

THE
HEAVENLY
COURTSHIP
OR
**SOLOMON'S
SONG OF SONGS**

BY A. S. COPLEY

*“Many daughters have done virtuously;
but thou excellest them all.”*

[Proverbs 31:29]

PREFACE

The following refreshing reflections were addressed by the author to his assembly many years ago, and then published as a serial in Grace and Glory magazine. They were so greatly enjoyed, and have been called for by so many saints, that we decided to publish them in book form. The 1st Edition was printed in 1918 and became a special blessing to many. May the perusal of this 2nd Edition be a far greater delight to our friends than they have been to us in writing and publishing them. May none of us miss the high calling, which these lessons inspire us to desire?

A. S. Copley (1927)

We add the following:

Brother A. S. Copley, the Author of the book has gone to be with Jesus since 1945. As the 2nd supply has been exhausted, we are publishing this 3rd Edition. We trust it will be a blessing to many longing hearts who love the Lord with the preeminent love of the Bride for the Bridegroom.

The Publishers (1951)

REFERENCES USED IN THIS PUBLICATION

- **Diaglott** is a two-language polyglot translation, of the New Testament by Benjamin Wilson, first published in 1864. It is an interlinear translation with the original Greek text and a word-for-word English translation in the left column, and a full English translation in the right column.
- **King James Version** (KJV) references are used throughout this publication unless otherwise noted.
- **Revised Version** (RV) (or English Revised Version) of the Bible is a late 19th-century British revision of the King James Version of 1611. It was the first and remains the only officially authorized and recognized revision of the King James Bible.
- **Wuest**: Kenneth Samuel Wuest (1893–1962) was a noted New Testament Greek (Κοινή) scholar of the mid-20th century...produced his own English translation of the New Testament (the Wuest Expanded Translation – abbreviated WET) based on Nestle's critical text.

Note: *Definitions of references pulled from WikipediA, The Free Encyclopedia, January 2012.*

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INTRODUCTION

Solomon had 1,005 songs [1Ki.4:32]; but this was his “**song of songs**,” or his chief (high) song. It may be correctly called a love song. He enjoyed more than one recognized marriage, as indicated by the phrase, “**in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart**” [SSg.3:11]. The spiritual meaning and beauty of this fact becomes evident as we study the song. When Solomon became king over Israel, he made affinity with the king of Egypt and took his daughter to be his wife, and built a house for her [1Ki.3:1, 1Ki.7:8]. But the chief lady of this high song was not Pharaoh’s daughter, as some have supposed; because she is called a Shulamite [SSg.6:13] and not an Egyptian. Song of Solomon 1-7 describes the rapturous courtship between the king and the Shulamite; Song of Solomon 8 records the jealous entreaties of another woman. May we not discover who they were in both cases? And, may we not know whom they each typify?

We believe that Abishag [1Ki.1:3-4] is the choice woman in our song. She was a Shunamite, a descendant of Issachar, whose lot bordered on Shunem [Jos.19:18]. The words **Shunamite** (“*double rest*”) and **Shulamite** (“*the perfect*,” “*the peaceful*”) are from the same root. Rest, peace, and perfection are an unbreakable triplet. Each implies the other.

Note another identity mark. The Shunamite was a “**very fair damsel**,” the fairest throughout the coasts of Israel. In this song the Shulamite is pronounced “**fair**” 9 times, “**all fair**” 1 time by her beloved, “**the fairest among women**” 1 time by him, and 2 times by the daughters of Jerusalem. Adonijah, type of Antichrist, wanted her for his wife. Why did Solomon put him to death for expressing that desire? Because Solomon loved her more than he did any other and he had a Divine Claim upon her. She was destined to be an essential figure with him in his dominion over Israel. Therefore, he said to his mother, who interceded innocently for Adonijah, “**And why dost thou ask Abishag, the Shunammite, for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also**” [1Ki.2:13]. To take the wife of a king was equivalent to taking his kingdom.

Oh, the beauty and sublimity of all those ancient happenings, when viewed under the typical lens. David’s reign was one of conquest. He put down rule and authority and power, and thus prepared the kingdom for Solomon’s peaceful reign. Likewise, Jesus must put down rule and authority and power during the first 7 years of His dominion, in preparation for a millennium of peace. Abishag, the fair damsel, “**cherished King David and ministered unto him; but the king knew her not**” [1Ki.1:4, 15]. She was not known as his wife, but rather as a comforting servant in his old age. During the Lord’s 7 years of conquering the nations and of spuing out Laodiceanism and of judging Romanism, the saints, who afterward constitute His Bride, will cherish Him and minister to Him from the glory. Daniel declares that “**the ancient of days did sit...and thousand thousands ministered unto Him**” [Dan.7:9-10]. They will have fellowship with Him as the King, but not yet then as the Bridegroom. How wonderfully the union of Solomon and Abishag foreshadows the wedding in the air of Christ and His Bride.

Solomon’s fellowship and marriage of Abishag, as the Shulamite, was apparently hidden. It is nowhere recorded in his biography in the Kings and Chronicles. We would never have learned of it, if the Holy Spirit had not preserved this Song of Songs for us. Likewise, the marriage of the Lamb to a choice company of believers is a deep secret. Did not Paul say, “**This mystery is great; but I speak concerning Christ and concerning the assembly?**” [Eph.5:32 Greek]. Only those saints who have “doves’ eyes” can see this precious truth. Hence, men teach that the whole Church will be the Bride of the Lamb, which is not only improbable, but impossible. Just as truly as Solomon loved, chose and wedded one whom he termed “**all fair**,” and not all the daughters of Jerusalem; so our blessed Lord Jesus will select for His Bride a company of saints, whom He

will know as “*called and chosen and faithful*” [Rev.17:14], a rib portion from out the Body (The Church of Christ).

The name **Solomon** means “*peaceable*.” True to that name, God had promised David, saying, “*Behold a son shall be born to thee, who shall be a man of rest from all his enemies round about; for his name shall be Solomon (“peaceable”), and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days.*” The verse which immediately follows shows that Jesus Christ was the ultimate Solomon in the mind of God. “*HE shall build an house for my name; and he shall be my son, and I will be his father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever*” [1Ch.22:9-10]. Hence, we see how accurately the name Shulamite, “the perfect, the peaceful one,” corresponds with Solomon’s. It is the feminine of Solomon. How expressive this is of the likeness of the Bride of the Lamb to the Lamb Himself. It is written, “*We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is*” [1Jo.3:2]. The Bride Company indeed must possess “*the wisdom that is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle*” [Jam.3:17]. A King, who shall be called “*the Prince of peace*” [Isa.9:6], with a “peaceful” company of saints as His Bride will ensure a reign of a 1,000 years of righteousness and peace. Hallelujah!

JESUS IS COMING

O, I THINK THAT HE’LL COME IN THE GLOAMING
WHEN OUR HEARTS ARE SO WEARY OF ROAMING
AND THE TOIL OF THE DAY IS ALL DONE.
HE WILL BURST ON OUR VISION TRANSCENDENT,
LIKE THE GLORY OF MORNING RESPLENDENT,
COMING OVER THE HILLS LIKE THE SUN.

WE’LL SEE HIM ADVANCING IN SPLENDOR,
AND THE HOMAGE OF LOVE WE WILL RENDER,
AS WE BOW TO THE MAN ON THE THRONE.
AND THE JOY OF THAT MEETING SUPERNAL
SHALL REMAIN WITH US EVER, ETERNAL,
AS HE CLASPS US FOREVER HIS OWN.

O, THAT RAPTUREOUS MOMENT OF GREETING,
WHEN WE GAZE AT OUR LOVER IN MEETING,
WILL BE GLORY ETERNAL FOR ME.
I WILL WALK BY HIS SIDE THEN FOREVER,
FROM HIS FELLOWSHIP PARTED, NO NEVER,
FROM SIN AND FROM SORROW ALL FREE.

THE 7 DIVISIONS IN SONG OF SOLOMON

The Desires of Love	SSg. 1
The Longings of Love	SSg. 2
The Insistence of Love	SSg. 3
Ravished by Love	SSg. 4
The Test of Love	SSg. 5
The Portrait of Love	SSg. 6
Love’s Last Conquest	SSg. 7
The Emulation of Love	SSg. 8

DIV. 1, THE DESIRES OF LOVE [SSg. 1]

“The song of songs, which is Solomon’s.” [SSg.1:1]

As indicated by this song, there was an actual courtship and marriage between Solomon and a Shulamite woman. It stands here, in the middle of the Bible, as the Divine Pattern of true affection between lover and love. It corresponds beautifully with Ephesians 5:25 which states, “**husbands, love your wives.**” The spiritual and typical lessons, which the song contains, demand for it a prominent place in the Holy Writings.

You will understand the song more readily if you continually bear in mind that **THE KING** is addressed as “**beloved**,” and **THE WOMAN** as “**love**.” There are 4 Hebrew words translated “**love**” in this song:

1. The 1st is **DOD**, which expresses the nature, attitude, and power of affection. It is used in Song of Solomon 1:2, 4; 4:10; 7:12.
2. The 2nd is **AHEB**, the verb, or affection in action. It occurs 7 times; for example, Song of Solomon 1:3-4, 7.
3. The 3rd is **RAYAH**. It is affection personified, and means “*a lady friend*.” In the song, the King addresses his lady friend as “**love**” 9 times; for instance, Song of Solomon 1:9, 15; and 2:2; etc. The Revised Version and the German render the word **Friend** throughout. We prefer the Authorized rendering, because it is more in keeping with the deep devotion of the song.
4. The 4th word for love is **AHABAH**, which is affection as an abstract quality. It occurs 11 times; for example, Song of Solomon 2:4-5, 7; 3:10.

Let us appreciate the deep love that each of these friends had for the other. Then see in Solomon a type of Christ, the coming Bridegroom, and in the fair woman a type of the full overcomers in The Church, as His Bride, and we shall obtain rich nourishment for the new man.

THE FIRST STRAIN

“Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for thy love is better than wine.” [SSg.1:2]

This is the expression of affection, as we all understand. The woman seems to be the aggressor in this courtship; but the King’s previous attentions are implied. She seeks him, because he had before sought her. Likewise, we should seek the Lord that we may know Him and enjoy His fellowship. Indeed, the Bridal saints exclaim, “**We love Him, because He first loved us.**” They run after Him. Apparently they are the aggressors in the courtship. They do not hide their fervent desire. They say to others, “Let me love Him; He has brought me into His chambers; He entices my attention.”

Then turning to Solomon, she modestly says “...**thy love is better than wine.**” The cup exhilarates, intoxicates, drives away sorrow, and drowns trouble; but real love does all that, and much more. It touches and warms the heart of the **FRIEND**, satisfying her desires. Yes, the love of Christ, to those who really know Him, is better than the most intoxicating blessings. It is more than gifts, or answers to prayer, or works done, or miracles wrought. “**The love of Christ**

constraineth us” [2Co.5:14], the Apostle declares. A true bride loves her bridegroom for himself, rather than for what he does on her behalf.

“Thine ointments have a goodly fragrance.” [SSg.1:3 RV]

The word for **ointment** is the same as for **oil** in Psalm 45:7 and Psalm 92:10. Primarily, this refers to Jesus’ anointing with the Holy Spirit because His name is as ointment poured forth. The fragrance, fullness, and power of His name flow all around on account of His being filled with the Spirit. When Jesus came out of the wilderness into Galilee **“There went a fame of Him through all the region round about,”** [Luke 4:14]. Song of Solomon 4:10 indicates that the Shulamite partook of his goodly ointments. If we love and follow Jesus with all our heart, we too will receive the same anointing with the **“oil of gladness”** [Heb.1:9] with which He is anointed. When we read the precious Word of the Lord, we feel His good ointments. The name of Jesus becomes so precious, so sweet, that to hear it mentioned lovingly, tenderly, is just like fresh oil poured over us. The heart warms toward Jesus and dances. The soul leaps and the fire burns within us. The place and power of the name of Jesus, as the Head of The Church, is very little understood. How much less is the fragrance of His name felt, as the Husband of the coming mystical Bride? **“Therefore, do the virgins love thee”** [SSg.1:3]. If the sweet aroma of Jesus’ name does not induce the love of other saints to Him, nothing else will.

HOW TO WIN OTHERS

“Draw me; we will run after thee: the king hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee” [SSg.1:4].

“Draw me; we will run after thee.” We would have expected her to say “draw us.” Believers usually pray, “Lord, draw them” or “make other saints follow Thee.” But the effectual manner to get others enthused over our Lord is to be enthused ourselves. Like begets like. Love awakens love. If we run fervently after the Lord, some others will imitate us. Hence, this typical bride cries, “Draw me; then we, I and the virgins, will run after thee.”

Sometimes people are very much concerned about the salvation of souls. They say that men are dying without the Gospel and going to hell, which is very true; but, they never once speak as if they had any pity for Jesus. They pity only the sinner. They talk of a passion for souls; but never have a passionate love for Christ, the sinner’s Savior. All their sympathy goes out for the people. The heart-felt condition of the Shulamite was not for the virgins or daughters, but for the King himself.

Mary sat at Jesus’ feet to learn His Word; to know and love Him for Himself. Hence, her most praise-worthy act, while Jesus was still alive, was anointing her Lord’s body for His burial after His death. Our God wants a people, whose first sympathy and whose deepest feelings are for Him. When He can draw us to Himself, then others will follow in due time and due measure and in the right way. God will draw them by the Spirit, and not we by the flesh.

The cry of the fair maiden was heard; for she shouted immediately **“The king hath brought me into his chambers.”** What is a chamber but a place of rest? Why did Solomon bring the Shulamite into his chamber? That he might talk to her, that he might perpetuate the courtship in view of a future life of happiness and union together. Why does Jesus bring us into His chambers? For the very same purpose:

- That He may speak to our hearts,
- that He may comfort and instruct us,

- that He may transform us by fellowship with Himself,
- that we may look like Him,
- that we may breathe in His very life,
- that we may be thrilled with His Spirit and nature, and
- that we may shine, like Moses did, with the presence of God in our faces.

God help us to yield to His bringing us in; then, when we go out, we will go out effectually. Jesus is jealous for His people today. He wants to speak to them, to reveal Himself; He wants to prepare us for the rapture and for the glory which shall follow. He does not want any of us to miss the greatest and best that Calvary has purchased for us as His people.

“We will be glad and rejoice in thee. We will remember thy love more than wine.” All the daughters and virgins will be glad, because the King brings his dearest Friend into the closest fellowship with himself, and they shall reap benefits therefrom. How true that is. If we are drawn into the secret place of the Most High, others will be drawn in also. If we learn to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, others will learn it too. If we put Christ first, ahead of our own interest, gifts, blessings, and achievements, others will be induced to do the same. Younger and weaker saints will learn to give to Jesus Christ the place which the Father requires.

THE 2 CREATIONS FIGURED

“I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.”
[SSg.1:5]

Because of exposure to the weather and storm and the scorching sun, on the outside those tents and curtains were dark and dingy; but, on the inside, they were bright and beautiful. The fair lady attributes her swarthy appearance to the fact that her sisters made her keeper of the vineyards. There she became sun burnt. Yet, she knew that she was comely within to her beloved. Now, we tabernacle in a body of humiliation. Because of service in behalf of others, on the exterior we are black, sun burnt, worn, and weary. We ***“die daily”*** [1Co.15:31]. We are in jeopardy every hour. Sometimes, because we know how we appear to others, we feel good-for-nothing and talk like we feel. We are conscious of the old creation. A sense of unworthiness sweeps over us; yet, the Spirit reminds us that we are ***“comely”*** in the sight of our Lord. We are indeed a new creation in Christ Jesus.

Our undue sun burnt condition may be brought on by yielding to other believers, who lay burdens on us which God has not ordered. We neglect our own vineyard (the service which our Lord has given us) and attempt to look after the vineyard of others. Let us obey God rather than man. As Song of Solomon 1:7 shows, a slight stepping aside from the plain path of duty awakens a cry for fellowship with Jesus and rest at His feet,

REST FROM SERVICE SOUGHT

“Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noontide: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?” **[SSg.1:7]**

Here the Shulamite is addressing the King. She wants to meet him. She has been so busy in another vineyard that she needs rest. She is longing to know where her Friend feeds, not where he is feeding others. Do you know that the Lord feeds on our affections? There is such

a thing as our satisfying the heart of Jesus. Our affections should reciprocate His affections, and thus He will feed on our love. Yes, we have this illustrated in the Gospels. One day, Jesus saw a fig-tree and **“He sought fruit thereon and found none”** [Luk.13:6]. He was hungry and wanted figs to eat. That fig-tree represents the Jewish nation. He looked if perhaps He might find some fruit from that source; but there was none. There was no reciprocating of His love, no satisfying of His heart. We are to gladden His heart by our satisfying, reciprocal love. Hence, we read that **“He feedeth among the lilies”** [SSg.6:3].

“For why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?” “Why should I be tending some other vineyard? I want your fellowship and your company.” You see, she had not continued long enough in the chambers of fellowship with the King. She had gone out before he sent her. Hence, her weariness with the vineyard service and her cry for his fellowship. Of course, there waited for her the soothing answer.

“O, thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds’ tents.” [SSg.1:8]

Here the King indicates what her vineyard really was. He says **“feed thy kids.”** Now, feeding kids may not be a desirable service, but if that is where your Lord bids you minister, there is where you will find Him; there is where you will have the deepest fellowship with Christ and the heartiest co-operation from Him. He does the very best for those who leave the choice with Him.

I have compared thee, O my Love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh’s chariots.” [SSg.1:9]

Now, think of a spiritual people, not simply one woman, and you will see the beauty and grandeur of all this description. For strength, speed, stately carriage, safety, and steady on-going, the Lord compares us to the horses of Pharaoh.

“Thy cheeks are comely, with rows of jewels and thy neck with chains of gold.” [SSg.1:10]

The cheeks maintain a healthy color, being full and plump; the lines of depression appear as rows of jewels.

The shoulder speaks of strength; but the neck speaks of loving strength or strength in tenderness. A man went into a home where there was domestic sorrow. The mother met him and fell on his neck and kissed his neck. Why did she do that? She wanted someone to lean on. Her heart was bruised and broken. The shoulder would have supported her, but she sought for tender support.

These **“chains of gold”** suggest the tender, loving strength that only God can give. Hence, the admonition, **“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ”** [Gal.6:2]. Be a neck to the weak, sorrowing, tempted saint.

“We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver.” [SSg.1:11]

The Shulamite desires to remunerate her lover for his tender words of comfort to her on her return from the toil and heat. She purposes to adorn him by beautifying his garments. She expects also that the virgins (other maidens) will join her in this glad ministry.

We come to Jesus for rest from toil, for comfort from disappointment, opposition, and criticism, and for deeper communion. We get all we seek, and much more. Then we long, not only to reciprocate His love; but we wish to remunerate Him. We learn that the best way to do so is by adorning Him. We magnify the Deity of Christ and worship Him as the Holy Son of God.

We glorify the man Christ Jesus, for redeeming us from an awful fall and providing so great a salvation for us. We set studs of silver on His bosom. The song of redemption is our never-forgotten pean of praise.

Observe, up to this point (in **SSg.1:4**), she makes promises for her sisters and friends. She says, ***“we will run...we will be glad...we will remember.”*** But this is the last time she includes them. Hereafter, her separation becomes marked. It is ***“I”*** and ***“he”*** only. Oh, the deep significance of these pen pictures...a very valuable lesson.

In our earlier Christian pilgrimage, we think that all believers see Christ and love Him with the same whole-heartedness as we do. When we seek Him and worship Him, we expect that all the saints will do the same. I thought the only way to be a Christian was to be one through and through. To me there was only one grade—all fully surrendered to God, all out-and-out for Him; and, I thought it was just so with other saints. But we find, even like the Shulamite, that a sharp separation comes. We quit making promises to God for others. We tire of trying to pull them along. We learn that only some will run after Christ, be glad and rejoice, and remember His love more than wine. The majority will be indifferent, or will be occupied and satisfied with gifts, service, and results more than with Christ Himself. The few will seek Him to be their Bridegroom.

