not from thy fold.

Thy choicest treasure, e'en thy Son,
Thy well-beloved and only one,
Freely thou gavest once for me,
From sin and death to set me free.

Yea, thou who sparedst not thy Son,
Whose sacrifice our ransom won,
Shalt, with him all things freely give;
He lives, a pledge that we shall live.

It must be that our Pastor studied the scriptures with scrupulous care, as they, to him, would represent God's special message to the heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. And it is clearly apparent that our Pastor knew he was "That Servant" to whom was entrusted the meat in due season for the "Watchers," and he bravely shouldered the responsibility of being chief steward over all the Lord's goods. He sensed the meaning of his ministry—that our Lord had at last returned and He was chosen to supervise the Harvest Work of gathering the wheat class.

"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4) These were the words that drove into the ears of Paul as he was suddenly struck down on his way to Damascus to apprehend and arrest any and all who professed to be the followers of Jesus. Thus do we have impressed upon us that Jesus regards his followers as vitally related to him—Jesus in effect said to Saul—"if you persecute my followers, you persecute me." Certainly this is another proof of a personal love that Jesus has for us—we are the men and women given to Him by the Heavenly Father.

If we are Jesus' own and precious in his sight, how do we esteem Him? Are there any scriptural words that express our feelings for Him? Let us try Songs of Solomon 6:3, "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine." And chapter 5, vs 10, "The chiefest among

ten thousand”—the chiefest among ten thousand—what is the meaning of this? If you could think of 10,000 of the most prominent and important individuals that are known to men, we would esteem Jesus the chiefest. In our estimation and heart-affections He would be superior to all; for is He not the Son of God, the Logos—sent of the Father to redeem the human race from Adamic condemnation?

Did He not show superior traits of character as he carried on his ministry for 3½ years? Did He not prove His loyalty to the Heavenly Father’s will and plan by actually giving His life on the cruel cross? Has He not been exalted to the Father’s own right hand, possessing glory, honor and immortality. There is no one in all creation who is possessed of more honors and favors from the Heavenly Father than our “Beloved.”

He is indeed “the chiefest among 10,000”—and amazing grace we are invited and given the privilege of changing our course in life from the ordinary to the extraordinary—to link up our lives with our Lord in the chief position in the Divine Plan of the Ages.

This is a great drama indeed, being acted out upon the stage of this earth. Actually the Divine Drama is being played out by living personalities—nothing is happening unless a living personality is in action carrying out the designs and purposes of the originator of the Drama—viz. our Heavenly Father. I think we need to grasp this fact more fully so that we will link up the outworking of the Divine Plan and Divine prophecy with personalities in action—chiefly our Lord Jesus.

This point is strikingly illustrated in the history of mankind. Generally speaking, people think of history as a record of the doings of nations or the doings of organizations. But if you will read carefully to see how nations and organizations got started, you will find invariably that individuals had ideas and those ideas were vigorously promoted and took root and molded organizations and nations, and these entities were carried on by other individuals.

Today, if you will read carefully, between the lines (especially biographies and autobiographies) you will find that political movements, business enterprises, national and international peace proposals, and all other important human endeavors and enterprises and movements, are guided in the way they go, by individuals and groups of individuals. And their conferences and discussions are usually behind “closed doors.” Diplomats, politicians, businessmen, religious leaders, as individuals are promoting their own personal ideas and actually they mold the destinies of men and nations.

Along this line, it is interesting to study two books by Richard Barnett to see how the United States nation has been used to further the interests of certain men of finance and business. One book is entitled Revolution and Intervention; and the other one is entitled Roots of War.

So when people are going along with certain human projects, they are in reality going along with the ideas of individuals—individuals they may never have seen or even heard of. Even such a simple thing as the rules of etiquette has been originated by some individual or set of individuals—millions of people conform to the rules set up by an individual or a group of individuals.

We think of two more instances of deep personal attachments that are impressive. One is the love between David and Jonathan, and the other one is the love of Ruth for her mother-in-law, Naomi.

David and Jonathan could have been deadly rivals; but both men were very noble in character, and their esteem for one another cancelled out any selfish considerations; and we have in their love a fine example of mutual admiration based upon mutual possession of noble traits of character.

As for Ruth's love expressed for Naomi, her mother-in-law, we have an immortal expression that is perhaps unequalled in any language, at any time. We remember the circumstances: Naomi and her husband and her two sons migrated to the land of Moab because there was a famine in the land. Naomi's husband died and she was left with her two sons. Her two sons married two women of Moab; and after a lapse of ten years, these two sons died. It was then that Naomi decided to return to Judah, and her two daughters-in-law arose to go with her.

We read now from the original record—Ruth 1:8-18, “And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead and with me. The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, and they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have a husband also tonight, and should also bear sons; would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me. And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her. And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law. And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if

aught but death part thee and me. When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.”

