

PREPARED AS A BRIDE

by the Rev. Robert S. Jungé

The Holy City that John saw coming down from heaven was the most beautiful city ever seen. It was made of so many precious stones that it shone brilliantly, from the foundations, to its walls of shining white jasper, to its gates of beautiful white pearl. The roofs, houses, and streets were of pure gold. The glory of God lightened it; it was filled with the light of heaven itself. The City was so lovely that John said, “I John saw the holy city new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21:2). We can hardly think of anything more beautiful than a bride at her wedding.

The dress a bride wears for her wedding is the most beautiful dress possible. It is usually pure white, soft and flowing. Sometimes a bride looks almost like a queen as she walks to the altar. She wears the beautiful dress to show how much she loves her husband, but also to show how happy she is that the Lord has given her such a wonderful love.

You see it is good loves that make a person really beautiful. The evil spirits in hell, who hate each other and even hate the Lord, are horrid and ugly. But the angels are handsome and beautiful. They have beautiful clothes to wear and lovely homes; everything around them is enchanting because they love the Lord.

Now when John saw the Holy City, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, it represented the New Church. The New Church is to be just as beautiful as that City, just as lovely as a bride on her wedding day. Often when people first hear the shining clear truths of the New Church they say, “Why, that’s beautiful,” and it surely is. The older we grow, the more we can see that the teachings the Lord has given us in the Heavenly Doctrines are clear—white and clean like fine linen.

We can always learn to see this beauty more and more clearly. And each one of us can help others to also see the beauty of the New Church. You see, the real beauty of the New Church can only be seen if we really love the Lord. If we do, people will see something of the beauty of the Church in us, even when we aren’t specifically trying to tell them about the Heavenly Doctrines. Then the Holy City can really descend on earth with all its beauty.

Now one of the reasons all these wonderful things could happen was that the dragon and all the evil spirits had been defeated. All the bad people in the world of spirits had been sealed in hell. And when all the wicked were removed, John heard “as it were the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, ‘Alleluia! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready’” (Revelation 19:6-7).

When any of us make up our minds to stop doing evil, it’s just as if we drove all the evil spirits out of our lives. Then we have made ourselves ready, and the Lord can make our lives beautiful. This is a wonderful time, like the happiest and loveliest wedding you ever went to. When we stop doing evil, and so prepare a way for the Lord, He will let us see the truths of His Word. Then we will be building a beautiful golden house in the Holy City in the other world.

Everyone knows that heaven is wonderful and lovely. But not everyone knows that we are building our houses in the other world right now. Everything we do today or tomorrow makes a difference in our homes there. When we go to the other world, the place where we live will look a certain way according to how we have lived here on earth. We have to work hard, then, to have a home that will fit into the pattern of the Holy City.

When we are ready to receive the Lord, then we are making our spiritual house lovely and warm, and for the first time we are really becoming a part of the New Church. We begin to really see then and understand how wonderful life can be. The Lord makes all things new in our hearts, and we are prepared for heaven. If we truly receive the Lord, our heavenly home will be new and beautiful beyond words.

The Lamb in the book of Revelation, who was the light of the Holy City, means the Divine Human of the Lord. (This is why it is often said that the Lamb was slain and is now risen.) The Lord is no longer to be thought of as an abstract god who is far off, or as some mysterious force in nature. He is a *Divine Man*, the Lamb of God. We can *see* Him in our mind's eye. We can *know* Him from all that He says in His Word. And, what is more, we can *love* Him and know that our love is received and that He loves us. This human relationship of love between a person and his or her God can be likened to a marriage. For in marriage there is a beautiful sharing of love, a giving of one's own life for the sake of another. Now, the Church is not literally some mystical wife of the Lord. But, nevertheless, symbolically, the love that a husband has for his wife and the love she returns to him, gives us some small yet beautiful picture of our relationship to the Lord. In marriage, as the partners learn to really share with each other, they can gain some small picture of our sharing with the Lord. For, when a person really learns to love the Lord, then indeed correspondentially, symbolically, "the marriage of the Lamb has come."

Now, just as there can be a true relationship in marriage with only one partner, so there such a wonderful relationship of love can exist with only one God. If the marriage of the Lamb is to really come, we cannot have confused notions of an angry God, yet a merciful Lord or of a Lord who suffered, yet a Holy Spirit who has the power to comfort. We must know the Lord as one God, and one alone. Otherwise the whole relationship is perverted, yes, even adulterated. It is *one* God who is just and merciful and can comfort us. It is the Lamb, the Divinely Human God, whom the lowly and the mighty, the educated and the simple, the rich and the poor, can all worship and love with the fullest of hearts.

The Lord God Jesus Christ doth reign. It is the glory of God that lightens the Holy City, for the Lamb who is God Himself is the light thereof. We have the opportunity to see the Holy City. And we can only pray that as individuals we will be prepared with love to the Lord filling our hearts, even as a bride is filled with love when she is prepared and adorned for her husband on her marriage day.

Amen.