FELLOWSHIP GROWING DEEPER

“While the king sat at his table, my spikenard sent forth its fragrance.”
[SSg.1:12 RV]

In the closing verses of Chapter 1, love begins her testimony of her beloved. He hears it and answers in tender tones of appreciation. As shown by Song of Solomon 1:4, his table was in his chambers and it was there she sat with him. There she fed upon his abundance, drank of his wine, and reveled in his love. From her warm heart, flowed the sweet fragrance of her spikenard. We are reminded of Mary, who ***“took a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment”*** [Joh.12:3].

At the great, holy, new-covenant banquet in the glory [Rev.19], there will be those who serve, those who eat, and those whose very presence, enveloped with costly ointment, will grace these halls and fill them with an aroma of heavenly sweetness, purity, and serenity, transcending our highest hopes. They are the Shulamite, Mary class, who spend much time sitting at Jesus’ feet, learning His Word, fellowshiping His deep love, and entering into profound sympathy with Him in His present patience with His people, His present vital and lesser operations, and His future purposes and hopes of glory and rewards. Now...

- They drink in Christ.
- They cover Him with their adoration and worship.
- They lavish upon Him tears of joy and delightful appreciation.
- They wipe his way-worn feet with their hair (sign of weakness), which is their glory, by ministering to others.

All this is sweet perfume to the Lord and to all in the house. I dare say there are many Martha’s and some Lazarus’s, but comparatively few Mary’s. Doubtless, the Bridegroom’s delay is so that the number of Mary’s may be made full.

“My beloved is unto me as a bundle (bag) of myrrh that lieth betwixt my breasts.”
[SSg.1:13 RV]

No one should shudder at the language of real affection again and again mentioned in this wonderful song. Love, mutual love, is the essence of this song. Take that away and you destroy the song, and rob us of the sweet, rich, spiritual lessons which it contains. Husbands and wives may well read this Scripture for personal, mutual, and family profit (they should study alongside of it **Pro.5:12-21** and **Eph.5:25-31**).

There is a cold, pharisaical religion abroad, which is the doctrine of demons. It **“forbids marrying and eating of meats”** [1Ti.4:1, 3]. It forbids married people from loving each other. Of course, it breaks up homes, breaks hearts, and brings reproach upon the cause of Christ. Did God make a mistake? Is His Word not to be believed and received? **“Let God be true, but every man a liar”** [Rom.3:4].

The marriage relation is the sweetest, richest, closest, and most perfect and expressive symbol of Christ and His Bride. If they put Christ first, or set their affections upon Him, the husband and wife cannot love each other too intensely. If they both walk in the Spirit, they will not know each other after the flesh, and yet their love will be unbounded each for the other. Thus, as a husband is to his wife **“a bundle of myrrh”** and **“a cluster of camphire”** (expressions of sweetest fragrance and affection), for which she longs to continually caress him, so it is with those saints who have found that interior, tender fellowship and sympathy with Jesus Christ. They’d rather worship than work. They’d rather adore Him than announce His power. They’d rather read than run. They’d rather sit at His feet than serve in His absence; but they do all of these. They seek His face more than the face of men. They’d rather know **“the secret of the Lord”** [Psa.25:14] than the secret of power. They prefer the company of the **“four,”** who **“rest not day and night,”** saying, **Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come** [Rev.4:8], rather than **“the voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia, salvation and glory and honor and power unto the Lord our God”** [Rev.19:1]. There will be a due time for the latter also.

“My beloved is unto me a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi.” [SSg.1:14]

This camphire is from a shrub which has evergreen leaves and small white flowers. It is exceedingly fragrant, a fragrance that affords strength. **Engedi** means **“wild goat”** or **“the climber.”** The presence of the King was to his dearest Friend a bunch of ever living purity, fragrance, and vigor. It strengthened her for any necessary steep ascent in her arduous service in behalf of others.

What a beautiful picture of Christ. His presence envelopes us with the rare fragrance of resurrection life; and, that life is everlasting. There is also an unsullied purity about His life which cannot be tainted. It repels and casts off the make-believe sanctity of this religious age. We, who are running for the Prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, must do some ascending; for our toil is in the vineyards of Engedi. We have to overcome things in order to be overcomers. We need special invigorating at times. God be praised, our heavenly Lover is to us a cluster of reviving and strengthening camphire.

THE KING’S AFFECTIONATE ANSWER

“Behold thou art fair, my love; behold thou art fair; thou hast doves’ eyes.” [SSg.1:15]

The King had before called her the **“fairest among women,”** and now he emphasizes his estimation of her beauty. By **“doves’ eyes”** he means that she has a keen, far-seeing vision.

Because of their keen sight, carrier pigeons (pigeon messengers) are used to carry letters across the land. They have been employed thus to bear messages from France to England. My father had secured a dove from my Uncle Emanuel, who lived 10 miles away. He brought it home in a tin lantern. One day Miss Dove was missed. Later, we learned that she had returned to my uncle's home. That dove had ascended straight up into the heavens till she scented, or saw the direction of her home and went thither speedily.

Jesus calls His Bride by many sweet, tender titles, but the Holy Spirit can address us by them only as fast and far as we are able to appreciate and understand them. Hitherto, the King addressed the Shulamite only as "**my Love**," naming only 2 descriptive statements of "**fair**" and "**doves' eyes**." She had called herself "**black**" (sun burnt) because of exposure in service. But he called her "**fair**." No matter what others think of us, what we think of ourselves, or how we appear because of "**keeping vineyards**," oh, how cheering it is to have our loving Lord say to our bleeding hearts "**Thou art fair**." Oh, if only we look fair to the searching eyes of our Lord, it does not matter how unfair we appear to onlookers. They are only onlookers, not through-lookers. God be praised! "**Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart**" [1Sa.16:7]. Hallelujah!

What are "**Doves' eyes**?" The first symbol of the Holy Spirit in Scripture is that of a dove. In Genesis 1:2 we read that "**the Spirit brooded (as a dove) over the waters**." In Genesis 8:8 we read that Noah "**sent forth a dove from him to see if the waters were abated from the face of the ground**." In Luke 3:22 we learn that when Jesus came up from His baptism in Jordan, that "**The Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape, like a dove, upon Him**."

Now wondrously, when we receive the Holy Spirit and become actually filled with Him, practically walk in Him, and constantly yield to Him, we truly have doves' or Holy Spirit eyes. Like the dove, whose eyes are modest, tender, searching, far-seeing and safe-guiding, so with the Spirit filled believer. He sees as God sees.

Oh, glorious truth! And our heavenly Bridegroom delights in us when we, by faith, through the Spirit and the Word, ascend up into the presence of the Father and get the direction of His wondrous movements and move rapidly on therewith. Mary had doves' eyes when she anointed her Master for His burying. She understood something of His sufferings to which others were strangers. Paul had doves' eyes in beholding "**the revelation of the mystery hid from ages, but revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets**." If we would behold the wonders of grace and enjoy the riches thereof today, we must needs have doves' eyes.

What impresses me here is this: The King compliments his love with having doves' eyes in beholding the revelation of the mystery hid from ages, but it is "**now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets**" [Eph.3:5]. Today, if we would behold the wonders of grace and enjoy the riches thereof, we must needs have doves' eyes.

What impresses me here is this, that the King compliments his love with having doves' eyes. It charms our coming King to observe that we dare to take the Holy Spirit to be what He purports to be, the 7-fold Spirit of the Lord [Isa.11:1-2], the "**seven eyes**" of the Lord [Rev.5:6]. God delights greatly in those who really count on the Holy Spirit guiding them into all the truth, and who are not satisfied with what someone else has told them, or discovered in the Bible; but who have an insatiable hunger to know all that it is their privilege to know for their happiness and usefulness, and for God's glory. Reader, do you seek to be one of them?

THE SHULAMITE'S LOVING RESPONSE

"Behold, Thou art fair, my beloved, yea pleasant; also our bed is green. The beams of our house are cedar and our rafters of fir." [SSg.1:16]

Of course, she sees more in him than he does in her. He is not only "**fair**," but "**pleasant**." We see infinitely more in Christ than we think He can ever see in us. Yet, He declares, "**as he is, so are we in this world**" [1Jo.4:17]. The time is coming when He shall be "glorified in us and we shall be glorified in Him" [2Th.1:12].

"Our bed is green." This speaks of resurrection fruitfulness. In springtime, look out upon a vast field of green. There has been a resurrection from the cold, bleak, freezing winter. Life has come out of death, followed by growth, freshness, and fruitfulness. Our mutual devotion with our heavenly Bridegroom is not simply productive of pleasure, but of evergreen, ever-growing profit. Being risen in the likeness of His resurrection, we walk in newness of life; we bring forth **"fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life"** [Rom.6:4, 22]. Finally, in Christ, **"all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord"** [Eph.2:21], being constructed with strong **"beams of cedar"** and great **"rafters of fir"** (cypress). The Bride speaks of the Bridegroom's house as if it were hers as well as His; and so it is **"all are yours"** in Christ [1Co.3:22].

THE WAY OF THE SEA

OH, THE WAY OF THE SEA IS THE PATHWAY FOR ME,
FOR IT LEADS TO THE PROMISED LAND;
AND THE CAPTAIN SAID, "GO, I WILL MAKE EGYPT KNOW
ALL THE POW'R OF MY OWN RIGHT HAND."

IT WAS DENSE, DARKEST NIGHT, WHEN I FIRST CAUGHT A SIGHT
OF THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FIRE;
AND I FOLLOWED THE LIGHT THAT WAS SHINING SO BRIGHT,
TO THE LAND OF THE HARP AND LYRE.

PHARAOH'S HOST COMING FAST, BUT THE DANGER WAS PAST,
WHEN THE LEADER HIS ROD LIFT UP;
SO THE WAY THROUGH THE SEA WAS MADE OPEN FOR ME,
FOR ANOTHER HAS DRUNK MY CUP.

ON THE CHRIST WAS THE ROD, AND I JOURNEYED DRY-SHOD
THROUGH THE WATERS DIVIDED FOR ME;
HENCE, I STAND ON THE BRINK, LIVING WATERS I DRINK,
FOR THE FRUIT OF THE LAND IS FREE.

MARY M. BODIE

<h2>DIV.2, THE LONGINGS OF LOVE [SSg.2]</h2>
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"I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys." [SSg.2:1]

In Song of Solomon 1, we saw that the essence of this song is love. We saw also the mutual fellowship of the King and his Friend, and her cry for his companionship. In this chapter, we behold her love greatly increased for him, which is expressed in words of appreciation of what he is and what he has done and said. Let us ever bear in mind that the King addresses the woman as "**love**" and she addresses him as "**beloved**." This will avoid confusion in the

interpretation and application of the song, and in arriving at the deep spiritual teaching which it contains.

It is quite common for people to call our Lord the **ROSE OF SHARON** and the **LILY OF THE VALLEY**. It is very illogical and unnatural to speak of a man as a **ROSE** or a **LILY**. How strange that these figures should ever have been used of Christ. The rose and lily are the most beautiful, most fragrant, and most attractive flowers of the Judean plains and valleys. They figure the beauty and tender glory of the Bride of Christ, whether in the place of honor and prominence or in the lowly places of isolation and pain for the sake of Jesus. The rose speaks especially of the “tender glory of the Bride of Christ” because it grows on the plains, or somewhat elevated lands; while the lily speaks of the “the lowly places of isolation and pain” because it grows in the lowlands. Saints are trained in both localities for the Bridal throne.

Then, because the fair lady did not yield to false modesty but took the place accorded to her by her lover, he publicly announces her to be even more, saying,

“As the lily among thorns so is my love among the daughters.” [SSg.2:2]

What a lesson this should be for us. It is hypocrisy to say more of ourselves than the Lord says; but it is most unworthy of Him for us to say less of ourselves than He says, or to accept a lower place than He gives us.

Has He not redeemed and saved us?

Are we not a new creation, when born again?

Does not Christ call us “**sons**” and “**free**”? Then we should accept the title and state, and praise Him for them.

Does He not mark The Bride as distinct from other believers, even as He does the lily band among thorns?

Let us not refuse a separation because it brings pain; but let us rather take grace to bear it. The King’s deep compliment of his Friend called forth from her a full and rich testimony of her lover.

TESTIMONY OF HER LOVER

“As the apple tree among the trees of the wood so is my beloved among the sons.” [SSg.2:3]

All believers are born the children of God through faith in Jesus, His eldest Son. Though they thus become sons provisionally, they do not all grow up into sonship in actual experience. Therefore, they do not all afford shade for the weary, sun-scorched daughter. Their fruit, if they bear any, has not always the best taste. At the feet of Jesus Christ, the eldest Son and the well-beloved of the Father, we find delightful rest and shade and sweet and luscious fruit. Yes, He is more than simply shade and fruit to us. Observe what she said further:

“He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.” [SSg.2:4]

The name of the Lord is a shelter from the storm. To the one who takes His shade and fruit and rest, He is a house of wine. We become intoxicated with His very presence. His banner over us, spangled with grace, peace, and kindness, is love. A fear may arise that we must leave this place of holy revelry; hence the cry:

“Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples (strew me with apples): for I am sick of love.”
[SSg.2:5]

This is the true Bridal spirit—“**sick of love**.” How few saints are really love-sick for Jesus Christ. How few seek Him and Him only for Himself alone, or for what He is in Himself! How few are experiencing the deep, loving, holy, hilarity—that sweet, tender, mellow, soothing, satisfying fellowship with the Lord. And when we become thus really sick at heart for the love of Jesus, He quickly responds, so that we can say as did the Shulamite, “**His left hand is under my head and his right hand doth embrace me**.” His Name be praised! He soothes the feverish brow and puzzled brain. He stills the throbbing heart and lavishly fills the bosom with His love, and covers us with His most affectionate caresses. It is God’s mysterious appointment that Lover and love should be lost in each other’s devotion, fervently cherishing each other. “**Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled**” [Heb.13:4]. But such divinely ordained devotion most expressly symbolizes that more profound union and affection with which Christ and His Bride sustain each other.

“I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake love till it please.” [SSg.2:7 RV]

These words are also found in Song of Solomon Chapters 4 and 8. The solemn adjuration of this verse is the natural outgrowth of intimate companionship with the King. We learn not to push things. The Hebrew word for **love** in this charge is neither DOD nor RAYAH (“*the lady friend*”) as in Song of Solomon 2, but it is AHABA, as in Verse 4 above. It is love as an abstract quality. Study it in Song of Solomon 3:10. The meaning is evidently that the lady does not want the daughters to interfere with her love nor with the love of her Friend. Love should be allowed to be spontaneous in both parties. “**Stir not up, nor awake love till it please**.” His banner over her was love, and she was responding to it fervently. Let the daughters keep their ladle out. Observe that the charge is “**by the roes and by the hinds of the fields**.” She means for them not to disturb love any more than they would the animals, when they rest. Love should not be feverish, fretted, or go beyond all reason so as to rob its channels of needed rest and quiet. No doubt this refers to her rather than to him.

What is the spiritual lesson? The attitude of some believers never gives the Lord any time of rest. They would stir up His love for the lost in a spirit of unbelief. They pray for their friends in a manner that seems to criticize the Lord. Why does He not bring my people in? They are not yielded to the tender dying love of Christ; but seek to arouse it selfishly. Such saints treat other saints the same way. They have the “**zeal of God, but not according to knowledge**” [Rom.10:2]. They seem to love Jesus more than real spiritual believers. They speak to them and of them as if they were indifferent. True love for Christ cannot be awakened by any carnal ladle. Love begets love. His love to us, made known through His Word, stirs up our love to Him. When we read, or hear, of His fervent love to us, our love flows out to Jesus with a warm buoyant spontaneity. Some people would stir us up; however, let the religious gazelles and gospel hinds take it easy. Oh, let us learn the deep, sweet truth of a fervent love that abides and glides on unruffled and needs no daughters to arouse it to action.

There is no reason why the lady love should be awakened by others. The progress of her affection forbids it. In Chapter 1, she spoke of her lover twice as “**King**” and twice as “**my beloved**.” In Chapter 2, she no longer calls him by the distant, though honored, title of “**King**,” but 5 times she bravely speaks of him by the endearing title, “**my beloved**.” She concludes her warm testimony by exclaiming, “**my beloved is mine**” [SSg.2:16]. Never again does she call him the “**King**”.

"The voice of my beloved! Behold he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe, or a young hart; behold he standeth behind our wall; he looketh forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattice." [SSg.2:8-9]

How expressive are these words concerning our heavenly Bridegroom. His voice is heard in the distance. His real activities are beheld in the heavenlies (holy heights). His real activities are youthful and bounding. This is manifest in the renewal of the youth of those who drink His resurrection life into their bodies. His approaches to men are modest and retiring, even **"standing behind our wall..."** Once **"He made as if He would go further"** [Luk.24:28]. He does not crowd Himself upon our affections and attentions. He stands, looks, and shows Himself, but is modestly hidden. Who will recognize and welcome Him?

"My Beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." [SSg.2:10-12]

Ah, there is one; the choice one of her mother. She especially hears His voice on this mountain; his leaping, hill-skipping, window-staring, lattice-showing visit. He is especially seeking an interview with His Bride; for she declares, **"My Beloved spoke and said unto ME"**. Happy and fortunate are the saints who appreciate this **"ME"** and who have the faith to take their place as a part of this wondrous **"ME"**—the Bride of Christ. Oh, who dares to say with the Shulamite, **"My Beloved said unto ME?"**

Notice what the Beloved said; **"Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away."** Aye, this is the latter-rain summons for the Bride to rise in faith and spirit to meet her approaching Bridegroom. She is "His Love, His Fair One." He longs for her. He cries, "Come away from all your toil, and trial and pain." **"For, lo the winter is past"**—the cold bleak winter of the past centuries of The Church's barrenness through her departure from the faith of the Gospel is past.

"The rain is over and gone"—that is, the latter-rain which has been falling the past few years. The rain is truly over. We have no warrant to look for another or greater outpouring of the Spirit. There is no Scripture for it. Here, the Holy Spirit is giving moisture, life, beauty, growth, and fruitage wherever He is accorded His place and prerogatives. Hence, in our parable we read further. **"The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of the birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."** The **"our land,"** to which the verse refers, is being literally fulfilled in Palestine today. But spiritually, this also is most gloriously true. The flowers of the land of Beulah, God's rose and lily saints are manifest. The time of singing is come; for when was the Lord praised more since apostolic days than now? The voice of the turtle (turtle-dove), as this particular bird is everywhere else called in Scripture (for example, see **Lev.12:6-8**, where the 2 words **"turtle-dove"** and **"turtle"** are used interchangeably). There is a contrast here between singing birds and cooing birds. The turtle coos. How expressive of the sweetest, most tender, mellowest voice of the Holy Spirit in the Bride. Only those who yield to the finer touches of the Spirit can know this by hallowed experience. Evidently the Bride is called Christ's **"turtle-dove"** in Psalm 74:19 because she is so subdued by and imbued with the dove-like Holy Spirit, who is figured by the turtle. It is evident that only those saints who are actually and practically filled with the Holy Spirit will constitute the Bride of Christ. They are turtle-dove saints and have doves' eyes.

"The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." [SSg.2:13]

The fig tree typifies the Jewish Nation, on which Jesus looked for fruit and found none. But they are returning to their native land in expectation of their Messiah. ***“And the vines with the tender grape give a good smell”***. The vine symbolizes the 10 tribes; ***“for the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel and the men of Judah His pleasant plant”*** (the fig tree) [Isa.5:7]. This is the way the Lord sees His present Israel [Gal.6:16], and His future earthly Israel of whom it is written that the ***“Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel and set them in their own land”*** [Isa.15:1]. Hence, again He calls to His Bride, ***“Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away”*** [SSg.2:13c].

But the Bride is not yet ready. She is not yet wholly possessed with the bridal spirit and ravished with rapture glory. Listen to the Bridegroom’s plaintive words,

“O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.” [SSg.2:14]

Her appreciation of her security and of the intimacy of the secret stairs is not fully worthy of the “Rock of Ages” and of Him whose name is “Secret” (“Wonderful”) [Jdg.13:18]. Therefore, He calls for a deeper, closer communion. ***“Let me see thy countenance; let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comely.”*** Oh, how he looks for her constant companionship! How he looks for the up-turned face and the open mouth toward Him!