What a sublime expression of devotion this is, and we doubt not that Naomi deserved her daughter-in-law’s love. Naomi was doubtless a woman of sterling character and Ruth respected her mother-in-law to the point that she wanted her as a bosom companion—two noble souls were knit together with the eternal bonds of righteousness and love.

If two human beings can experience such deep loving sentiments for one another, based upon purely human traits of character and under human conditions—what shall we say concerning the love that can exist between Christ and his espoused Bride? We know the love Christ had for his apostles—he spoke of them as the men that God gave to him; and He indicated in His prayer to the Father, that these men were wanted by Him to be with Him in His glory and kingdom. Can there be any doubt as to his personal attachment for his apostles? He died for us too, to redeem us from condemnation to death. And the whole 2,000 years of the Gospel age are used by Christ to sanctify His body members with the Word of Truth that He might present to Himself a Bride, pure and spotless. And this pure and spotless Bride will be confessed to the angels and the Heavenly Father beyond the veil in glory.

If this is the love that is exercised toward the Bride, what about the love that is felt by the Bride for Christ? If we know about the character of Christ, and if we know something about the loving acts of Christ for us, His followers, what must follow?

If we have good spiritual judgment, we must realize that no other person has shown or can show even a fraction of the love that Christ has shown to us in redemption and labor of sanctification upon us. And if we have good spiritual judgment, we must know that if we become the Bride of Christ, we will be in a position of favor and honor superior to all other creatures in heaven and in earth. And last, but not least, if we have good spiritual judgment, we must realize that if we have sympathy for the groaning creation, and would like to be instrumental in rescuing the race from sin and death, we can have that joyous privilege if we make the necessary effort to become the Bride of Christ. All this adds up to one thing—to the giving to Christ the chief place in our affections, above all other creatures.

He is literally to be our Master, our Head, and we are in awe of Him as the Bishop of our souls, and as our Lover Supreme—beyond all the loves we might have for other human beings. In Him we are to have perfect peace and satisfaction, as authorized by God, who has invited us to become his daughter-in-law, the Bride of His Son.

Let us ask the 11 apostles what they thought of Christ right after Pentecost: You 11 apostles—you knew Christ and were with him during his ministry of 3½ years. You

heard his teachings, and witnessed the kind of life He led. You saw His miracles and considered His claims to be the “bread from heaven.” You knew of His crucifixion and the terrible disappointment you felt; for it looked as though His claims were false. You experienced the revival of your confidence and hopes, as you were convinced of His resurrection. After His ascension you went through a waiting period of uncertainty for 40 days. You finally saw what happened at Pentecost—as you were assembled there, you heard a mighty rushing of wind, and you saw tongues of flame upon the head of each of you; and you spoke in tongues the wonderful message of the good news. And you noted that the people assembled there with you, from different countries, heard the message of the grace of God in their own languages.

YOU ELEVEN—what think you of Christ? How does He compare with all others of the human family? what position does He occupy in your hearts affection? Peter, as we know, would answer promptly and with characteristic vigor—“Christ is the long-looked-for Messiah. He is the Seed of Abraham through whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed. He took us into His confidence and made us His mouthpieces. He occupies the highest position in our heart’s affection—no one is equal to or even approaches the love we have for Him. Our lives are in His care and we look to Him as our Head as we serve God under his direction.”

Let us turn to Paul and see what he thinks of Christ—Paul, you remember how you served God according to the Law, with uncommon zeal. You remember how you were a witness to the stoning of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. You remember how you hounded the followers of Jesus, both men and women, and, if you had had your way, you would have had them all apprehended and thrown into prison. You remember when you were on the way to Damascus on the trail of the followers of Jesus, and how you were struck down at noon day by a light exceeding the light of the sun; and how you heard a voice speaking to you—“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” And when you asked for the identity of the speaker you heard in amazement, “I AM JESUS WHOM THOU PERSECUTEST.” And you remember how you were instructed to go to Damascus and how you were led by the hands of your companions, for you had been blinded by the bright light. And you remember, Paul, how you were without sight for three days and neither ate nor drank. (Acts 9:9) And you remember how a certain disciple at Damascus by the name of Ananias was given a vision by God and he was told that you were praying, and in this vision he was told that you were given a vision, and in this vision you saw Ananias come to you and putting his hands upon you that you might have your sight restored. And you remember, Paul, how the vision was fulfilled and that Ananias did come to you and did put his hands upon you and he gave you this message (you remember it well, no doubt)—“Brother Saul,” the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. And you remember how scales fell from your eyes, and you received your sight and arose and were baptized. And you remember how you received

food and was strengthened and you stayed certain days with the disciples at Damascus. And you remember it was recorded of you that “Straightway you preached in the synagogue that Jesus is the Son of God.”

Paul, in view of all this—what do you think of Christ? What position does Christ occupy in your heart’s affection? Paul could answer and say, “My epistles speak with clear and vigorous tones, that my life has been profoundly affected by my experience at Damascus. Jesus occupies the supreme position in my heart’s affections—note a few of the things I have written about myself.”

