

THE HEAVENLY MARRIAGE

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And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban...that Jacob went near and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock.... Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept (Genesis 29:10-11).

The whole of the Word is a love story. It speaks of the marriage between the Lord and His church, an everlasting covenant of love which is freely given and gratefully received. It tells of the union between true ideas and good feelings, between strong principles and tender concern for others. It breathes the promise of the love of a man for his wife and hers for him.

There is also a simple love story in the Word—the romance and enduring love between Jacob and Rachel. Now, it was not written in the Christian era. Jacob and his people accepted polygamy, so he had children by three other wives. Yet he loved only Rachel. For her he worked seven years, and then seven more. It was her children he longed for, and he loved them most when they were born. She died giving him his youngest son, and he called him “the son of my right hand,” and felt that if Benjamin died he would have no reason to go on living.

Rachel, the beautiful young woman who kept her father's sheep, represents a quality hidden deep in the heart of every person on earth. It is a most precious feeling, always to be loved and treasured, because unless we are married to it we will not know the true joy of heaven. Everyone has the spiritual Rachel within them. It is the love of those truths which teach us how to love the Lord and to love the neighbor.

The good part of us—represented by Jacob—wants to live a worthwhile life. We want to care for other people and help them. We want to love the Lord and serve Him. We want to be happy doing so. And this wish brings us to the Word to search for meaning in life. When we go to the Word we are like Jacob coming to the well of Haran. For that well represents the Word.

There isn't a truth in the Word that doesn't teach us how to help someone else, and how to love the Lord. Not one. But at times we don't see this. We read about heaven and it seems far distant—a land full of people who don't think the way we do. We learn about the Lord's Providence and wonder what it all means. We hear about charity, and it seems technical. We feel that much of what the Word teaches is hard to understand and not terribly relevant to our lives. Its message doesn't seem very beautiful or stirring. The mouth of the well is closed up. We can't reach the water.

But something can happen to each one of us, now and many times in the years to come. The Lord can stir us with an affection, a deep-seated love for the truth. And when this happens, it will inspire us with the strength to open the Word and find meaning in it. So when Rachel the shepherdess came, Jacob got up, all by himself, and rolled the rock aside so that he could water her flock from the well. Her presence gave him the inspiration and the strength to do this.

When a man meets the girl of his dreams it seems like a miracle. He can't believe the Lord made someone so beautiful and so able to touch his heart. When the spiritual Rachel appears to us it seems like a miracle, too. We find ourselves deeply moved with excitement about what is true. We want to know more. We know that we are seeing something we can use in our lives.

Jacob worked seven years for Rachel, and they seemed like a few days to him because he loved her so much. These seven years represent time spent learning from the Word. They seem like a few days because when we are in a state of love, time doesn't matter. There's no impatience. What we are doing is too important to worry about minutes. We are in a heavenly state, where love determines time.

That is the ideal state we must search for. It is a gift from the Lord that starts to transform us from selfish to caring people, people with a mission to help others, people who feel the Lord's presence and want to serve Him.

The love story of Jacob and Rachel tells of the spiritual marriage in every human heart which is wending its way toward heaven. It tells of the holy wedding between our wish to do what is right and the precious idealism the Lord has sown in our hearts. As the years go by, each one of us will be temporarily wedded to many different motives, just as Jacob had children by three other women. But the heavenly marriage, the one which is of love, the one which will endure, is between our wish to follow the Lord and our love for the living truth of His Word.