This is why the Lord cannot come for His own. His Bride is not yet fully prepared. She is still occupied with her blessings, her faithfulness, and her labors. She is not wholly occupied with her Bridegroom Himself. She is still saying, ***“My beloved is mine”*** (putting herself first) and ***“I am His”*** (putting Him last); declaring also His interest in others rather than in her by saying ***“He feedeth among the lilies.”*** In Chapter 6 we find a great progress where The Bride puts the Bridegroom first when she says ***“I am by Beloved’s and my beloved is mine.”*** Yet, she is still not lost to Him and in Him for she again adds ***“He feedeth among the lilies.”*** But, finally and gloriously, she sees only Him and exclaims, in translation rapture, ***“I am my Beloved’s and His desire is unto me”*** [SSg.7:10].

“Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vineyards; for our vineyards are in blossom.” [SSg.2:15]

The enemies of Israel are likened to wild beasts that destroy the vineyards (see **Psa.80:8-15**). Foolish prophets, who follow their own spirits and have seen nothing, are compared to ***“foxes in the deserts”*** [Eze.1:4]. While the Bridal Company is being perfected and the Body of Christ is being prepared for translation, Israel is blossoming in view of the millennium. But some self-appointed prophets are miss-guiding and be-clouding the people that they may not be prepared for the revelation of Christ. The above is the cry of the Shulamite and typifies The Bride praying for Israel and also for herself. She desires that every hindrance to her growth and perfection be removed that she may be ready for the rapture.

“My beloved is mine and I am his. He feedeth among the lilies.” [SSg.2:16]

This is the attitude of the ***“fair one”*** toward her beloved. Previously, she expresses a claim on him but she had not yet given him the highest place. She does not allow herself to fill his heart; hence, he still feeds among the lilies. Do not some saints pray and talk as if they owned the Lord? Do they not try to use Him? We have not bought Him; He has bought us with a dear price. When speaking to others, let us not only call Christ our Beloved but let us actually lean on His arm, cling to His heart, lavish our love upon Him, and worship Him in spirit and truth as indeed our Beloved. Let us fill up His bosom with real affection so that He will have no need of feeding among other lilies. The one lily, the choice one, should satisfy His heart, even as afterward the Shulamite did Solomon [SSg.4:9].

"Until the day break and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of Bether." [SSg.2:17]

The fair one expresses her feeling of ownership. The virgins and daughters are not running after her beloved as speedily as she had hoped. They are lagging behind. **Bether** means "*depth*," "*division*," or "*separation*." Her depth of love for him has caused a breach between her and all others. It is very painful to her. Knowing his wisdom and influence, she still hopes that he may be able, by a fleet visit among the inhabitants, to quell all friction and bring about full fellowship among all; and to induce them to love and fellowship him, even as she does.

Is this not our photograph? Have we not cried to the Lord against separation? Have we not done our best to prevent it, by even compromising in a way? Have we not sought to "**keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace**" [Eph.4:3]? How many of us have almost ordered the Lord to put an end to divisions. We well nigh felt cross at Him for blessing those who were not going on with Him with all their heart. But beloved, we cannot righten the wrongs in Christendom. No matter how fleetly we leap upon the mountains of Bether, we cannot put down strife among God's people nor hinder divisions. The deeper we delve into the Truth and become rooted in Divine Love, the wider the breach becomes between us and other saints; the more manifest to us become the subtlety, power, and shame of sectarianism. These conditions are here and will be here until our own Beloved comes in person and "**puts down rule and authority and power**" [1Co.15:24], both national and religious. We must learn to be content to say, and mean it with all our heart, "**I am my Beloved's and His desire is toward me**" [SSg.7:10].

I SHALL MEET HIM

IN A MOMENT—IT MAY BE AS TREADING BUSY STREET,
WITH ACTIVE EARNEST PACE, NOT LOOKING FOR SUCH GRACE,
I SHALL BEHOLD HIS FACE,
SOME HAPPY DAY MY LORD AND I SHALL MEET.

IN A MOMENT—PERCHANCE THE SUN WILL SHINE FROM SKY OF BLUE,
OR MAY BE WINTER'S CHILL SHALL GRIP THE VALE AND HILL;
WHAT MATTER, I SHALL THRILL
WITH SUMMER IN MY SOUL, MY LORD TO VIEW.

IN A MOMENT—IT MAY BE WHILE ALONE ON BENDED KNEE
THE TRUMPET BLAST I'LL HEAR, ITS SILVERY CHIME SO CLEAR,
WILL DRIVE AWAY ALL FEAR,
AND I SHALL RISE AT HIS COMMAND TO ME.

IN A MOMENT—THE DREAM COMES TRUE. MY LORD I GREET;
IN SCENE OF ALL THINGS NEW; HIS FACE DIVINE I VIEW,
MORE GLORIOUS THAN I KNEW.
AND MY FELLOWSHIP WITH HIM IS THERE COMPLETE.

MARY M. BODIE

DIV.3, THE INSISTENCE OF LOVE—[SSg.3]

WEAKER, BUT WISER

“By night on my bed I sought him, whom my soul loveth; I sought him, but I found him not. I will arise now and go about the city, in the streets; and in the broadways, I will seek him, whom my soul loveth. I sought him, but I found him not. The watchmen that go about the city found me, to whom I said, Saw ye him, whom my soul loveth?” [SSg.3:1-3]

Do you wonder why the Shulamite sought the King? The reason is plain. We saw in Chapter 2:17 when she advised him to **“turn and be like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of division.”** He took her advice, not willingly, but because she thought she could get along without him in a measure. This is just the way we treat the Lord. He can but let us have it so; for only by being separated from Him will we learn our deepest need of His abiding presence and fellowship. He lets us have our way that we may learn by bitter experience not to want our way. He lets us be alone that we may learn painfully that we cannot be alone. We learn that our deepest concern is to be always in His presence, to have our Bridegroom’s constant fellowship, and choose constantly to sit “down under His shadow with great delight” and be “brought to His banqueting house.”

Any degree of the absence of Jesus brings a sense of night. How truly, when we feel such a sense of the Divine Absence, we seek Him, in service somewhere. We will hold a street meeting. We will foolishly give ourselves away by mentioning our loneliness to others. What a shameful admission. We must hunt for our heavenly Lover. Oh! Let us never again tell the Lord to “TURN” and look after the divisions. Let us never again hint to Him that He should be busy bringing about harmony among His people. Fox-chasing and schisms should never again so engage us as to cause the absence of our heavenly Lover.

HER QUEST AWARDED

“It was but a little that I passed from them; but I found him whom my soul loveth.” [SSg.3:4]

How our Lord longs for the company and fellowship of His people. As soon as He beholds our regret, even before we have time to ask His pardon for entertaining a little feeling of independence, He appears on the scene. How He covets to be with us. So we find Jesus again and again saying, **“Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile” [Mar.6:31].** He took **“Peter and James and John...up into a high mountain apart” [Mat.17:1].** He frequented the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus. And in His last hours, our blessed Lord pitifully exclaimed, **“couldst not thou watch one hour” [Mar.14:37]?**

Do you see the further lesson here? It was when the Shulamite had passed from the watchmen that she found her lover. It is when we are alone that we meet the Lord. People think that if they can only get to a camp meeting or a convention, where there are a great lot of great people, they will surely see God and receive a blessing. Well that may be true; but it is only when we lose sight of the convention and the conventioners and are shut up alone with God that we receive the fullness of His blessings. We get occupied with Him even if there were no crowd. She said **“It was but a little that I passed from them”** i.e., the watchmen in the street. Yes, but a little separation from others, then we begin to meet our heavenly Guest. Glory! Someone has truly said that people are afraid to be alone. But not so when we are in vital fellowship with Christ Jesus; for then we are indeed not alone.

"I held him and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house and into the chamber of her that conceived me." [SSg.3:4]

Yes, the Shulamite is learning her lesson. She is becoming tenacious in her desire for the presence and fellowship of Solomon. Still her tenacity is not for him alone, for his own intrinsic merit, and for what he is to her. She is still too much occupied with herself and her own activities. Observe that in the first 5 verses of Chapter 3 the pronoun **"I"** occurs 12 times, all referring to herself; e.g., **"I sought," "I found" "I will rise," "I held him,"** etc. She insists on his activities running in her set groove. Her own people must meet him and hear his voice.

Surely we see here the picture of most of God's dear people. They are so occupied with themselves, their activities, their grave responsibilities, and their arduous duties presumably for the good of others. They have so much to say about their praying and travail for others. Before they are aware of it, there comes a distance between them and the Lord. They wonder why. Then when they do meet the Lord again in deep fellowship, they insist that He shall engage with them in their arduous tasks. They already have a plan mapped out for Him:

"You must come and see my mother."

"You must save my family."

How many times we have gone at someone's beck to pray for a friend, or a neighbor, only to find them not only not ready for prayer, but not even willing to listen to the Word of God. Human sympathy and fleshly zeal are too often the call to service. We need to hear the voice of our Beloved.

ENTHRONEMENT OF SOLOMON

"Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?" [SSg.3:6]

The 6 closing verses of Chapter 3 are an abrupt change in the sublime anthem. A strong bass voice apparently interrupts the melodious soprano of the Shulamite and the seraphic tenor of Solomon. It is a bold blast, at first like a surprise, then a sudden proclamation of the crowning of Solomon as King over Israel (compare **1Ki.1** and **2**). Solomon ("*peaceable*") was apparently hidden in the wilderness. He was kept little and unknown in quiet and modest preparation for the throne of his father, David. Adonijah, an older brother, claimed heirship to the throne and tried to usurp it; but he could not get it because it was Solomon's from the Lord [**1Ki.2:15**].

The typical teaching is wonderful. For 1,900 years, Jesus Christ has been hidden, as it were, being in heaven. He has been insignificant to the Jews and little known to The Church as the coming King. He has been thought of only as a Savior. Now, in later years especially, His return is being announced. A company of saints is being awakened to be ready for His coming and they are seeking to be His Bride. Suddenly, the nations will declare "*peace and safety*," thereby announcing a mock millennium, which is usurpation (Adonijah is a figure). At that very moment, our blessed Lord Jesus will be crowned King on His own throne in the air [**Rev.4**]. Unexpectedly, He will burst forth as from long retirement, in majesty and might, as a lion that roars for his prey.

Pillars speak of strength and greatness and smoke speaks of glory and majesty. Imagine huge pillars of perfumed fiery smoke, the sweet fragrance of myrrh and frankincense, pervading and scenting the atmosphere as if all the druggists had hurled the contents of their perfumery boxes into the sky. That pictured the honor and glory of Solomon's crowning day.

It is a faint forecast of the intertwining pillars and billows of glory and dazzling splendor which will envelope our King when he shall be crowned in heaven; for out of His throne shall proceed lightnings and thunders and voices [Rev.4:5], and there will be much incense, with the prayers of the saints, and the smoke of the incense ascended up before God [Rev.8:3-4].

“Behold it is the litter of Solomon.” [SSg.3:7 RV]

This is the answer to the exclamatory question above. The Hebrew word MITTAH is here rendered “bed” or “litter;” it means “*anything spread out, a place of reclining or comfort.*” In Song of Solomon 3:9, the same object is called a chariot (palanquin or car of state) from the Hebrew word APPIRYON. In eastern countries, such a vehicle was 4 feet wide, 4 feet high, 8 feet long, and was borne by 4 men. “*The wood of Lebanon,*” of which Solomon’s chariot was built, was fir and cedar (evergreen and strength). See Isa.14:8 and Psalms.29:5.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CHARIOT

“He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the seat of it of purple, the midst thereof being inlaid with love from the daughters of Jerusalem.” [SSg.3:10 RV]

This is a graphic foregleam of the throne of Christ in the air. First, our eyes behold the massive pillars which proclaim redemption; silver figures redemption, which is the foundation of Jesus’ throne on high. He would never have a throne of His own if He had not redeemed the world through His death. He would have remained with the Father, as the eternal Word [Joh.1:1]. Man would never have the high honor of sitting as Jehovah on a throne in heaven if Jesus had not died to save men. Oh, what Christ’s redemption has brought to Him as well as to humanity. Second, the gold bottom of Solomon’s palanquin suggests that Deity is beneath and back of redemption. The God-Man wrought redemption. In the tabernacle of Moses in the wilderness, most everything was overlaid with gold and some things were beaten out of gold. The holy city and its streets in heaven will be pure gold. Gold speaks of God, who is the Creator of all things. “*There is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all*” [Eph.4:6]. Finally, the Son shall be subject to the Father that “*God may be all in all*” [1Co.15:28]. Third, the seat of the chariot he made of purple, which color always figures royalty. That was a kingly seat, and proves that his litter was a car of state. Of course it typifies the royal seat of our glorious King of peace. Fourth, in the middle of the floor was a paved or inlaid work, as an expression of the love of the daughters of Jerusalem. Just so, other saints besides the Bridal Company will contribute their portion to the honor and glory of Jesus Christ and help crown Him Lord of all.

“Threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.” [SSg.3:7]

Those 60 expert warriors were Solomon’s bodyguard as he was enjoying the days of coronation. While Adonijah was still alive, there was some possibility that he might rise up against Solomon. Therefore, every one of his 60 mighty men “*had his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night*” [SSg.3:8]. Because of the rebellion of church and state, the first years of Christ’s reign will be a period of night and darkness. But in glory, there will be with Him some valiant warriors who will judge the world together with Him. As they are now “*set for the defense of the Gospel*” [Phi.1:17], so will they then be firm in the defense of their Lord. At His Word, they will pour out bowls of judgment upon their foes [Rev.15 and 16]. Jesus also will have a Zadok, a Nathan, a Benaiah, and Cherethites and Pelethites who will execute His will upon His enemies. Amen!

“Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals and in the day of the gladness of his heart.” [SSg.3:11]

Bathsheba, Solomon’s mother, informed David that Adonijah was taking the throne, but insisted that her son should be the King. Therefore, she is counted as having crowned him [1Ki.1]. **“The day of his espousals, and gladness,”** was the time of the beginning of his reign and when, some years later, his marriage took place. Solomon typifies Christ. Bathsheba typifies the true Israel, who will crown Christ by refusing to yield to Antichrist. Abishag, who afterward became Solomon’s choice bride, typifies the Bride of the Lamb. He will reign in heaven for about 6 years. After His wedding takes place in the air, which will consummate **“the day of His espousals and the day of the gladness of His heart,”** He will execute judgment on the usurpers. Glory to God! Then a voice out the throne will exclaim, **“Praise our God, all ye His servants and ye that fear Him, both small and great” [Rev.19:5].**

GREAT REJOICING IN MY SOUL

THERE ARE PEACE AND REST AND GLORY IN MY SOUL;
FOR THE POWER OF REDEMPTION; THIS THE GOAL.
SINCE THE HOLY WORD, THE SEED, PLANTED IN MY HEART INDEED,
THERE’S A SONG OF GREAT REJOICING IN MY SOUL.

I WAS CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST, HE PAID MY TOLL.
HE IS MY PRESENT JOYOUS LIFE, MY FUTURE GOAL.
ON HIS WORD I’M DAILY FED, GROWING UP INTO MY HEAD.
THERE’S A SONG OF GREAT REJOICING IN MY SOUL.

THERE IS HEALING FOR MY BODY, I AM WHOLE;
FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS COMPLETE CONTROL.
SIMPLY TRUSTING IN THE WORD, SWEETEST THAT WAS EVER HEARD,
THERE’S A SONG OF GREAT REJOICING IN MY SOUL.

THERE IS PENTECOSTAL POWER IN MY SOUL,
IN HIS TEMPLE, BELLS OF GRACE AND GLORY TOLL.
WITH THE TRUTH MY HEART’S ON FIRE. I ENJOY THE HEAVN’LY CHOIR.
THERE’S A SONG OF GREAT REJOICING IN MY SOUL.

A. S. COPLEY

DIV.4, RAVISHED BY LOVE [SSG.4]

“Behold, thou art fair, my love, behold thou art fair; thou hast doves’ eyes within thy locks; thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead. Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bear twins, and none is barren among them. Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely; thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks. Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men. Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.” [SSg.4:1-5]

We marvel at the tender grace of God as set forth in this type. Solomon does not chide the Shulamite. Instead he heaps upon her the most flattering blandishments, as expressed in this chapter. In the first 5 verses of Chapter 4, there is a remarkable and beautiful correspondence between Solomon’s heart-view of the Shulamite and the Divine Description of the Spirit-moved members of the body (The Church), wherein we see gifts of the Spirit [1Co.12].

1. ***“Thou hast doves’ eyes within thy locks.”*** The dove always refers to the Holy Spirit. To have doves’ eyes is to see as the Holy Spirit sees and typifies those members of The Church who have the ***“gift of discernment.”*** They see as God sees, because He makes them to see thus. They readily discern the spiritual state of other people and the condition of a meeting. Often, they see exactly what is lacking and what the cause of that lack is; hence, they know the remedy and how to pray. The dove also sees a great way off. So also those saints, who are the divinely appointed eyes to the assembly, are made to see far in the distance. Therefore, other saints often think that they are wild, or fanatical, or claiming too much. As the body of the dove is safe in following her eyes, so is the vision of those whom God has set for eyes to The Church.

2. ***“Thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from mount Gilead.”*** Her hair is full, long, and strong. In the natural, ***“if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her,”*** in deference to her husband who is her head: ***“The head of the woman is man”*** [1Co.11:3]. Woman acknowledges the headship of man and her subjection to him by wearing her hair long. This is her glory, her strength. What a crown of beauty to a woman is her long hair. Hair symbolizes those in The Church who most lovingly, emphatically, and constantly acknowledge the headship of Christ and most fervently maintain the attitude of absolute dependence upon Him. This is their strength, their beauty, and their glory. These are the goat’s hair of the assembly. **Gilead** means ***“heap of witness”*** or ***“rolling forever.”*** Therefore, the testimony of such entire subjection to Christ, figured by the waving hair, rolls on forever. It acknowledges Christ to have been the sin-offering, by whose death their intimate place as His Bride was purchased. They held that they are not their own, ***“but are bought with a price.”***

3. ***“Thy teeth are like a flock shorn, which come up from the washing; whereof every one bare twins, and none is barren among them.”*** Such teeth are clean, white, even, and fully developed. Every tooth is in its proper place in the mouth and fully serviceable. The teeth represent those saints who receive the Word of God as it reads and ***“rightly divide it”*** (***“straightly cut it”***) for the whole Body. The front teeth bite off the food. The larger teeth (molars), more hidden, grind the food for mastication. Thus, some preachers give out chunks of truth to the audience. Others, less prominent but necessarily stronger, so divide and subdivide, arrange, and compare truth with truth as to make it most palatable and nourishing to the whole assembly. Wondrous ways of wisdom, words of weight and wealth are that ***“now God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him”*** [1Co.12:18].

“Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet.” A woman’s lips indicate the depth of her affection. The Shulamite appears to be very affectionate. Some saints are lips to the assembly. They love Jesus with a depth and intensity indescribable. They are carried away with the love of God that provided such a wondrous redemption. They are melted and subdued with the love of Jesus who died such a shameful and painful death for them. They exclaim, ***“We love Him because He first loved us.”*** These are the blazing indices of the love that flames in the assembly. In close conjunction with this, is the next item...speech.

4. ***“And thy speech is comely.”*** In the antitype, we read, ***“For to one is given by the Spirit a word of wisdom; to another a word of knowledge by the same Spirit; ...to another prophecy”*** [1Co.12:8-10]. Such speech is of course, comely. It comforts; it instructs; it builds up; it establishes. But note how that the comeliness is apparent to the Bridegroom. He beholds the fervent love indicated by the scarlet lips and appreciates the comely words as the glowing outflow of a heart of love—the wholesome, praiseful “fruit of the lips.” ***“Though I speak with the tongue of men and of angels, and have not love...it profiteth me nothing”*** [1Co.13:1-3]. Who would not covet the loving approbation of the heavenly Solomon?

5. ***“Thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate within thy locks.”*** Here, the temples include the cheeks; the happy, blooming flush of health. These pinkish temples symbolize those members of the assembly who are especially the index of the happy healthiness of the mind of Christ. It is significant that this state is seen between the locks. That is, the strong saints are a backbone and strength to the happy and healthy ones; and the healthy ones grace and adorn the strong ones, even as doves’ eyes are sight to the strong.
6. ***“Thy neck is like the tower of David, builded for an armory, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers; all shields of mighty men.”*** The neck speaks of tender support. Here it prefigures the ***“helps”*** of 1 Corinthians 12:28. There are those believers who are a neck; they render kind support and pity to weaker saints. They are always seen lovingly running to grab and hold up the building when it would seem to topple over. Tempted, discouraged believers are constantly running to them and falling upon their necks. They have unbounded charity and patience for and with others. They are a place of refuge for the storm-driven. They furnish armor for the warriors.
7. ***“Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.”*** Here is suggested the possibility of fruitfulness and the necessary ability to give nourishment. The saints, who are developed in faith, joy, and truth, furnish ***“the sincere milk of the Word”*** for babes in Christ. The roes feeding among the lilies indicate the growing condition of such believers; that is, they themselves are nourished by the living Word, whereby they are enabled to minister to others. But what pity that to so many, God must say; ***“for when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat”*** [Heb.5:12].