What Paul? Rom. 1:1: “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle separated unto the gospel of God.” Phil. 1:17: “... I am set for the defense of the gospel.” Phil. 3:13 14: “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Thank you, Paul—we know that Christ is supreme in your heart’s affections.

Now the question comes to us—what do we think of Christ? What position does He occupy in our heart’s affection? How do we esteem Him? Do we love Him above every other person we know of?

I fancy I hear someone say—“well if I had an experience like the apostles did—who saw Jesus, who heard him speak as no other man spoke; if I had observed his character qualities and witnessed his miracles; if I had been on the spot when Jesus was crucified and had been a witness to His resurrection; if I had experienced the Pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit—I surely would have Jesus at the very pinnacle of my heart’s affections.” “Or, if I, like Paul, had been struck down and heard Jesus speak to me personally and had a special miracle in my behalf—I would surely know Jesus for what He is, and would give Him the choicest position in my heart.”

But are our experiences any less striking than the experiences of the Apostles and of Paul? Let us dwell on this for a few moments: We are a very insignificant people in the world. Very few of us occupy any position of prominence or importance in the world. We are not even acknowledged as God’s people. And yet, what do we have that the world around us does not have?

Who of the world, or who in the churches know what God’s plan is? Who has an understanding of the Scriptures? Who has a harmonized Bible? Who has a clear and connected understanding of all the teachings of the doctrines as outlined in the epitome of the faith that we have in the back of our Berean Bibles?—18 pages in all? Who has six Studies in the Scriptures? Who has a grasp of Tabernacle Shadows of the better sacrifices? Who has a Heavenly Manna book to feed on every morning? Who has the

Sermon Book, the Photo Drama Book, the Covenant Book. Who has the Reprints with its hundreds of articles? Who has the Holy Spirit in good measure? Who has experiences in character development, and knows what they are for—preparing them to be the Seed of Abraham to bless all the families of the earth? Who has an understanding of prophecy? Who comprehends the events in the world today? Who has heard the knock of our present Lord, and has let Him in? Who is feasting with the Lord, and the Lord with Him—on Present Truth? Who are feeding together at the Lord’s table? Who have new hopes, aims and ambitions? Who made all this possible? Who has shown us all this special love and favor from God? IS IT NOT THE LORD JESUS?

Do we need the experiences of the Apostles? Do we need the experiences that the Apostle Paul had? Are we not just as favored as the Apostles, including Paul? Do we need any more proof of special love, personal love, of Christ for us, than we now have? Has not Christ earned the chief place in our hearts, many times over? May we not say “Lord Jesus, thou hast made thyself to me, a living bright reality, more real, more intimately nigh, than even the sweetest earthly tie?”

Our Pastor made the remark one time that the Bible contains the sweetest love story that was ever thought of. As Bible Students we are apt to measurably forget this, because we have the most wonderful collection of Christian knowledge the church has ever known. We are delighted and fascinated with the doctrines of the divine plan—with the enlightenment concerning prophecy; with the exhortations and precious promises. But all these things are evidences or facets of the love that the Heavenly Father has for us—the Heavenly Father has called us to be His daughter-in-law, the Bride of His illustrious Son. All these things are evidences or facets of the personal love that Jesus has for his intended Bride.

The Heavenly Father has taken us into His confidence and revealed the secret of the Heavenly love story. King Jesus greatly desires our beauty (Psalm 45:11); and to us, our Lord Jesus is the greatest among 10,000.

As Rebecca and Isaac were finally joined to one another in the ecstasy of human love, after her long journey with Eliezer (Gen. 15:2) to become the Bride of Isaac—what shall we say concerning the thoughts of love and anticipation that these two would have before they were finally united?

Could this be any less—should it be any less concerning the thoughts of love and anticipation that Jesus and His intended Bride have all during the Gospel age before they are finally joined to one another in the ecstasy of heavenly love in the First resurrection?

Could there be any greater joy to a Christian heart than that which will be experienced when we are finally joined to our Heavenly Bridegroom?

Can there be any greater joy of anticipation than that which we have when we think of being united to the One who occupies the chief place in our heart's affection?

Many of us have very warm affections for certain ones in this life along natural lines, and especially along spiritual lines. But none of these affections can compare in intensity or in character with the love that we have in our hearts for Christ, our Redeemer, our Master, and finally our Heavenly Bridegroom.

The very names we apply to Him prove this point: He is our Redeemer, our Master; our King; He is our High Priest, the Shepherd of our Souls; He is the Author and Finisher of our Faith; He is the Bread of Life to us; the Captain of our Salvation; our Advocate; He is our Head and Judge; He is the Light of Life to us; our LORD.

Does anyone in this life occupy any of these offices to us? NO ONE: Then He is supreme isn't He?