Glancing back over this 8-fold tribute (praise) of the Shulamite, what a perfect picture we have of the ***“pure virgin”*** which the Holy Spirit ***“espoused to Christ”*** [2Co.11:2]. This is God’s view of what Christ’s Body, The Church, should be because we are ***“in Christ”*** provisionally, ***“sanctified in Christ Jesus”*** [1Co.1:2], and ***“in Him we are complete”*** (***“made full”***) [Col.2:10]; although in actual experience we may not be so. The Bridehood is no doubt the ***“prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus”*** [Phi.3:4]. Is not this what Paul means in saying, ***“I count all things loss that I may win Christ and be found in Him”*** [Phi.3:8]? For this we are ***“apprehended of Christ.”*** But who of us will ***“lay hold upon the hope set before us”***—this particular hope [Heb.6:18]? All we enjoy from God is by His grace. Who of us will be imitators of Paul and be thus minded to follow after, if that we may apprehend that for which we are ***“apprehended of Christ”*** [Phi.3:12]? Who will fully abandon all and so run in the victory, joy, and strength of the Lord as to ***“ravish Him with the eyes and with one chain of the neck?”***

ESPECIALLY COMFORTING

“Until the day break and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense.” [SSg.4:6]

Christ encourages His Bride to make her calling and election sure; for He is praying for her on the mount of myrrh and frankincense. Until the shadows of unbelief flee away and the day of glory breaks, our heavenly Lover is in the secret place of intercession. While we are here in the world, yielding to God and walking in the light and helping others, Jesus is praying for us that we may overcome every obstacle. The mountain of myrrh speaks of Christ’s sufferings, which is the basis of the fragrance and effectiveness of every petition of His, as well as ours.

“Thou art all fair, my Love; there is no spot in thee. Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.” [SSg.4:7-8]

This whole chapter is a deep appreciative description of the Shulamite by Solomon. Previously, he had addressed her as **“my fair one,” “my dove,”** and repeatedly as **“my Love.”** But in Chapter 4, 6 times he speaks of her as **“spouse.”** This indicates a much deeper mutual attachment and suggests betrothal. Therefore, the King invites the Shulamite to look at all things from his point of view. **Lebanon** means **“very white”** because its eastern ridge is covered with perpetual snow. **Amana** means **“integrity and truth.”** **Shenir** means **“coat of mail”** or **“armor.”** **Hermon** means **“destruction”** or **“let him be accursed”** [Gal.1:8]. Now that she is to be his bride, he no longer wants her to be chiefly concerned about her complexion and service [SSg.1:5-6], nor about his activities, [SSg.2:9-17]. He wants her to view everything and everybody from the standpoint of whiteness, or purity, integrity and truth, and herself as being armored or equipped and as freed from every curse. Just so our heavenly Lover deals with us. He shows His deep love and seeks our close fellowship; but we act a little indifferent to it. We are too busy quelling quarrels or writing articles. While He is waiting for and wanting our worship, we are occupied with others. So He tries us. Jesus makes as if He would leave us. He does not answer prayer. Heaven's door seems closed. Then, we realize the reason and begin to worship Him and magnify His grace; and presently we feel His nearness and love again.

CONQUERING DEVOTION

“Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister, my Spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.” [SSg.4:9]

What a forceful and true picture this is of the love Christ has for His people! He is ever calling them apart from their own feelings of unworthiness to behold their worthiness in Him. Even though they are for Him, He invites them from their activities to be alone with Him. We have our view of people, events, movements, or times because we look from too low a standpoint. Christ wants us to see as He sees. He wants us to see ourselves as He sees us, even in Himself. Therefore, He exclaims, **“Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.”** As His fair, lovely, spotless one, He invites us to behold all things from the Divine Viewpoint of heavenly purity and revealed truth; counting ourselves equipped with heavenly armor and free forever from every **“curse of the law,”** that is from sin, sickness, and death.

Then, as we yield to and believe Him, we hear His more lavish words of endearment. If we gaze upon Him steadfastly; He answers back, **“Thou hast ravished (taken away my heart) with one of thine eyes.”** You have held me with **“one chain (loving strength) of thy neck.”** It seems hard for saints to believe that Jesus so deeply loves His people. They cannot comprehend such lavish personal affection from the Son of God. They seem to forget that He is also **“the son of man,”** with a human heart, affections, and desires. He is a real Man, although He is the glorified Man. Now, if we believe that Jesus loves us so deeply and wishes to draw us to Himself for fellowship, companionship, personal enjoyment and we begin, like John, to lean on His bosom, we shall soon experience His profound love for us. Many, very many of God's dear children are frettedly occupied with service, unscripturally burdened with work for Him, and know little, or nothing about the real personal love of the Lord for them. The growing sense of His love for me creates in me an increasing longing for my brethren also to experience this love.

“How fair is thy love, my sister, my Spouse. How much better is thy love than wine and the smell of thine ointments than all spices.” [SSg.4:10]

The beloved continues his blandishments. He has not yet fled to the mountain of myrrh. He never will as long as his Friend responds to his devotions. In Song of Solomon 1:3, she extolled his name, comparing it to good ointments poured forth. By being with him, she became like him, and partook of those good ointments. Her love to him was the root of the fragrance, which was far more to him than all manner of spices.

In the antitype, this love is of course the love of the new creation. We count our own life dead; Christ liveth in us. Wine exhilarates but love satiates. Wine is only for the moment but love abides. There is much religious exhilaration that does not satisfy the heart of God. There is the deep, hidden, quiet affection of the yielded heart that charms the heart of the heavenly Bridegroom. ***“Thine ointments”*** here suggests the anointing with the Spirit, as do Song of Solomon 4:13-14. When saints are filled and clothed with the Spirit and walk in the Spirit, they emit a pleasing odor to the Lord, ***“for of Christ a sweet perfume we are to God in those being saved and in those perishing”*** [2Co.2:15].

“Thy lips, O my Spouse, drop as the honeycomb. Honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.” [SSg.4:11]

Nothing is sweeter than honey. No food is purer than milk. The words of the Shulamite were sweet and pure beyond all comparison. Is it possible that the words of our mouths can be sweet to Jesus? David said to the Lord, *“Thy words are sweeter than honey, or the drippings of the honeycomb”* [Psa.19:10 RV]. ***“Honey and milk are under thy tongue; the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.”*** But oh, how wonderful that we may be so given up to the Lord and so walk in the Spirit that our language will be sweetness and comfort to Him. Yes, He can behold a deeper devotion than we can express, even that which is under the tongue.

“And the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon”. The bride expresses her warm affection for her beloved by her attire. She dresses to please him. Pine, oak, and cedar trees grew on Mount Lebanon. It also abounded in figs, olives, vines, mulberries, and flowers. The sweet odor of the attire of the fair one was like the incomparable fragrance from that mountain. The righteousness of faith, which is the imputed righteousness of Christ Himself, is the raiment of saints. Bridal saints repudiate all self-righteousness, or that of The Law, but insist on being clothed with the ***“righteousness, which is of God by faith”*** [Phi.3:9]. We find the Bridal wardrobe in Colossians 3:

“Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;...And, above all (or over all) these things, love, which is the bond of perfectness.” [Col.3:12-14]

Such enrobements are fragrant to the heavenly Bridegroom; they attract His loving eye and win His heart and hand.

GARDEN OF THE LORD

“A garden enclosed is my Sister, my Spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.” [SSg.4:12]

This verse, with Verses 13-15 of Chapter 4, is a marvelous description of the Shulamite as she appears to the King in her entire separation from all others and her devotion to him. It was written to convey to us deep and precious typical teaching. It is evident that the garden of the Lord is a choice company of believers. To our heavenly Bridegroom, the bridal saints are ***“a garden”*** of beauty, aroma, and fruitfulness; but she is ***“enclosed”*** (***“barred”***)...that is, she is for Christ alone. She is ***“a spring”*** which brings to Him continual refreshing by quaffing His deep thirst for love; but she is ***“shut up”***...that is, Christ is her only Lover. All her stream of affection is

poured out on Him. If she loves others, it is only an expression of her **“shut up”** love for Him. O what a deep heart estimate Christ holds of His Bride. As she beholds Him and becomes changed from glory to glory, more and more partakes of His nature and takes Him as her life, she becomes **“a fountain”**, abundantly satisfying the profoundest longings of His tender Bridegroom heart. Who of us is so appropriating Christ, so utterly depending upon Him, and so wholly occupied with Him that we thus satisfy His loving heart? The Bridal Company will be a rare company indeed. How can anyone expect to be a part of it without a thorough and suitable preparation?

“Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits; camphire with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices.”
[SSg.4:13-14]

These verses explain the character, fullness, and richness of the garden. It seems to enlarge into an orchard or paradise. Solomon saw in his choice one all the noblest traits and qualities which a woman can possess. There was no lack in her whatever. What a picture of the perfection of the Bride of Christ. There is also a strong implication of the anointing with the Holy Spirit. In Exodus 30:22-32, we find the ingredients of the holy anointing oil with which Moses anointed Aaron and his sons and the tabernacle and its furniture. Three principle spices **“pure myrrh, sweet cinnamon and sweet calamus,”** which are also mentioned here in Song of Solomon 4, are named. And, together with **“cassia and olive oil”** these spices constituted that which God said should **“be a holy anointing oil unto me throughout your generation”**. That was not to be counterfeited, nor its effects imitated; and it could be poured only on the new creation. **“Upon man’s flesh shall it not be poured; neither shall ye make any like it,”** not even **“to smell thereto”** [Exo.30:31].

The lesson is this, we cannot possess the sweet, aromatic soothing, gentle, healing qualities, which these spices indicate except we are anointed with the Holy Spirit and constantly drink in Christ by His gentle and mighty enabling. How can we exhibit **“the fruit of the spirit...love, joy, peace,** etc.” [Gal.5:22-23] except we are filled with the Holy Spirit? We never can! Our own natural sweetness, gentleness, patience, goodness, however amiable, are of no avail to God. Flesh is flesh and **“all flesh is grass,”** whether it be good or bad. Only the aromatics diffused into us by the presence and power of the heavenly apothecary [Exo.30:25] can adorn the Bride and make her acceptable to the Bridegroom. The Divine Standard is the righteousness of God by faith, and the fruit of the Spirit is also by faith.

USEFULNESS OF THE GARDEN

“A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters and streams from Lebanon.” [SSg.4:15]

In Verse 12 of Chapter 4, Solomon expressed the view of his fair one as separated (**“enclosed...shut up...sealed”**) from all others and devoted to him and living for him alone. In this verse, he beholds her in relation to others by being united to him. She was destined to be a great channel of special blessing and comfort to the people of his realm. Saints who keep yielding to the Lord and fill up on His Word develop from **“a garden enclosed,”** for Him to enjoy, into **“a fountain of gardens”** to feed others for His glory. They swell from **“a spring shut up,”** for Christ’s refreshing, into **“a well of living waters”** to quench the burning thirst of other saints to His praise. They, as **“a fountain sealed,”** become gushing **“streams from Lebanon,”** pure, cool, refreshing, and invigorating to all the land. Spirit-filled, full overcomers (growing saints), are identified with the **“rivers of living water,”** or the Holy Spirit, with which they are anointed. Oh, how wonderful is the Word of God!

“Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south. Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.” [SSg.4:16]

Verse 16 agrees with Verse 15 in that the King desires that the aroma and charm of his dearest Friend may become manifest throughout his kingdom. He challenges the envy and criticism from the daughters and virgins against his spouse as well as invites the compliments of her friends. These two opposing conditions would give notoriety to what he saw in her, as pictured by the fountain of gardens, etc.

Our heavenly Bridegroom uses similar providence to make half-hearted believers know the real worth of His choice saints. In the natural, the hot south winds would burn up the garden and the cold north winds would freeze it out. Both are needed to offset each other. Likewise, the warm winds of commendation, compensation, and comfort would ruin us. No one can stand flattery or unbroken prosperity. On the other hand, unceasing trial and persecution would destroy us. Who can endure unceasing hardship, or defeat, or discouragement? Yet, all these vicissitudes are necessary to our symmetrical growth in the things of God. **“Tribulation worketh patience”** [Rom.5:3], which is the way to the throne. As Jesus did, so we learn obedience by the things which we suffer. The north winds of adversity prepare us for the warm south wind breath of our Father’s care and comfort, which we would never learn otherwise. Paul said, **“Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men”** [2Co.3:2]. By these varying experiences, the fruit of the Spirit, in its 9-fold beauty and fullness, is exemplified in us and flows out from us like all the chief spices from a perfect garden. Then, our heavenly Gardener comes into His garden and eats of His pleasant fruits and is satisfied. As we yield to the inward wooings, promptings, and workings of the Holy Spirit; as we hearken diligently to God’s voice in the written Word and take every providence as from His tender hand for us, we become increasingly pleasing to Him and make His heart rejoice to the uttermost. Thus we are being prepared for the glorious wedding in the air; and, at the same time, we bear the fullest witness of Christ to mankind.

DIV.5, THE LAST TEST OF LOVE [SSG.5]

SATISFIED WITH AFFECTION

“I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse. I have gathered my myrrh with my spice. I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey. I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.” [SSg.5:1]

These words are Solomon’s reply to the request of his Friend to **“come into his garden,”** as expressed in Song of Solomon 4:16. They show the continuation of 2 facts: that she has a warm admiration for him, but he has the profoundest love for her. She speaks many words of approbation and admiration to others about him; but he addresses to her the sweetest and most endearing words of loving appreciation and satisfaction. He wants her, but she does not yet wholly want him. His desire for her is unchanging; her desire for him is somewhat intermittent. She has had much to say about her suffering and toil and about his activities; but he has spoken only of what she is herself, not a word about her toil.

How this should speak to us that our Lord’s desire is for us rather than for our labors! Jesus wants us. He constantly seeks our companionship. Why did Enoch walk with God? Because God wanted his companionship, yet there is not a word said about his service. Abraham believed God’s promise to him. He is called **“the friend of God”** [Jam.2:23]. Abraham **“is the father of us all,”** a **“father of many nations.”** Many chapters in Genesis (and elsewhere) are devoted to his biography; but where do you read of him serving God? We read of him spending many hours

of converse and fellowship with God. All we who are “**the children of Abraham**,” by faith in Jesus, should walk in his footsteps seeking first of all friendship and fellowship with the Lord.

Solomon’s enjoyment of his Friend seemed perfect. He gathered and ate and drank of her affection to his utter satisfaction. Oh, how the Lord must enjoy our worship of Him, our adoration of His name, and our praises of His grace. The pain of persecution and the bitterness of His death (spice and myrrh) are more than offset by the sweetness of our joyous fellowship, the intoxication of the fullness of Pentecost, and our feeding on His Word. He loves to be intoxicated, abundantly moistened, with the “**fat of...our...sacrifices**” [Isa.43:24, margin], or the sacrifice (offering) of praise, the fruit of the lips. Oh, “**Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness**” [1Ch.16:29, 2Ch.20:21, Psal.29:2]!

“**Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.**” His spouse calls upon others to enjoy her fellowship. That seems like a little interference in her fellowship with her beloved. She is not quite wholly taken up with him. Why should she be concerned with friends? Is not her beloved everything to her? Then she quickly sees her mistake; hence in the same breath she turns to him and with double emphasis exclaims, “**yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.**” A look of surprise and slight disappointment checked her invitation to the friends. Oh, how jealous is our heavenly Bridegroom. It hurts His heart when He shows us such profound love and intricate concern, and assures us of His enjoyment of our worship, and then we suddenly become occupied with other friends.

AFFECTION SLUMBERING

“I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.”
[SSg.5:2]

The aforementioned jostle in their courtship, seemed to send Solomon away. She became weary and sought rest. However, he desired her company so greatly that he returned quickly and sought entrance into their courtship parlor. His rap at the door and his pleading voice aroused her sufficiently to make her dream of him...“**my heart waketh.**” Marvel at the tender titles of endearment –“**Open to me, my SISTER, my LOVE, my DOVE, my UNDEFILED; for my head is filled with dew, my locks with the drops of the night**” He wandered around, sad and sick at heart. He seems to have forgotten his hat, because he left her so suddenly.

Certainly this is a photograph of believers’ frequent treatment of the Lord. They yield to indifference akin to sleepiness; though His wooing awakens them to daydream about Him. We should be so wide awake to the love of Jesus, and so sensitive to His whisperings that He need never call loudly and knock at our hearts. Indeed we should dwell constantly in His presence; counting by faith that “**the Lord is at hand.**” We should blush with shame that we ever make our heavenly Lover feel any measure of coldness, or distance, or the absence of love from us, even by our occupation with work for Him. But it seems difficult to believe that He calls us by such endearing titles as the above. We will not believe that we are indeed Christ’s “**sister**,” although we know that we are begotten of the same Father; nor that we are truly His “**love**,” although we have the “**love of the Father in us.**” We cannot grasp it that we are Christ’s “**dove**,” although we have been anointed with the Holy Spirit (symbolized by the dove). Who dare believe that we are the Lord’s “**undefiled**,” and actually “**sanctified in Christ Jesus**”? Ho! Ho! Why not? Harken to the thrilling words of the new covenant prophet, the Apostle Paul, who writes, “**I am jealous over you with the jealousy of God; for I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present a chaste virgin to Christ**” [2Co.11:2]. Some are beguiled by the subtlety of Satan, even as was Eve, and become corrupted from the “**simplicity that is in Christ.**” That is, they draw away

from dependence upon His strong and loving arm. They become independent toward our new head, Christ Jesus. They do not feel deserving of such sweet names as “*sister*,” “*love*,” “*dove*,” and “*undefiled*.” These are the saints who will miss the Bridehood of Christ. Oh, let us fervently receive the above comfort and caution of the Apostle Paul and profit by the Shulamite’s drowsiness toward Solomon.

“I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?” [SSg.5:3]

This is no doubt the King speaking. The word **coat** is a man’s outer garment. It is from the Hebrew word KETHOUNETH which means a tunic or a long coat. Joseph’s “*coat of many colors*” is from the same Hebrew word. The priests’ coats in Moses’ time were also the same [Exo.28]. It is employed 20 times as a man’s garment. Only once is it worn by a woman [2Sa.13:18-19]; and, in this place it is also translated “*robe*,” and the same in Isaiah 22:21. The word **garment** in Song of Solomon 4:11, is the Hebrew word SALMAH. Solomon expected an immediate entrance to his Friend’s quarters. He was worthy of it. If she loved him as he did her, she would be awake and looking for him. Hence, he put off his robe or outer garment and washed his dusty feet; for they wore sandals in that land. He even put his hand in through the hole in the door; but he received no response. Again, his tender heart was pained. She was too slow. Her love for him did not yet find him absolutely necessary to her. Therefore, when he was absent, she became a little indifferent. She was half asleep when he spoke. He supposed he was not wanted; so he quickly and quietly withdrew. She afterward confessed, “*My soul failed when he spake*” [SSg.5:6].

“I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.” [SSg.5:4]

Jesus constantly expects from us the warmest welcome to His deepest heart of love; and is always the attitude of Jesus toward His people. Though we temporarily let Him depart, yet He supposes that we are on the lookout for His return. He hopes that there will be no hesitancy to grant Him entrance when He does come. But His temporary withdrawal does sometimes cause indifference. We should insist on His continued presence. We should covet His companionship. Let us follow the example of Mary, who “*sat at Jesus’ feet and heard his word*” [Luk.10:39]. You need not fear that her crowd will be too great. Mary has not many admirers or rivals. She is not very well known. There is room for you and me. Peter is far better known than Mary. Nevertheless, she was the one who anointed the Lord for His burial. Later, she filled the banquet hall with the odor of her precious ointment, typifying the Bride at the wedding in the air [Joh.12:3]. She was the first at the tomb. Christ first appeared to Mary after His resurrection. Personal attention to the Lord greatly delights His heart. Let us delight Him more. Oh, let us not disappoint Him! Let neither labor in His vineyard nor laziness of affection come in between us and Him. Let us seek to please Him by our love rather than by our labor. Let us seek to win Christ rather than to win some laurels here. We should far rather appear to be indifferent to everything and everybody than to be, in any measure, indifferent to Christ Himself. Better far for us to seem cold to people than to be cold to the love of Jesus.

A TARDY RESPONSE

“I rose up to open to my Beloved; and my hands dropped myrrh, and my fingers sweet-smelling myrrh upon the handles of the lock.” [SSg.5:5]

The fair lady had no doubt retired and was preoccupied with herself. She had done her manicuring before retiring. On waking to meet her Friend, she was still admiring her beautiful hands and dainty fingers, thinking how attractive they would be to her Friend. Instead of hastening to answer the call, she gazed into the mirror and was stroking her hands, while

moving indifferently with self-complacent delight toward the bolted door. When she reached the door, he had gone.

Self-occupation grieves the Lord. He does not want us to moan over, nor condemn ourselves. If we have failed, let us confess it to Him, and pass right on in victory, believing that He does forgive us and forget our mistake at once. Nor does He want us to sit in admiration of our gifts, or our service for Him. We may have natural or acquired abilities with which to toil and glorify our dear Lord and for these we are to be ever grateful to God; but, we must always keep our eyes on the Giver instead of the gift, on the One who blesses instead of the blessing. We dare not, at the expense of our devotion to Jesus Christ, even become occupied with our future place and rewards. It is not what we are in Him, not what He has made us, nor the beauty He has put upon us that should absorb our attention, but Christ Himself. If we become fascinated with our own beauty instead of His, He seems to be absent. We wonder what has caused a sense of distance between us and Him. It is all because we were taken up with something about ourselves, instead of looking steadfastly unto Jesus and keeping in communion with Him.

I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone. I sought him, but I could not find him. I called him, but he gave me no answer.” [SSg.5:6]

The withdrawal of Solomon was because his lady was more concerned about herself than about him. He had stood outside the door quite long enough for her to arise and dress and receive him. He did not care for the myrrh falling on the door knob. He wanted her to open the door and cast upon him the perfumery of her fervent love. Disheartened with her self-occupation, he fled. His heart was hurt, sad.

- What wound is deeper than wounded love?
- What grief is greater than disappointed affection?
- What sadness is heavier than that caused by light indifference of expected attention and devotion?

Physical pain and mental agony are not to be compared with the pangs of a heart of lacerated love. Yet, this is the way some of us are treating the Lord Jesus Christ. We shout His praises, tell of His mighty power, relate some wonderful thrilling events; but, we find little time and patience to wait with Him, to really listen silently to Him and pour our heart’s love upon Him. We find small time to ponder over His precious Word until we become saturated with His very Spirit and filled with a deep, sweet, subduing, melting, unspeakable sense of His loving presence; until we have a profound inexplicable assurance of His particular love and concern for us. Or perhaps some of us have become cold towards even His mighty works and the progress of His cause in the earth.

I tell you my Friend, when you are finding it difficult to get the ear of God it is because you have deeply grieved the Spirit. Your carnal zeal or your lethargy has cut a deep gash in the heart of Jesus Christ. He means to let you alone until you simply cannot get along without Him. You dozed while He sought you in the dark, damp night of the world and soiled His hallowed feet passing through its filthy streets.

“The watchmen that went about the city found me; they smote me; they wounded me. The keepers of the walls took away my veil from me.” [SSg.5:7]

The Shulamite ran out into the dark after her Lover. She forgot about her beautiful hands and delicate fingers; but it was not time for her to be going through the city. She had been out one other night [SSg.3:3] and that time the watchmen had warned her to stay indoors at night. Now

that she was out again, they chastise her. The keepers of the walls took away her veil of modesty and purity, which left her apparently looking like a street walker. She should have stayed at home until her Lover called again.

Whenever saints get preoccupied with their gifts, toil, or sufferings, they are apt to mingle with other saints who are not so spiritual. Sometimes they tell their feelings to those who are considered spiritual watchmen who advise them. Being slightly out of fellowship with the Lord, they hope to find the way back through the supposed spiritual advisors. Instead of being comforted by the religious watchmen, they are smitten by them. Instead of being healed of their troubles, they are wounded more deeply. The ministers criticize them for taking up with the deeper things of God. They accuse them of being overmuch righteous, saying, "It is not necessary to live such a separated, self-denying, self-sacrificing life." Or, they take away their veil of chastity. The veil speaks of complete separation from the world and a betrothal to Christ as the One Head (Husband).

Rebekah put a veil over herself when she saw Isaac coming. She outwardly acknowledged her glad willingness to be his wife (see **Gen.24:65**). The woman praying, or prophesying with the head covered [**1Co.11**] has the same deep meaning. The Church was espoused by Paul to one Husband, even Christ [**2Co.11:2**]. Jesus wants our closest fellowship, our warmest devotion, even bridal affection. If we lose the sense of His presence through occupation with our service or sufferings and we go to unspiritual guides for counsel, they take away our veils because we treat them as heads. We give to them the place that belongs only to our Beloved. We act as if we were seeking a man; we become guilty of spiritual adultery. What a sorry plight. If we feel a sense of distance from the Lord, let us wait on the Lord at home under our own vine and fig tree.

"I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved, that you tell him that I am sick from love." [**SSg.5:8 RV**]

At night, the Shulamite went in search of her Friend, but was buffeted by city officials. By day, she inquired after him among her lady friends. One would think that she would not so humiliate herself, but deep love awakened to its folly and neglect overrides all thoughts and reflections of others. Sick folk want the doctor whether or not. Although torn by her own self-occupation and seeming coldness toward him, only Her Beloved could heal her torn heart.

Is it possible that a believer can be so carried away with personal attainments, ministries, or grievances as to slight the worship of God? Is it possible that such a one will run to those less spiritual for spiritual help? Yes, that actually happens. How unwise is such a course. How unworthy of our Beloved Lord. The Shulamite should have stayed indoors and waited for the return of her Friend. Likewise, when saints become fretted with a feeling of separation from Jesus, they should give themselves to prayer and reading of the Word. He is not far away as He may seem to be. Hunting for Him in meetings other than your home meeting (if your assembly is Scriptural) only widens the breach. Christ is not here and there, on the street, or among the daughters. He is at home. He is not lost. You need not hunt for Him. The Psalmist writes that we are to "**wait on the Lord**." And...wait for the Lord also. Give Him time to appear.

Some people's worship reminds one of a woman who rolls her bare arms in her apron and scurries across the street to her neighbor for a morning call. "Be seated," says the neighbor. "No, I can't; I have bread in the oven; I must hurry back," she answers. A little gossip and she is gone. Oh, though He seems to be away from home, let us sit down at Jesus' feet in faith. Dismiss the baking bread from your mind. Refuse to be hindered by the whirl of thoughts and things which may come like an armed troop upon your attention. By His grace, set your face

like a flint that you are going to worship God and soon the place will be filled with the glory of the Lord. Not only will your Beloved ring the doorbell, but He will appear in your very presence all radiant with delight.

AFFECTION'S QUEST QUIZZED

"What is thy Beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so adjure us?"
[SSg.5:9a RV]

This question was put to the Shulamite by the daughters of Jerusalem because she was in search of her Friend. She had given them a charge twice before, but of a different character (see SSg.2:7 and SSg.3:5). In the former instances, she cautioned them not to disturb neither her love nor the love of the King. In this instance, she begs them to inform the King of her breaking heart for him.

"O thou fairest among women? What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?" [SSg.5:9b]

Now, the daughters inquire as to what she sees in Solomon more than in other men, or other rulers. Observe a remarkable admission—they regard her as the *"fairest among women."* They are impressed by her beauty as being super-excellent; and, they wonder that a woman such as she should be sick from love for Solomon.

Our **FIRST LESSON** here is this: The Holy Spirit overrules any indifference in us toward the Lord or neglect of devotion. He convicts us and awakens in our hearts a deeper longing for Him than before. David said, *"My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God"* [Psa.84:2]; God answered that cry. If we profit by our mistakes, they become stepping stones of progress. If we learn our lesson from bitter experience, our Beloved comforts us and presses us ever closer to His bosom. But, He expects that we will sometime, and that soon, become steadfast in our devotion to Him without any measure of indifference or preoccupation with other things. Christ must become first in all things.

Now, the **SECOND LESSON** is that as the lady in our story stands paramount in beauty, so there is a company of saints, who are paramount in piety. Other saints admit that they are more spiritual, further on in Divine Things and know the Scriptures better than they themselves. This company is known to believe God simply and to be in full sympathy with all His will and workings. They live unselfishly for the good of others. What is especially marked about them is that they are devoted to Christ Himself, not chiefly for service, but for very love of what and who He is in Himself and for His tenderest, deepest attention to them personally. Out of the depths of the heart they are wont to exclaim, *"We love Him because He first loved us"* [1Jo.4:19]. They do not speak, or sing, thus by habit nor because others may, but it is in them a profound reality. Their yieldedness to God and their fellowship with Christ may not yet be perfect in His sight; yet they are so far beyond believers generally, that they are counted *"the fairest among the fair."* Dear Reader, are you in this class? If not, why not?

The Shulamite's charge aroused the curiosity of the daughters. Hence, their question, *"What is thy beloved more than another beloved?"* What do you see in Solomon that we do not see? If we push past everybody and run after Christ, lured by His love, captured by His care, enamored by His endearments, surely others will be stirred up. Some will cry, "Overmuch righteous"; some, "fanaticism"; some, out of envy, will see an apparent blemish in us. But God be thanked! Others will be drawn on Christ-ward by an irresistible, unseen cord until they, too, will be swallowed up with Him. The effectual way to win others to Christ is to keep occupied with Him and strive to win Him as the *"Prize of the high calling"* [Phi.3:14] at the end of this age.

A **THIRD LESSON**: The query of the daughters sounds like a fling at Solomon. Was he different from other men? Was he a better man, a wiser king, than other kings? Or was the Shulamite only charmed by him? Maybe there was a little envy behind this question. The fact is that the daughters did not know Solomon like she did. God had chosen him to be King over Israel, and had bestowed upon him special wisdom for the office. The Shulamite woman became acquainted with him quite intimately by being much in his company. She learned to appreciate him deeply and loved him dearly. Likewise, some saints wonder why other saints make so much ado about our Lord. They cannot understand the heart-melting, will-subduing, all-absorbing devotion manifested in some believers. “Come down out of the clouds,” they exclaim. “You talk like you were the Lord’s pet.” Mary was one of those pets and Martha upbraided her for seeking the Master’s presence continually. Why is it?

It is because some believers, like Mary, really learn the super excellencies of Christ by being much in prayer and by studying His Word and believing it. Salvation from sin and the initial anointing with the Spirit, with possibly a touch of healing, is all that many saints experience. They know the Lord as Savior and perhaps look upon Him as a mighty miracle worker; but, they have not learned Him as a warm Friend, a bosom companion, a tender, loving, ever-present arm of comfort and strength. The idea of Bridegroom is far from their thoughts. Why? Because they do not seek Him with all their heart and because, when He seeks them to woo them close to Himself and would reveal Himself and His full will and purpose to them, they draw back. They fear it will cost them something. They begin to smell the fire of hot persecution. (The flesh shrinks from sharp separation). They do not abide long enough in His presence and fellowship to be overwhelmed with His super excellencies. They do not experience His ardent love for them. It seems that they never have heard Christ say to them, “*my darling*” (My Only One) [Psa.22:20 and 35:17]. Beloved Reader, how is it with you?

LOVE’S PORTRAIT OF HER BELOVED

“My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.” [SSg.5:10]

The slight indifference or preoccupation of the fair lady worked good for her. She learned to appreciate her Friend so much the more. Therefore, when interrogated by the daughters about her love for him, she was moved to give a 9-fold heart-description of her Beloved (found in the last 7 verses of Chapter 5).

First, the Shulamite described the beautiful complexion of Solomon. He is “*white*.” He was a white man with rosy cheeks. Then she spoke of his health and vigor. He is “*ruddy*,” of red, firm, health. We may thus know the Lord. White speaks of holiness, which is Christ’s beauty. David longed to dwell in God’s house and “*behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple*.” He also prayed saying, “*Let the beauty* (or pleasantness) *of the Lord our God be upon us*” [Psa.27:4, Psa.90:17]. He declared the Lord to be “*the health of his countenance*” [Psa.42:11] and “*the saving strength of His anointed*” [Psa.28:8]. How precious to know Christ as indeed the Holy and Strong One. Holiness is His chief charm. It radiates from Him and captures Bridal saints.

Then the Shulamite compared her Friend with others. He is “*the chiefest among ten thousand*.” The Revised Version says “*Marked out by a banner*.” The number 10,000 was a common number of great comparison or contrast. Thus, David exceeded Saul in warfare [1Sa.21:11]. Paul thus magnified his Father’s care and the value of God’s Word [1Co.4:15, 1Co.14:19]. Hence, in the Shulamite’s eye, there was none to compare with her Beloved. None could carry the nation’s banner like Solomon.

What an imposing picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. Beloved Reader, is Jesus the Chiefest to you? Has He the warmest place in your affections? Does He occupy the throne-room of your counsels? Is He all in all to you?

THE PORTRAIT DETAILED

“His head is as the most fine gold; His locks are bushy and black as a raven.” [SSg.5:11]

The head speaks of intelligence, nobility, lore, position, and authority. Being of gold it indicates the deity of our Lord. It suggests His holy intelligence and wisdom and is prophetic of His reign over the nations. The reign of Nebuchadnezzar was only transient. His glitter was brief and perishing. But the golden rod of the Son of Man will never lose its luster nor pass away. The bushy black hair speaks of beautiful, vigorous manhood. Jesus was all this when He laid down His life for the redemption of the race. It was not while He was yet of tender youth; nor did He wait till He became wearied with years of toil. In the zenith of His vigorous manhood, Jesus put away our sins and our old man and brought up from death a new creation. He will never change from that vigorous, healthy, splendid state. He will bear the matured bloom of manhood, but never grow old.

“His eyes are as of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with mild and fitly set.” [SSg.5:12]

The doves' eyes are very keen and far-seeing. If she is away from home and in a strange place, she ascends strait upward, gazes till she locates the direction of her home, and then swiftly flies in that direction. Solomon's sight was keen. He wore no eye-crutches; yet he spied his foes afar off. The dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Doves' eyes indicate that Jesus searched and saw by the enablings of the Spirit. His discoveries were from above. He read nothing, probed nothing, saw nothing with a fleshly eye. He beheld as His Father did. He looked at every object and providence in the light of Scriptures; they were *“washed with milk”*...the pure milk of the Word. They were clean and clear and sparkling. Yes, His eyes were *“fitly set”* set in fullness. He possessed a full vision of every object and a full understanding of all things. Jesus' eyes were in the right place in His head, fitly set. That speaks of His rightly dividing the Word of truth. He also discerned His friends and foes, reading the love of the one and the treachery of the other.

“His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers.” [SSg.5:13a]

They stand out full and flush. This implies life and health. Their appearance is beautiful. They emit a fragrance, or perfume. In the margin they are regarded as *“towers of perfume,”* or *“banks of sweet herbs”* (RV). In the natural, it was said of Jesus that *“he hath no form, nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him”* [Isa.53:2]. But to faith, in the Spirit, He is most attractive. The perfume of His face makes one feel as though he were in the presence of flowers of the sweetest odors. Let us stay in His presence till we become so saturated with this Divine Aroma that we shall unconsciously cast it upon others. The flowers suggest the fragrance of Christ's holiness, which appeals to the scent of spiritual people.

“His lips are as lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.” [SSg.5:13b]

She had kissed her Beloved. That is how she knew [SSg.1:2]. There is a peculiar richness, softness and sweetness to a lily that makes it charmingly beautiful. The myrrh-like odor of a lily is exquisitely sweet. The very appearance of lily-like lips must therefore be exceedingly attractive and expressive. They are the outward expression of inward affection. They are also the communicative members of such affection, as it is written, *“so will we render the calves of our*

lips.” We will offer to the Lord fervent praise and adoration for graciously pardoning our sins and receiving us to Himself. How much sweeter to us are the words of Christ, when we know Him as our coming Bridegroom,

“His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl.” [SSg.5:14]

The Shulamite has forgotten about her own myrrh-dropping hands. The Revised Version (margin) says, “*Cylinders of gold*” or wide band-like rings of gold. The Hebrew word GALIL is translated “*ring*” in only one other place in Scripture, Esther 1:6. The hangings in the palace of Shushan were fastened to “*silver rings and pillars of marble*” [Est.1:6]. This use of the word RING, and the fact that the word also means “*cylinder*,” indicates that they speak of strength. The hand figures power, either to work or to war. It is also the instrument of authority and comfort. The beryl (or topaz RV) is the arrow-stone, the hardest substance known to the ancients for cutting. Solomon’s hands appeared to his fair lady like strong, wide, golden bands, beautified with a setting of sparkling beryl, topaz, or chrysolite. In Song of Solomon 2:6, we heard her say, “*His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.*” She is held by the strength of his mighty hand. She is eternally secure.

What pen-pictures these are of our heavenly Bridegroom:

- In His head, we behold holy, Divine Wisdom [SSg.5:11].
- In His eyes, we see Divine Discernment [SSg.5:12].
- By His cheeks, we are awed with the fragrance and sweetness of His holy character [SSg.5:13a].
- Then from His love-lit lips, drop words of myrrh-like tenderness and love [SSg.5:13b].

Now, our eyes fall upon His hands, the instruments of never failing comfort, strength, ministry and defense. The gold speaks to us of Christ’s unchangeable deity and glory. The cylinders speak of His all-sufficient power. Their ring-like appearance declares the eternity of that power; for a ring has no end. Then the beryl announces the flinty endurance of Christ’s service and the unwearying care and comfort for His own. Symmetrical, beautiful, powerful, wonderful and glorious are His hands. So many precious things are said of the Lord’s hand in the Bible. For example:

- “*Thou hast a mighty arm; strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand*” [Psa.89:13].
- “*For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand*” [Psa.95:7].

“His body is as bright ivory work, overlaid (or encrusted) with sapphires.”
[SSg.5:14 RV]

Certainly the lady of our song has lost sight of her own attractiveness, being charmed by the grandeur of her Beloved. Ivory is a hard, white bony substance. Sapphire is a very beautiful stone, sky blue, or red and blue and yellow mixed, an exquisite blend. It is incomparably precious [Job 28:16].

What a view the Shulamite had of the King’s body. But this is a marvelous picture of the body of our glorified Lord. Paul calls it “*His glorious body or the body of His glory*” [Phi.3:21 RV]. How wonderfully glorious He will be. His entire body will appear like the brightest ivory, polished and firm, encrusted, not simply set with one sapphire stud, but overlaid with variegated sapphires of the most charming beauty. It will seem like a huge form of exquisite beauty and dazzling light. People think that it is wonderful to receive a diamond; but our

heavenly Bridegroom will be covered with gems...sparkling, bright, and glorious. This all speaks of the immovableness and unchangeableness of the character and glory of our Lord and of the fixedness of His eternal purposes. No change, Jehovah knows. His grandeur will abide forever.

“His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold.” [SSg.5:15a RV]

We can hardly understand how a woman could give such a graphic description of her Friend. It shows that the writing of this song was divinely inspired. The spiritual lessons are the important features. The pillars of marble speak of our Lord's firm standing. The sockets of gold suggest His holy, Divine Life. He is the holy Son of God. His Divine Life is the basis of His standing. His eternal deity is the absolute foundation for His eternal humanity. All that He is now stands on the basis of what He was. His standing is in His own perfection, greatness, and grandeur. Strong, firm, immovable, grand and glorious will be our heavenly Bridegroom, and the Bride will be safe and glorious with Him.

“His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.” [SSg.5:15b RV]

Solomon's charming, broad Jewish face shone with love for his fair one. She had entreated him saying, **“Let me see thy countenance” [SSg.2:14]**. Now, her desire is granted and she cannot find adequate words to describe it. She calls nature to her help. The mountains of Lebanon were the most picturesque and sublime, the highest and grandest of any in Palestine. They always speak of the majesty, greatness, and unchangeableness of Jehovah. Their perpetual snow-covered crowns speak of His eternity, purity, and incomparable glory. Hence, we read that **“His head and hairs are white like wool, as white as snow, and His countenance as the sun that shineth in his strength; and the earth was lightened with His glory” [Rev.1:14, 16; Rev.18:1]**. The tall cedars, which graced the mountains of Lebanon, declare the super-excellence of the effulgent face of our Lord as the Son of Man...our coming Bridegroom. Lebanon speaks especially of Christ's deity; but the cedars speak of His vigorous humanity. Those towering trees with their waving branches are the monarchs of the Judean forests. Likewise, Jesus Christ is destined to be the rightful Monarch of the heavens and the earth.

“His mouth is most sweet; yea, he is altogether lovely.” [SSg.5:16a]

This is the last stroke of the artist's brush of this wonderful 9-fold picture of King Solomon. The Shulamite began with his head, compassed the whole body with its different members, and returned whence she started. As the lips are the expression of affection and the confirmation thereof by its utterances; she was not content with the touch of love. She must hear him speak; and she did.

Just so it is with us and the Lord. We first admire His spiritual understanding. We are stilled by the discernment of His lovely but piercing eyes. Then, we are carried away with His kind comfort and strong ministries, the greatness and sublimity of His Person, and the steadiness and fixedness of his eternal standing. We are awed by His countenance of glory and splendor. Finally, His mouth conquers us completely. He speaks tenderly, deeply, with gentle soothing words of warmest comfort. It is enough. Like the Shulamite said of her lover, **“He is altogether lovely.”** There is no imperfection in Christ. He is perfect from the crown of His head to the soles of His feet. The old creation is full of blemishes; but there are none in our Beloved. There is not one ugly thing in Him.

“This is my beloved and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.” [SSg.5:16b]

The Shulamite's answer to the question of the daughters was full and complete. They learned more than they expected. She showed them how her beloved was more than any other beloved. Then, she sealed her witness of him by exclaiming enthusiastically that "This man is my Beloved; this man is my Friend. He satisfied me to the uttermost." Yes, at last she became wholly taken up with the King himself. She was no longer occupied with what he did or where he went. Hence, she sang about him altogether.

That is what Christ yearns after in His people. Our heavenly Bridegroom longs for us to behold His excellencies and be swallowed up with his perfection and beauty. He wants our love, undivided and unchanging. Our fervent love for him is far more to him than our most strenuous labor. Our worship of Him is much more to Him than our warring for Him. A longing for the personal presence of Christ is far sweeter to His heart than a longing for His power. To sit at the Master's feet and learn the Word is better than to sit as chairman of a convention or commander of a camp meeting. Indeed he that does not do the former is not qualified to do the latter. "**He that winneth souls is wise**," but he who winneth Christ is wiser. He who aims to gain Christ is sure to win souls. Such a one will receive the greatest reward, even "**the Prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus**" [Phi.3:4].

Beloved Reader, what is your testimony today? Is it about your toil, or sacrifice, or holiness, or walk? Are you taken up, in any measure, with your beautiful myrrh-dropping fingers or are you all absorbed with Christ's personal character and loveliness? Is your testimony wholly of Him?

DIV.6, THE PORTRAIT OF LOVE [SSG.6]

ANOTHER QUERY AWAKENED

"Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? Whither is thy Beloved turned aside, that we may seek him with thee?" [SSg.6:1]

The interest of this song-dialogue rapidly increases. In the preceding chapter, we saw that the daughters wondered what the fair maiden found so attractive in Solomon. Her rich, descriptive answer was effectual. It aroused in them a second question, even as to his whereabouts. They desired to become better acquainted with him.

It is always so. When we whole-heartedly describe our Beloved Lord, and tell what He is to us, others are attracted to Him. Others will seek after Him. It is noticeable that when people tell what they have done and suffered for the Lord, how far and with what difficulties they have traveled, and how coldly they have been received, and what wise things they have said to others; a heaviness and dryness comes over the meeting. That may entertain the fleshly; but it never edifies the spiritual. It may superficially interest some and attract them to the speakers, but it helps no one, and draws no one to Christ. How very far different when one arises full of love for Jesus, and speaks only of Him. Immediately there comes a lifting, a refreshing, a happy delight, a wave of glory. Christ seems to stand in the midst. The Spirit's power is manifest. Saints are helped. The lukewarm are awakened. Sinners are convicted. God is glorified. Every heart says, Brother, come again. The words of John are fulfilled "**Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord**" [Joh.20:20].

That is just what we find here. The daughters have the utmost confidence in the Shulamite, calling her "**the fairest among women**," and because of her devotion to her Friend, and her warm, frank and full expressions of praise of him, they seek his company also. Furthermore, she is

able to tell them where he is. Immediately, her testimony about her Friend brings him to her side, with the deepest and tenderest words of love. Your warm testimony of Jesus brings Him to your side at once with a warmer sense of His good pleasure. You will see Him.

“My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens and to gather lilies.” [SSg.6:2]

Solomon termed his fair one his garden, even a fountain of gardens [SSg.3:14]. Observe 3 things which the Shulamite states about the King in her answer to the daughters:

- Where he went,
- what he is doing, and
- his relation to her.

Study these points; they are for our practical good. You will not find our heavenly Bridegroom roving with the world’s crowd. He is not present at the religious throng as many think Him to be. He could not be there and be consistent with His own character and teaching. No! You will find Him in His garden, by the beds of spices. He hungers, and can only feed in the garden. He feeds on the **“fruit of the Spirit”** in His people, that is, **“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance”** [Gal.5:22-23]. Reader, are you satisfying the hunger, and quenching the thirst of your Lord? Do you really love Jesus and express that love to Him? Do you really gladden His heart by your fervent praises to Him? Does your heart make melody unto the Lord? Do you really, patiently suffer with Christ and let no one know it? More and more may it be so with us.

You will still find Christ in the garden; He is there **“to gather lilies.”** What are lilies? Aye, they are the richest, softest, deeply white flowers of Palestine. Jesus said of them: **“Consider the lilies, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these”** [Luk.12:27]. Will you let Him gather you as a lily, without your toiling and spinning? Will you trust Him and love and worship Him? Where was the Shulamite? Why was she not gathering lilies? Ah, gathering lilies is the work of the King. Hers is to love him and wait on him and make known his character to others. He does the gathering. So it should always be with us and our Bridegroom. We should witness of Him; He gathers. He is pleased to use us in gathering the lilies, when we are most pleased to abide with Him as faithful, fervent gathered ones. He desires to say of His people, **“Consider the lilies, how they grow.”** They can grow, however, in His presence only and by His care and fellowship.

“I am my Beloved’s, and my Beloved is mine. He feedeth among the lilies.” [SSg.6:3]

These words indicate a marked degree of the increase of the love of the fair lady. Formerly she said, **“My Beloved is mine, and I am his”** [SSg.2:16]. Her possession of him was paramount, His claim on her secondary. She loved him; but then her love was not perfect, not unselfish, not without reservation. Now, she puts him first, **“I am by Beloved’s.”** However, there is still some self-recognition if not reservation. She adds, **“and my Beloved is mine.”** We shall see another and final step of full devotedness in the next chapter [SSg.7]. Though she has lost sight of her own activities, yet she is still exercised about his activities, **“He feedeth among the lilies.”** She wanted the daughters to know, not only the beautiful, attractive features and handsomeness of the person of her Friend; but also that he was satisfied. He was living on love. The beauty of the lilies filled his vision. He would be a pattern husband. Any wonder, after such an all-around tribute (praise), that the daughters desired to meet King Solomon?

Dear Reader, we begin to see who will make up the Bridal Company of the Lamb.

First they who know Christ as “the Beloved”, even as the Father says, “***This is my beloved Son; hear ye him.***” That is far beyond knowing Jesus as Savior, or Healer, or Baptizer with the Spirit. The Bridal Company does not just admire Christ or His gifts and achievements. Neither is He only one of many beloveds, as the daughters’ imagination of Solomon figures. He is Chief in meriting our love. And that is not all. Each of us must regard Him as “***my beloved,***” as if no one else called Him such. It is not enough to call Christ “the King,” and say to Him, “***The upright love thee***” [SSg.1:4]. The Shulamite soon advances from that distant attitude; and so must we. In the first part of the song, she pronounced Solomon her “***beloved***” 3 times. Otherwise this would not have been a love song and it would not have typified Christ and His Bride. “***My beloved***” is the key note of the Bridal anthem to be sung in glory.

Another step, and the espoused one shouts, “***I am my Beloved’s.***” I belong to no other. No man, however handsome and promising, shares my affection. I love only **ONE**, **THE** only **ONE**. For His coming I wait, and for the wedding in the air I am longing.

THE BELOVED’S PENCILINGS

“Thou art beautiful, O my Love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.”
[SSg.6:4]

The profuse tribute (praise) of the Shulamite concerning Solomon called forth from him a profuse tribute (praise) of her. He would not be outdone. It is even so with our Lord. Our high praises and lofty terms of heart adoration concerning Him bring Him on the scene with the warmest and sweetest sense of appreciation. “***Them that honor me, I will honor***” [1Sa.2:30], saith the Lord.

Tirzah (“*delight*” or “*she will delight*”) was the 5th daughter of a great grandson of Joseph. Tirzah was also an ancient city in Canaan, which later became the residence of Jeroboam and his successors [1Ki.14:17-18]. Those 2 cities, Tirzah and Jerusalem, were famous for their beauty and grandeur. Jerusalem was said to be “***beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth***” [Psa.48:2]. The King likened his fair lady to those cities. She would delight him to the uttermost; for no one could be compared to her. The word **terrible** means “*awe-inspiring*” and it is used frequently in speaking of Jehovah and rendered “*reverend*,” for example, “***holy and reverend is His name***” [Psa.111:9].

Again, we are overwhelmed with the wonder of God’s Word. Our heavenly Bridegroom calls the full-overcoming saints “***my love.***” He compares them to royal cities for beauty and comeliness. Kings dwelt and reigned in those renowned places. So Christ reigns in the lives of the overcomers. They are lovely and beautiful to Him and He makes them to know it. They are also awe-inspiring, because they partake of His Kingly spirit in view of their future queenhood. In Christ, such saints may truly be called “*holy and reverend,*” because they possess His holy and sacred nature. They are indeed holy to God and “*a terror to evil doers.*” But the modern use of the word “*reverend*”, as a ministerial title, is an abomination to God. Solomon’s address to the Shulamite was personal and private. It was not an official title that he gave her. It was his heart estimation of her as his dearest Friend. Likewise, as we wholly love and trust the Lord, He too speaks many comforting, precious, and deep things to our hearts, which we cannot make public. “***The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him***” [Psa.25:14].

THE IRONY OF LOVE

“Turn away thine eyes from me; for they have overcome me.” [SSg.6:5a]

At a former visit, the King said to his Friend, “***Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck***” [SSg.4:9]. She took away his heart (margin), as if to say, “What would happen to me if you fixed both eyes upon me?” Now his ironical query is answered. She did not now look sideways at him, but gazed upon him with both her “***doves’ eyes***.” Now, he exclaims that her gaze has “made him afraid” (overcome him). But he did not mean that the way it sounded...he spoke in irony. He was glad to be overcome with those lovely, piercing orbs. Yes, as the margin reads, “***they puffed him up***,” not with vanity, but with ecstasy. He would have been grieved deeply if she had turned her sweet face away, as he’d requested. Indeed, he was overjoyed with love’s conquest. She delighted his heart exceedingly. A real lover loves to be overcome with the loving, sparkling fixed look of the one he loves.

What a picture of Christ and His Bride! This figures the profound devotion which Jesus longs for from His people. Mary sat at His feet and heard His Word; thus, she overcame Him with her attention. In turn, He appeared to her joy and in her defense against her critics. Paul fled into Arabia to be alone with the Lord for over 3 years. There, filled with the Spirit, he gazed steadfastly into the face of the Son of God, until his own heart glowed with the fire of Divine Grace. His face shone with the flame of Divine Love and his anointed lips and pen boldly proclaimed the riches of grace and glory. The climax of this glory will be, Christ, “***the prize of the high calling***” [Phi.3:14]. As a result, we have before us the full unfolding of the truth of the new creation, of which Christ is the Head, the Center, and the Circumference. This all came to Paul because he fixed both his eyes on Him who sought his love and fellowship. Paul held a single eye to the glory of God. He overcame his Lord by his untiring devotion to Him everywhere. Of course, He appeared to the Apostle with the profoundest revelation of Jesus Christ and with the sweetest words of comfort. He gave to him the “***full assurance of faith***” [Heb.10:22] as to his present standing and state, and the “***full assurance of hope***” [Heb.6:11] as to his future place and reward. Hence, he declared at the last, “***There is laid up for me a crown***” [2Ti.4:8].

O, my Fellow Believer, shall we let Mary and Paul alone lavish unmixed and unmeasured love upon the Lord? Shall they only overcome Him? Why shouldn’t we too fix our dove-lit eyes steadfastly upon our heavenly Solomon and compel Him, by very flaming affection and extravagant adoration, to make as though He would draw back from us but really more warmly commend us and reveal hidden secrets to us? Are you willing for the consequent “***thorn in the flesh?***” We hear of many organizations of various kinds of complexions; but no one seems to be ambitious to head an organization which ravishes the Son of God with personal love. There is nothing showy in this. It is internal, profoundly hidden, supernaturally real, intensely spiritual, and wholly divine. Love cannot be organized...Love is free. Devotion cannot be controlled. Worship and fellowship cannot be circumscribed. Praise prances, sings, and swings; it rises, rolls, and swells like the mighty ocean whose bosom seems to be ambitious to rise and meet the sun from whence it came. O, how our hearts surge with fervent emotion, flutter with longings to see our Lord, and would break the cage-wires of this earthly house and fly away to be forever with Him. (Song of Solomon 6:5-7: See notes on Song of Solomon 4:1-3.)

THE BRIDEGROOM’S PUBLIC PLAUDIT

“There are threescore queens and fourscore concubines and virgins without number.” [SSg.6:8]

The singer suddenly turns from addressing his special Friend and speaks to the audience in the highest terms concerning her. This is the first time he sings about her to others. Heretofore, his song was all words of appreciation directly to his Friend alone. First of all, he had to have her undivided attention, love, and devotion. Before he could give her the highest place before others, he must be assured that she gives him the first and only place in her

heart. She must say to the inquisitive daughters, *"I am my beloveds,"* and must capture him with both her entrancing eyes, before he can begin to commend her to the public. How wonderful this is! How rich and marvelous is the Word of God! *"How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past tracing out,"* but for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear and heart to receive, the blessed Holy Spirit searches and traces, *"even the deep things of God"* [1Cor.2:10].

Many children have been ruined by their parents' unwise and undue praise of them before strangers. Many beginners in grace have been spoiled by other saints making too much of their gifts and usefulness. They became lifted up with pride; then when God, by His providence, humbled them, they backslid and became bitter or discouraged. Beloved, Reader, no doubt you have wondered why you have not been more appreciated, why you have not received more words of praise. If healthy and true, they are God's public expression of His approbation and esteem. Ah, my bruised, rejected brother, your heavenly Bridegroom has something far better for you than human praise. You could not endure and rightly appreciate the far better, without His jealous, though severe training for it.

First of all, the Lord wants you yourself, and He wants you altogether, all the time, and forever; and He wants you apart from others. Do you see it? Do you believe it? Which do you prefer? The present mixed emoluments of men with the lesser future reward, or the present rejection of men with the future's eternal best? Which? The Lord will give us the prestige with men when we really deserve it and can bear it for His glory. We are now sharing His rejection. Someday, we will share His renown.

Observe that Solomon's public praise of his Friend was shortly before their marriage. Likewise, we need not expect any banquet receptions or palace car excursions on earth. Paul espoused us to Christ and set the pace for running to gain the prize—Christ as Bridegroom. But he was always imperiled whether he walked on land or rode on freight ships. He was imprisoned 3 times and went to glory from the executioner's block. When His Lord declared Paul's character and worth, men refused to hear. They trembled at his words, but said he was beside himself and mad. Our grand excursion will be unseen and land us in the banquet room in glory.

THE BRIDAL ATTENDANTS

Observe that there were 60 queens, which implies a vast dominion under Solomon. However, none of them sat on his throne. They were subject to his rulership, associated with him, but under him. Sixty is man's governmental number; 6 (man's number) multiplied by 10. The 60 queens figure a rank of believers, who will have a sphere of rulership under Christ's dominion. They will not reign as sitting on His immediate throne. They will be associated with Him, ruling as servants of His on individual thrones. They will be fully qualified and be able to fill their respective offices.

There were 80 concubines. Let no one wonder at this; for those things *"happened unto them for figures, and they are written for our admonition"* [1Co.10:11]. It behooves us, then, to discover their figurative meaning. Eighty is the new creation number, 8, multiplied by 10 (the ability number). The concubines speak of fellowship. They suggest a rank of believers who have a certain measure of fellowship with Jesus Christ, but not the closest and deepest fellowship. They are born again; they are new creatures; for such only can know the Lord and be fellows with Him. The old creation can never understand divine and spiritual things in any sense. They are not even in the kingdom of God. The saints, represented by the concubines, will have Divine Enabling to render to the Lord the fellowship due to Him in their particular sphere; but it will not be the most intimate. Some believers will enjoy the fellowship of Christ, as dutiful servants of a kind Master; others as fellow rulers.

The number of virgins is not given. There were many more of them than of the queens and concubines. At an eastern wedding the virgins are the “**companions**” of the bride [Psa.45:14] and they follow the bridegroom [Rev.14:4]. But the virgins are not The Bride, as some venture to teach. The typical meaning here is precious indeed. Certain saints are very friendly to bridal saints and enjoy a measure of fellowship with them. No doubt John and Peter had much fellowship with Paul. Their writings are companions to the unspeakable unique writings of Paul. Such saints also follow Jesus whithersoever He may lead them [Rev.14:4]. Jesus said to Peter, “**follow me.**” He never spoke that way to Mary, who sat at His feet. Believers, figured by the virgins, will not constitute the Bride of Christ. The 5 wise virgins of Matthew 25 are 5 virgins, not 1.

“The King’s daughter is all glorious within. Her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework. The virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought. They shall enter into the King’s palace.”
[Psa.45:13-15]

THE CHOICE ONE

“My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one of her mother; she is the choice one of her that bare her.” [SSg.6:9]

The number of queens and concubines and virgins were mentioned as being many, in the preceding verse; but the king’s Friend is only one. His true love could be but one. A bride cannot be divided. If she were divided, she would not be a bride. In Solomon’s eyes, the Shulamite was so pure and perfect that her sisters did not compare at all with her. “**She is the only one.**” She satisfied him beyond all utterance. He addressed her always as, “**my Dove,**” “**my Love,**” “**my Fair One,**” “**my Undefiled,**” “**my Spouse.**”

What a beautiful picture we have here of the Bride of Christ. Do not Verses 8-9 teach ranks of believers in The Church? Here 4 distinct groups are named. However, only one of them was destined to be the bride of Solomon. He married only “**the choice one.**” It is true, that “**in one spirit we all were baptized into one body, whether Jews, or Greeks, whether bond of free, and were all given to drink of the one Spirit**” [1Co.12:13]; but in fact, and experience, in the sense of bridal oneness the Body (The Church) is not one. Paul said, “**I espoused you to one husband, that I might present a chaste virgin to Christ**” [2Co.11:2]. The whole Church was thus espoused; but as the Apostle Paul feared, so it came to pass. The minds of the majority of believers are corrupted from the simplicity and purity that is towards Christ [2Co.11:2-3]. They turn away from Him as the one head of the body, and thus are disqualified for The Bridehood. They fail to lay hold of the provision made for them.

“Christ loved the church and gave himself for her that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present her to himself the assembly glorious, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that she should be holy and without blemish.” [Eph.5:25-27 RV]

But most saints do not yield to the necessary sanctifying process. First, they do not drink of the fullness of the Spirit, which was given; hence, they cannot come into the full joy, power, and wealth made over to us in the “**one baptism**” accomplished at Pentecost. The thirsty drink, and experience the refreshing and anointing with the Spirit. In actual experience, and not in name only, they become Christians (“**anointed ones**”). Certainly, only Bible Christians can ever hope to be in the Bridehood of Christ. Likewise, only those who actually, practically receive Christ as the One, all-sufficient Head can come into blessed oneness with Christ.

Certainly, in experience, they alone constitute *“The assembly glorious, without spot, or wrinkle”* [Eph.5:27 RV]; of such the Holy Spirit says, *“The mystery, this one, is great; but I speak concerning Christ and concerning the assembly”* [Eph.5:32 RV].

Therefore, this strong exhortation is given:

“Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the assembly and gave himself for it; and let the wives be subject to their own husbands, EVEN AS the assembly is unto Christ.” [Eph.5:24 RV]

Then the Apostle Paul concludes this comprehensive study of The Church and her Head by saying, *“Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband”* [Eph.5:33]. Similar unselfish love for one another is also required of the unmarried. It is not supposable that saints of any less mutual devotion should be in the Bridehood. Impossible! Only such can be considered **“one”**. Only such deep, mutual yieldedness and devotion can be termed **“without spot or wrinkle,”** Only such Scriptural, unselfish attention can be pronounced **“glorious.”**

Can Believers be in The Bridehood who only want what they want, who go only where they desire to go, seek their own ease and comfort, who are not yielding to others for Jesus' sake, or are not willing to be led by others? Can they be called **“the choice one?”** Those who are sectarian in spirit—“We are the people; wisdom will die with us”—those who hold to names other than the name of Christ, surely cannot be called, **“My dove, my only one.”** Those who compromise with their own flesh; those who yield to human sympathy, or human operations; those who follow the spirit of this age cannot be members of the Bride of Christ. No! No! Impossible! Only a divinely tried and approved company out of The Church will constitute the Bride. Solomon made it clear who should be his bride. There could be no mistake about it. Our Lord also declares who should be His choice one. As the wedding day draws near, we hear Him saying, even as Solomon said, **“My Dove, my undefiled is but one.”**

LOVE COMPLIMENTED BY FRIENDS

“The daughters saw her and called her blessed. Yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.” [SSg.6:9]

At first, the Shulamite's sisters were angry with her, possibly from envy that the King should have fallen in love with her [SSg.1:6]. The watchmen, when meeting her in the city at night, upbraided her [SSg.3:3, 5:7]. Later on, the daughters acknowledged her to be **“the fairest among women,”** but, they quizzed her concerning the object of her love, wondering what super-excellence she could see in him [SSg.3:7]. While the fair one was coming up to the highest expectations of her lover, she was also rising in the esteem of her acquaintances. She proved herself worthy of being Solomon's wife. When he gave her such a full, bold, public compliment, her friends acclaimed it by similar notes of praise. That was a very interesting act of the drama.

May we look for the antitype?

May we expect the other saints will recognize and acknowledge a certain choice company of believers, who will have qualified to be the Bride of Christ? Why not? Of course, not all believers will do so.

Some will insist up to the coming of Jesus that all The Church will be in the Bride.

Others, however, figured by ***“the daughters...and concubines,”*** will doubtless have sufficient spirituality to discern the excellencies of the Bridal Company, while not being able, seemingly, to prepare for it. They count themselves unworthy, because they do not fully grasp the meaning of Divine Grace. Such, however, have a measure of fellowship with full overcomers, who are the agencies of blessing to them. They receive spiritual instruction and food from those who are qualifying for the Bridehood. Of course they rejoice in what God does for and through them, and for the faith and love which they evince. A false humility hinders some saints from speaking commendably of other saints, lest the latter should be inflated. The Bridegroom sees to it that His Choice One will not receive more tribute (praise) than she can bear. They who entertain such thoughts, especially about those who have gone on with the Lord and have proved their devotion to Him, do not know what pain, anguish, and grief they have borne. They would not believe it if one told them. They cannot conceive how anyone could come through such furnaces of affliction and persecution without the smell of fire upon them. Sometimes they blame the sufferers for their persecutions, not believing that they were suffering with Christ. All that most of us know is, after all, only what we know by actual experience.

It is a vital fact, that during the courtship of Solomon and the Shulamite, she received very little encouragement and few compliments from others until just before the marriage. The Beloved was profuse and unchanging in his expressions of deep appreciation of His Love. Already in Song of Solomon 1:8-10 were warm words of welcome and comfort to her. If it were not for the 2-score fervent expressions of love and devotion to his Friend, she would not have gone on with the courtship through the criticisms and hindrances that beset her.

The same things are more emphatically true of the experiences of full overcomers. They receive little encouragement from other saints at the beginning of their running for the prize. Everything and everybody is against them. Full surrender is hooted at. Whole heartedness is mocked. The seekers after full victory are accused of being over-much righteous: “Ah, you take yourself too seriously.” “The world will wag without your zeal.” “You are not so important to the Lord.” “Are you one of His pets?” “Ah there are no overcomers.” Such are the taunts of critics.

Some believers are so impudently unbelieving as to dare to declare that Joshua and Paul were not victorious in their lives. They claim that Jesus was the only full overcomer. Indeed, they who will constitute ***“the Lamb’s wife”*** suffer in their preparation with Christ. They become ***“partakers of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death”*** [Phi.3:10]. Oh, if it were not for the assurance by the Word, of being in His will, they could never stem the tide of opposition. If it were not for Christ’s comforting voice, heard again and again, the runners for the prize would cease running. The Holy Spirit, as the brooding dove, hovers over those who are tried beyond measure soothing, quieting, and resting their hearts. He binds up the wounds that do not heal. He strengthens those who are ready to die with disappointments and grief.

Beloved, have you ever read Psalm 22:20 and 35:17? Read these verses now:

“Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog.” [Psa.22:20]

“Lord, how long wilt thou look on? Rescue my soul from their destructions, my darling from the lions.”
[Psa.35:17]

The word **darling** is ***“only one”*** in the margin, which is the meaning of the Hebrew word YACHID. In Genesis 22:2&16 it is translated ***“darling”*** because Isaac was Abraham’s only son (darling). The Bride of Christ is His ***“only one”***, or ***“darling.”*** The enemies of Christ during His life and when He was on the cross are termed ***“dogs”*** and ***“lions,”*** because they bark, growl, roar,

bite, and devour. They are also enemies of the Bride of Christ. It is a very sad fact, that sometimes God's children yield to the flesh and Satan, and thus act the part of dogs and lions, as if to devour true saints of God.

One more item: Is it not wonderful, that when Jesus prayed for His own deliverance, He prayed for His "**darling**" also? Why? Because He counted her as one with Himself, even a part of Himself. By the Spirit, He was made to know that she would suffer **EVEN AS** He suffered, which would be equivalent to suffering **WITH** Him. "**If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him**" [2Ti.2:12]. Seeing these and many other comforting truths in the Word enables the Bridal saints to run without stopping. They "**press toward the mark (goal) for the prize of the high (upward) calling of God in Christ Jesus**" [Phi.3:14]. They so run that they may obtain.

LOVE'S PROMENADE

"Who is she that looketh forth as the morning; fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible, as an army with banners?" [SSg.6:10]

The King likens his Friend in the song to various imposing objects. First, he said, "**I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots**" [SSg.1:9]. She was no doubt cheerful in spirit; yet he saw her as a mighty company. Then, because of her gentle, tender disposition, he likens her to "**the lily among thorns**" [SSg.2:2]. In Solomon's next picture of his fair one, she has grown into unspeakable greatness and splendor [SSg.4:1-11]. She has doves' eyes. Her hair resembles goats' hair. Her teeth look like sheep newly washed and shorn, etc. He is carried away with her beauty and perfection; he exclaims, "**thou art all fair, my love; no spot in thee.**" "**Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.**"

Then suddenly, his song camera throws her on the screen as "**a garden enclosed...a spring shut up, a fountain sealed...an orchard...a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters and streams from Lebanon**" [SSg.4:12-15]. He compares her beauty to the city of Tirzah and her comeliness to Jerusalem and her awe inspiring womanliness to a victorious army. Then he challenges all spectators as it were, to produce her equal, loudly shouting, "**My dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the only one, the choice (pure) one of her mother**" [SSg.6:9]. Finally, and as if unexpectedly, Solomon beholds his Bride, beaming with the glow of a radiant morning in an unclouded eastern sky. Note the 4 following facts:

1. "**She looketh forth as the morning.**" She wears a youthful, hopeful countenance. She is brimming with bright expectations of her soon-coming wedded life with the greatest man on earth. Freshness and vigor stream from her face. This is indeed a pen-picture of the Bride of Christ. She wears the life and vigor of the resurrection morning. She has learned something of "**the power of His resurrection,**" and exemplifies the youthfulness of it in her believing, unclouded countenance.

"**She looketh forth.**" Yes, this is the all-absorbing spirit of the Bride. At the Lord's Supper, she eats the bread and drinks the cup in memory of His death "**till He come.**" She yearns to "**come behind in no gift waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ**" [1Co.1:7]. She groans to be unburdened of this present mortal tenement and "**clothed upon with our house which is from heaven**" [2Co.5:2], or "**the body of His glory**" [Phi.3:21 RV]. The glorious hope of being with Christ and like Him is her great comfort and impetus to press on. Her constant gaze is into the heavens.

She "**looketh forth as the morning.**" Her heart is light and her face is bright with the thrilling expectation of reigning with the greatest Man in the universe. She is filled with the spirit

of the millennial morning. By faith she beholds a bright, glorious, victorious, fruitful, unhampered day before her; 1,000 years of unbounded, unparalleled, unrestrained love and fellowship with her King and Bridegroom. There is a boldness and intoxication in this gaze upwards for Christ's coming that bewilders those who do not possess it. It is fixed, firm, and flaming. O, how small the world grows! How its attractions fade away! How fleshly ambitions retire! How repulsive becomes their fellowship! **"He that hath this hope set on Him purifieth himself even as He is pure"** [1Jo.3:3].

2. **"Fair as the moon."** Six times before, the King had pronounced his Friend **"fair,"** or **"all fair."** Now he compares her beauty with that of the moon. If she was Abishag [1Ki.1:3], we are not surprised at this description; for she was **"a very fair damsel."** Have you noticed what a beautiful, healthy, happy face the moon always wears? She is always smiling. When the moon appears full-orbed, her neighbors, the stars, recede and hide their faces. Such was the wise man's impression of the beauty of the one he loved.

But this portrait of beauty must have been intended to convey deep spiritual meaning, even as all of these descriptions and comparisons. How could these elaborately picturesque descriptions be given of a woman, except she was to be a figure of a company of saints, perfected, and beautified by their Lord? Indeed, the Bridal Company is as fair (beautiful) as the moon. The epistle to the Ephesians is pre-eminently concerning **"the heavenlies in Christ,"** our future abode. It is a significant fact that **Ephesus** means **"the city of the moon."** The Bride is fair because she beholds the face of the Fair One in the glory. She becomes changed from beauty to beauty by gazing upon Him. Some people claim to see a man in the moon. Watch real spiritual saints and you will see "the Man of Nazareth" mirrored there...**"The Man"** is indeed in **"the Moon."** We can truly say, **"Christ liveth in me."** It is most logical then, that those who are in Christ, and acknowledge Christ in them and are being transformed into His image, should be named **"fair as the moon."** The Lord Himself pronounces them so, because He sees that they have absorbed His own beauty and loveliness; they are **"partakers of Christ."** He will cause other saints to behold the real character of full overcomers, and they will be amazed at the perfect product of redemption.

3. **"Clear as the sun."** In Solomon's eyes, the Shulamite was **"pure (RV) as the sun,"** that is, he could detect no spot or taint of impurity in her character. Indeed, he had said to her, **"There is no spot in thee."** Her face shone with undimmed splendor.

How marvelous are the Holy Spirit's descriptions of God's people. Here is a beautiful and wonderful unfolding of her beauty intensifying; from astonishment to grandeur and from grandeur to awe. Who dare look into the face of the sun? His brilliant beams are blinding to the extreme. It is his pure, clear light which makes it so. He is himself a ball of fire. There is no purer, brighter, more needed planet than the sun. Aye! What a symbol of the Bride of Christ. As it is written, **"They that love Him are as the sun when He goeth forth in his might"** [Jdg.5:31]. She is the purest, holiest object in the universe next to Jehovah Himself. She is like **"the Sun of Righteousness."** She possesses His fire. She is clad with His brilliancy. While beholding the face of the transcendently glorious **"Sun of righteousness"** she is changed **"from glory to glory,"** from the calm, brightness of the morning to the smiling beauty of the moon and then into the glory of the glorious sun. Indeed, Jehovah covers His saints, as well as Himself, with light as with a garment [Psa.104:2]. O, who would not covet to be among the princes, the coming Shulamite of the heavenly Solomon of millennial power and glory? Who can help aspiring to **"stand perfect and complete in all the will of God"** [Col.4:12]? Who can help longing to be presented **"faultless before the throne of His glory with exceeding great joy"** [Jud.1:24]? Yea, more, on the throne with Him? **"They that be wise (or**

teachers) *shall shine as the stars forever and ever* [Dan.12:3]; and *“the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father”* [Mat.13:43].

4. **“Terrible as an army with banners.”** The Hebrew word AYOM means “awe-inspiring,” and is translated “terrible” here in Song of Solomon 6:4, and in Habakkuk 1:7. Other Hebrew words also are translated TERRIBLE (fear-producing); for example, YARE in Psalm 45:4 but is rendered REVEREND in Psalm 111:9. The Shulamite appeared awe-inspiring, majestic. She was fully developed and strong. She was a woman in every sense of the word. She reminded her lover of an **“army with banners,”** parading with colors flying. She proved herself prepared to be the King’s Bride.

Again the choice one of her mother stands forth as an interesting type of an interesting band of believers. As to our attitude to God, we are lamb-like, yielding, ready to serve or be slaughtered. We are always absolutely and gladly in entire subjection to Him. However, as to our attitude to Satan, the flesh, and the world, we are lion-like, unyielding, ready to reign and slaughter. We inspire awe and command the respect of men. Being in subjection to **“The Lamb of God,”** We bring everything of the world, the flesh, and the devil under subjection through the power of **“the Lion of Judah.”** God would teach us that by faith we may reign over the world in every phase of its character during this present time. As we are altogether overcome by the love of Christ and walk in the spirit, so we altogether overcome all the world in us and about us. We actually make everything serve us for Jesus’ sake. We are truly **“terrible.”** As we are lost in God by faith, occupied with the sweetness of the Lamb of God, we appear terrible to on-lookers. We possess an invisible, unexplainable, invincible power which, unconsciously to its possessor, overcomes everybody round us.

Those who thus overcome now will be most closely associated with the Lion of Judah when He roars against the nations in fierce judgment at the opening the next age. He and His shall pour out the bowls of Divine Wrath upon this Christ-rejecting, truth-crushing, infidel world. **“The terror of the Lord”** will climax in the juggernaut of Divine Indignation, even **“in flaming fire”** upon the wicked during the tribulation days. Those, who flame and flow together with the Lord here in deep heart-union and fellowship, will share in dispensing the judgments, **“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?”** [1Co.6:2].

THE KING’S FINAL EXAMINATION

“I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, to see whether the vine flourished and the pomegranates budded.” [SSg.6:11]

Solomon is now fully satisfied with his Friend. He is persuaded that she is qualified to be his bride. His last visit with her beheld the foregoing imposing picture of her beauty, stateliness, and perfection. She is all that he can desire. The **“garden enclosed,”** the **“fountain of gardens”** [SSg.4:12-15], delights him to the uttermost. She is blossoming and budding with brightest promise of unspeakable fruitfulness. There is no garden like his **“spouse.”** She is prepared, and he is ready for the wedding.

But how about the other gardens [SSg.6:2], even the **“garden of nuts”** mentioned here, which figure all the King’s subjects. The **“vine”** speaks of his entire realm, and the **“pomegranates”** suggest the most devout and useful individuals in the realm. Therefore, we see the reason for this visit. Is the kingdom flourishing and hopeful, and are its representative characters budding with the promise of increasing usefulness? Are they prepared for this, the most important

union in the kingdom? Are the queens and concubines in full accord with this coming event? These queries occasioned his final walk of investigation through the garden of nuts.

Stop! Listen! Hear Solomon's abrupt thrilling chorus to his base solo of examination.

"Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib." [SSg.6:12]

The Revised Version reads, "*Before I was aware, my soul set me among the chariots of my princely people.*" The explanation is simple. The meaning is wonderful.

The word **Amminadib** means "*my willing or princely people.*" The word **nadib** means "*willing, noble.*" The word for **prince** in the exclamation, "***O prince's daughter***" [SSg.7:1], is **NADIB** in Hebrew and means "*willing, noble, princely.*" Ah! Wonderful! I say. Before Solomon scarcely realized what he was doing. The arrangements for the wedding were made, their mutual friends were notified, and they were speeding away to the place of marriage. His soul, flaming with true love for the choice one, landed him on his **palanquin** ("*car of state*" or "*chariot of Lebanon*") with his "princely" spouse by his side. Her sparkling eyes, her pleasing, pleading voice and firm purpose of heart not to suffer longer delay, overcame him. Had the Shulamite's father just then given her to the King, as was the custom [Gen.24:51]?

BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY!

What a perfect picture of the long-looked-for time, now close at hand.

The heavenly Bridegroom has been making warm overtures to the saints, especially in the closing days of this age. He has been wooing them to Himself for Bridal fellowship. Some have accepted the invitation and are reciprocating His love. They understand and appreciate His endearing words of comfort and hope. Their cry is, "Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly." They long for the glorious wedding in the air.

On the other hand, the Lord has been making repeated visits, as it were, to discover the exact status of The Church and of Israel. Is the Bridal Company making herself ready for the wedding? Has she put off all that pertains to the old creation, the flesh? Is she having her wedding garments made? Does Christ, as Bridegroom (not only as King), have the chief place in her heart? Is she saying with all the heart, "***I am my Beloved's***"? Who of His people are really refreshing Him with "***the fruit of the spirit ... love, joy, peace,***" etc.? Who are greatly rejoicing and satisfying His heart with constant worship and adoration?

One of these days, He will make a last visit to the "***garden of nuts***" and close this age. He will come to ascertain whether "***the vine is flourishing***" and will find Israel [the vine, Isa.5] ripening with prospects of accepting His Messiahship. He will know if "***the pomegranates are budding,***" and will see the "***valiant of Israel,***" the 144,000, preparing to be present at the wedding in the air. He will behold all companies of saints—daughters, queens and concubines—all who are concerned in the coming of Jesus, qualifying in their respective spheres for the glorious day. Is that too much to hope for? Prevailing conditions seem to answer, "**Too Much!** Impossible! Strife and divisions on every hand forbid such a prospect. But Jehovah is on the scene. He controls the actors on the world's stage. What He has purposed, He will do. He says, "***I will watch over my word to perform it***" [Jer.1:12]. The operation of the Holy Spirit in believers is so rapid, perfect, and hidden, that all things are being made ready. It is the day of the Lord's preparation. While Satan is fitting his dupes for the Antichrist, God is preparing His people for His Son who shall reign. The Jews are looking with brightest hope for their Messiah; but our Christ will be that Messiah.

“Or (before) ever I was aware.” One of these days, our heavenly Lover will call on us here for the last time. Our Solomon will find His longing Shulamite fully prepared, full-grown, fully developed, happy and strong in the Lord, **“Called and chosen and faithful”** [Rev.17:14]. In her, He will find His own bursting, blooming, vigorous resurrection life. As to her beauty, she will amply adorn the holy city. Her colossal strength, **“pillars in the temple of God”** will overwhelm the angels and saints with sublime awe. By her sweet, deep, warm fellowship with her heavenly Lover and her inexpressible adoration of His worthy majesty, she will be **“to the praise of the glory of His grace”** [Eph.1:6] unto the uttermost. The fragrant fruit of her fervent love will prove her right to queenship with Him throughout the ages. Hallelujah! It will be seen that she is indeed His “willing, noble, princely people,” even “willing in the day of His power (power to resurrect and translate), **“in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning”** [Psa.110:3]. The heavenly Shulamite will conquer the heavenly Bridegroom with her ardent love and over-mastering desire for the nuptials in the sky. The Father will give her in marriage to His most deserving Son, our Lord. In turn, His longing for His **“darling”** [Psa.22:20] and for His millennial reign and glory will impel Him to snatch her away and take her back with Him.

One of these days, our Lord will come near to the earth. The graves will suddenly open. **“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye...we shall be changed”** [1Co.15:52]. The full overcomers, from among the dead and the living, will speed away to glory; **“and so shall we ever be with the Lord”** [1Th.4:17]. Oh, what a bright prospect! Oh, what a glorious day! Oh, how real and fascinating it grows as we ponder the blessed Word, and **“comfort one another with these words”** [1Th.4:18].

LOVE’S DEPARTURE DEPLORED

“Return, return, O Shulamite. Return, return, that we may look upon thee. What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.” [SSg.6:13]

This cry implies that Solomon took his love away soon after beholding her so beautiful, handsome, and majestic (seen in **SSg.6:10**). This is the first time that the daughters acknowledge her name, which means **“peaceful, perfect, complete.”** They acted in her presence like they did not care much for her, and did not believe her to be true to her name. But now, that she has disappeared, they call for her. However, they are never granted the privilege of seeing her again until after her marriage; until the “peaceful” one was joined to the “Peaceable” one.

Can it be thought strange that we should expect such disappointed ones to exclaim? “Come back, come back, O heavenly Shulamite; come back, O ye spiritual ones. Come back, come back. We miss your fervent fellowship. We miss your burning zeal. We miss your triumphant faith, your shouts of praise. We miss your quivering, melting tenderness. We miss your untiring concern for us, your counsel, your prayers.” I tell you there will be sobbing children and heart-broken companions then. There will be sad lamentations and regrets. There will be shame-covered believers groaning because they did not believe the true report; but made light of the faith and victories and experiences of their brethren, calling them “fanatics.” Therefore, we should not wonder that John exhorts thus **“And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming”** [1Jo.2:28]. I tell you, that then...

GROANS WILL GROW
AND TEARS WILL FLOW,
THE TROUBLED, ANGUISHED, SORROWING SAINT
WILL WEEP, LAMENT AND WELL NIGH FAINT,
NOT FINDING WHERE TO GO.

“...What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies.” [SSg.6:13b]

*“Why will ye look upon the Shulamite as upon the dance of **Mahanaim**?” (RV). Here we are reminded of Jacob’s experience on his way to meet his brother, Esau. **“And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God’s host; and he called the name of that place, Mahanaim”** [Gen.32:2].*

Mahanaim means “two hosts or camps”. The onlookers beheld the Shulamite, before she fled away as one “**terrible as an army with banners**,” but, after she was gone, they thought of her as 2 hosts (camps). Those angels came to Jacob from heaven as Mahanaim (2 hosts). There will also be 2 messengers from earth seen in heaven as Mahanaim (2 hosts), even Christ’s princely people, the heavenly Shulamite. Are you very surprised to find that John tells us of these very companies in Revelation 4?

“I looked and behold a door opened in heaven...and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and One sat on the throne....And round about the throne were four and twenty thrones, and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting; and they had on their heads crowns of gold....and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts (living creatures) full of eyes before and behind.”
[Rev.4:1-6]

Most marvelous is the blessed Word of God. The 4 living creatures and the 24 elders are almost constantly associated together; but they are distinctly 2 companies. They speak of 2 phases of experience (2 offices), but one in faith and purpose. They are rulers and worshippers. They are most likely the Bride, for John sees them first in heaven immediately after the thrones are set in heaven. He sees 2 hosts, for these numbers 24 and 4 are representative numbers. They are “**redeemed...out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation...made...unto...God kings and priest:...and...shall reign over the earth**” [Rev.5:9-10]. Marvelous, I say, that these should be typified and symbolized by the Shulamite, viewed as 2 hosts.

This foreshadows a truth that few care to hear. Some believers will be translated to glory, while others will remain behind. Some will be raised from among the dead; but others will remain for a later resurrection. The Apostle Paul ran for this out-resurrection and taught it to us saying, “*...if possibly I may attain to the resurrection from among the dead ones*” [Phi.3:11 Diaglott]. Moses enjoyed an out-resurrection (compare **Jud.1:9** with **Mat.17:1**). Likewise did other saints of the old covenant [Mat.27:52-53]. And an advanced translation is certainly offered to Philadelphia overcomers [Rev.3:10]. Enoch and Elijah enjoyed an out-translation under the old covenant. Why may not some under the new covenant? As Mary was first at the tomb and first to see her risen Lord, so will some be first at the tomb again to join Paul in the out-resurrection from among the sleeping saints. They learn Christ now, and will know His resurrection then.

It is as true as it is solemn, that some believers will miss the 1st Rank rapture. In the type, they are figured by the daughters, queens, and concubines. They are less yielding to God. Although they may have received the Spirit, they walk in the flesh. They are more occupied with service than with worship. They know the Lord Himself less than they know His work. Their fellowship with Him is not of a bridal character but rather that of a slave. They are of the Jonathan and Martha class.

Beloved fellow saint, are you so yielding to God, seeking Him, and stretching toward the goal that you may arrive at that for which you are apprehended of God in Christ? If not, why not? **“So run that you may obtain”** [1Co.9:24].

IN A MOMENT

IN A MOMENT! IN A MOMENT!
AT THE BREAKING OF THE DAY,
CHRIST SHALL COME WITH CLOUDS TRIUMPHANT,
AND SHALL STEAL HIS BRIDE AWAY,
EVERMORE TO REIGN IN GLORY,
ALTOGETHER GLAD AND GAY.

IN A MOMENT! IN A MOMENT!
ALL OUR SORROWS WILL BE PAST,
AS THE LORD SHALL BE DESCENDING,
HE SHALL CHANGE THESE MORTALS FAST;
AND WE'LL LEAVE OUR FRAGILE BASKET
AT THE TRUMPET'S BRIDAL BLAST.

IN A MOMENT! IN A MOMENT!
AT THE MOVING OF THE REEL,
WE SHALL DON OUR HEAVENLY CLOTHING,
AND MOUNT UP AT TRUMPET PEAL.
ALL THE WOUNDS AND STABS OF SATAN,
JESUS THEN WILL QUICKLY HEAL.

IN A MOMENT! IN A MOMENT!
IN THE TWINKLE OF AN EYE,
WE'LL BE TAKEN UP IN CHARIOT
TO OUR MANSION IN THE SKY,
WHERE WE'LL MEET AND GREET OUR BRIDEGROOM,
AND WILL NEVER SAY, "GOODBYE."

MARY M. BODIE

DIV.7, LOVE'S LAST CONQUEST [SSg.7]

THE BELOVED'S PANEGYRIC

Chapter 7 falls into 2 parts. It relates happenings (1) immediately before and (2) after the wedding. The first 9 verses are the first part—a tender melody of climaxing panegyric from the Bridegroom to the Bride. The first 7 verses are sung before the marriage, and the next 2 verses are sung afterwards. Then the 4 last verses give the Bride's warm response. The primary portion of the king's song contains a 10-fold graphic picture of the beauty and majestic grandeur of his Friend. It begins with the feet and culminates with her magnificent stature.

"How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman." [SSg.7:1]

The Hebrew word for **prince** is **NADIB** and it means "*noble, willing, princely*." It is the latter part of the significant word **Aminadib** which means "*my willing, or princely people*." The Shulamite's father was probably a prince in Israel or in the princely line. At least there is this lesson here: To be willing to yield to the king was considered noble and princely. This title being given to her is further evidence that she is the Amminadib ("*princely people*") of Song of Solomon 6:12.

Two fundamental facts are named in Verse 1.

1. The Shulamite's "*feet in sandals*" (RV) are regarded as beautiful. That is unusual; for the feet are among the "*uncomely members*" of the body. That is why women try to squeeze them into small shoes. But this woman's feet are fair to behold in homely sandals.
2. "*The joints*" of the thighs are like jewels. Consider the delicately fitting jewels in a watch, and you will understand the perfect union of hip and thigh. God Himself is the cunning workman. That is the way He built a woman for Adam [**Gen.2:22**].

These 2 members, the thighs and feet, speak of the firm, stately, and beautiful carriage of the Shulamite. With ever increasing wonder and delight this holy drama proceeds.

Here we are reminded of the "*feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace*," and of the "*whole body fitly joined together*" [**Eph.4:16**, **Eph.6:15**]. In a deeper sense, this must refer to "*the assembly glorious, not having spot, or wrinkle*" [**Eph.5:27** RV]. The Holy Spirit, the cunning workman of today, works in yielding saints and beautifies their every step. The walk of the natural man is horrible to the Lord; but "*how beautiful are the feet of him that publisheth peace*" [**Isa.52:7**]. Who does that like Bridal believers?

The thigh is a strong member of the body. It speaks of "*the loins girt about with truth*." When we eat the Word of God, we become strong in the Lord; strong to stand and endure hardships and bear burdens. Samson smote the Philistines "*hip and thigh*," that is, he broke their strong places. Therefore, the joints of the thigh, being jewel-like, teach the perfect, firm, easy, calm, steady, practical walk in the light. Coupled with the feet, the walk is beautiful.

In Moses' day, Bezaleel was chosen and anointed of God to devise cunning works in gold, silver, and brass. He was filled with the Spirit in all manner of workmanship for erecting the tabernacle in the wilderness. He represents the Holy Spirit. **Bezaleel** means "*God's shade or protection*." As seen in the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, the Holy Spirit was the shade and protection of Jehovah over Israel. Today, He is the never failing shade over God's people from the heat of trial and their protection from all their foes. He is indeed the cunning workman. He sets the members in the Body of Christ as it pleaseth Him [**1Co.12**]. He also makes the Word of God effectual in them that believe it.

Aholiab ("*tent of a father*") was appointed to work with Bezaleel. He was a cunning workman and an embroiderer in blue, purple, scarlet, and fine linen (see **Exo.31:2-6** and **Exo.38:29**). Aholiab represents the Apostle Paul. It pleased the Lord to make the Apostle Paul "*a wise master builder*." He "*laid the foundation*" of The Church, which is a "*habitation of God*" [**Eph.2:22**]. Thus, he is the chief agent on earth in erecting "a tent" for our heavenly Father. Few people realize the important place that he has in the counsels of God. Do you know that he espoused The Church to one husband, that he might "*present a chaste virgin to Christ*" [**2Co.11:2**]? Paul said, "...*God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel*" [**Rom.2:16**].

"*And every wise hearted among you shall come and make all that the Lord hath commanded*" [**Exo.35:20**] (see also **Exo.36:1**). The spiritual successors of Paul, beginning with Timothy, Titus, etc., have continued this cunning work in The Church, by proclaiming his Gospel. This results in "*the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the edifying of the Body of Christ*" [**Eph.4:11-16**]. Out of this mystical Body, The Church, Paul's Gospel is building a Bride for the heavenly Bridegroom. The joints of her thighs are jewel-like, the effective results of the pains-taking toil of the cunning Workman, the Holy Spirit through the agency of divinely guided workmen. We have a right to expect to walk beautifully and with stately, unblameable mien.

“Thy body is like a round goblet, wherein no mingled wine is wanting.” [SSg.7:2]

Wine stimulates and invigorates the body. The Shulamite had frequented Solomon's banqueting house (house of wines) [SSg.2:4]. Her body showed the good effects of drinking good wine, such as was entirely free from mixture or adulteration. Her form was perfectly proportioned and most comely. This speaks to us of the indwelling and operations of the Holy Spirit.

It is more than Pentecost begun. It indicates a company of saints who have drunk deeply of the fullness of the Spirit, and keep on drinking. Some yield sufficiently to be filled initially with the Spirit; but Bridal saints yield to the Spirit so as to go on with Christ, grow up into Him in all things, and increase with the increase of God in them. They become well rounded in experience and show aptitudes of usefulness. They keep filled with the Spirit by walking in the Spirit and not in the flesh. They show that *“no mingled wine”* has any place in them. They are delivered from formalism (a dry spirit). They are not fanatical; they have no wild spirit. They are not anointed with an unguent made by man. They are anointed with *“the holy anointing oil, compounded according to the (heavenly) apothecary”* [Exo.30:25]. It is unmixed and unmixable. *“But ye have an unction from the Holy One and ye know all things”* [1Jo.2:20-27].

“Thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies.” [SSg.7:2]

The King had before found his Friend *“all fair, undefiled,”* lovely in disposition and undivided in her devotion. Now he beholds her fully developed and capable of being useful, fruitful, productive. He was not going to wed a doll, nor an ornament, but a woman. Oh, what an impressive picture of real, practical sainthood.

When Jesus comes, He will not select babies for his Bride. He does not want simply a spiritual ornament to gaze upon. The Bride Company will be useful and powerful as well as beautiful. They demonstrate the probability of their future place by what they are now, *“a heap of wheat set about with lilies.”* They are productive now. Collectively, they have the appearance of a stack of grain in the open field studded with shining lilies. They demonstrate spiritual motherhood, the proof of which is the lily-like younger and growing believers which worship with them. Thus, they are qualifying for their higher and fuller fruitfulness in glory. Through their union with Christ, up yonder, a nation will be *“born at once”* [Isa.66:8]. *“The residue of the men (all Israel) will seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things”* [Act.15:17]. After the wedding in the air comes the great world-wide revival. We need not look for it before then.

“Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.” [SSg.7:3]

In Song of Solomon 4:5, this same delicate statement is made with these words added, *“which feed among the lilies.”* The Shulamite is not feeding among the lilies now. She is ready and waiting for the marriage ceremony. She is qualified to be a bride, fully satisfying her lover. (See the spiritual interpretation previously given of SSg.4:5).

It is proper to add here, that as in the type so in the antitype. When the time figured here comes, the Bridal saints will be in heaven, there waiting for the wedding. There will be worshipping and adoring the Lord, and assisting Him in putting down His enemies. He will have to judge Christendom as false to Him. Laodicean Protestantism will be spued out of His mouth and the great harlot will be destroyed before He can take to Himself, in wedlock, His true Bride. During those days of warring and waiting, the heavenly Bridegroom will be admiring His overcoming “princely people” and enjoying their fellowship. His heart will be overwhelmed with utter delight. He will not feel disappointed with them. They will be just what

He longed for and sought to have them be. They will intoxicate (abundantly moisten) Him with their sacrifice of praise [Isa.42:24], and will show their entire fitness to be His Bride.

Let not false modesty, the result of sin in the flesh, hinder us from understanding the will of God, either in the natural or supernatural. ***“Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled”*** [Tiu.1:15]. This entire description is no doubt a pen-picture, by the Holy Spirit, of Eve fully formed before sin had marred her beauty and perfection. Why is it not also a portrait of a typical bride today, filled with the Spirit and walking in the spirit, in order to foreshadow the Bride of Christ? The Holy Spirit never employs imaginary things to illustrate, typify, or symbolize truth. He uses actual facts, persons, and scenes. In Bible times, marriage was expectant with loving reproduction, but not for carnal gratification. Hence, it was the gravest reproach for a woman to be barren. All that foreshadowed the impossibility of the Bride of Christ being barren. Therefore, Verse 3 most beautifully typifies her healthy, reproductive state after the translation and before the wedding in the air.

“Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim: thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus.” [SSg.7:4]

Ivory is a hard, white, bone-like substance. Hence, it suggests beauty, purity, and strength. A neck like ***“a tower of ivory”*** figures majestic beauty and womanly purity with refined and polished strength. The neck is also an important support. It holds up the head, which is likened to Carmel in the next verse. It also connects the head with the body (see the notes on SSg.4:4).

We are still studying about that wonderful company of people, called the Bride of Christ. The neck speaks of that principle in overcomers, which directly connects those who possess the necessary senses of usefulness with the body. Some saints especially exemplify firmness with beauty of character, and strength with refinement and purity. They may be quiet; for the neck does not speak. It has no mouth. These saints stand by immovably and hold up Christ as Head of the Body. Indeed they are as a tower of ivory—hard against evil, firm for the truth, shining with glory. They seldom miss a meeting. They do not gossip, nor criticize. They pray and pay. They proved to be a vital connection between the Head and the body, The Church, and acknowledge Christ as ***“Head over all things in behalf of the Church”*** [Eph.1:22].

“Thine eyes are like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim.” Heshbon (*“reason or stronghold”*) was a town in Moab, east of the Jordan, and was captured from the Amorites by Reuben and Gad. In Heshbon’s wall was a gate named **Bathrabbim** (*“daughter of many”*). Near that gate, were 2 renowned fish pools, whose clear waters sparkled perpetually. The eyes of the Shulamite were evidently big and bright, sparkling and clear, especially when gazing upon her Beloved. At least, so they were to him. Twice before, he said to her, ***“Thou hast doves’ eyes.”***

Again we marvel at God’s Word. We saw previously, that ***“doves’ eyes”*** figure enlightenment by the Holy Spirit. Now, eyes like the Bathrabbim fishpools indicate the vast usefulness of doves’ eyes. The vision of bridal saints is not only to be admired, as being clear and wonderful; but it is to be prized for enabling others also to see. Fishpools abound in fish, figuring life and fruitage. As the 2 fish pools were at the entrance into Heshbon; so the eyes are to the head; the seat of reason, and the stronghold of the old creation. Fish-pool-like eyes, suggesting a spiritual grasp of Divine Things, make even Heshbon (*“reason”*) productive. They ***“cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ”*** [2Co.10:5]. That makes such believers Bridal saints.

“Thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus.” Lebanon is the snowy white mountain range lying west of Damascus. The tower was on the sunny side of the mountains. It was a military tower, whence a watchman sighted danger, or an enemy coming, and gave warning. Thus the watchman was, in some sense, also a guide. Did Solomon admire a large nose? A typical cook has an acute smeller. Never mind about the dimensions. Rather, his bride’s nose was prophetic of a future function which she would fill. She would differentiate and separate the precious from the vile. Many a modest wife has saved her husband from numbers of troubles by sensing the future and giving him caution. The tower of Lebanon faced **Damascus** (*“silent is the sackcloth weaver”*). It is said that Uz, Shem’s grandson, founded Damascus. The new world which emerged from the flood may have been so green and growing, and life so redolent and prolonged, that Uz may have supposed that there would not be any more deaths or not many at least. Hence, the sackcloth weaver went out of business. At least, the Shulamite’s nose did not forebode gloom and death. It betokened perpetual life, of which Damascus is a figure, being the oldest city in the world and still in existence.

Spiritually, the nose speaks of discernment and of inquiry. Discernment of spirits is the 7th of the 9 spiritual gifts named in 1 Corinthians 12. It is profitable to have the nose in the Bible frequently, though some people say it is not necessary. ***“He that is spiritual judgeth (discerneth) all things; yet he himself is judged (or discerned) of no man” [1Co.2:15].*** He knows his rank. He knows God’s will as far as he needs to know, and he understands those who do not understand him, but misjudge him. The spiritual man pries into the secrets of the Lord, by searching the Scriptures in dependence upon the Holy Spirit. The name of the Lord is his strong tower; he runs into it and is safe [Pro.18:10]. The scent of bridal saints is from the viewpoint of heavenly whiteness and purity. They are looking down from their magnificent tower. They are in Christ, and through the Spirit, discern approaching dangers. They smell the footsteps of the foe afar off.

Their cautions and warnings may not be heeded now. But, after the resurrection of Paul’s Smyrna cohort, and the translation of their Philadelphia associates in the faith, the imposing function of their spiritual nostrils will be manifest (study the career of the 4 living ones and the 24 elders in the book of Revelation). For nearly 7 years before the wedding in the air, they will be there. They will discern the throne and Him that sits on it. They will discern their place there and take it. They will discern the voice of the great, sublime Stage Manager as He shall call forth the holy actors to their various performances. First, they will engage in unspeakable adoration of Christ on the throne. Then, they will lead the redeemed in song and praise. Again, they will call the 4 international horses of the 7 years of trial onto the stage [Rev.6]. Throughout those troublous times, they will show themselves worthy to be the Wife of the Lamb.

“Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the king is held in the galleries.” [SSg.7:5]

“Thine head upon thee is like Carmel.” Carmel (*“a park, a place of order and beauty, a fruitful field”*) is an elevated tableland by the sea. Every Scripture citation of it indicates its fruitfulness and excellence. Isaiah 35:2 emphasizes ***“the excellency of Carmel.”*** The Shulamite possessed a prolific mind. Hers was not an empty think box. She was quick to perceive and understand. She saw things in their right relations. Order and symmetry enabled her to have a rich store of thoughts and facts, beautifully arranged. Her head was indeed an intellectual park.

Bridal saints in particular ***“have the mind of Christ”*** [1Co.2:16]. They refuse the reasoning of the natural man; they accept God’s reasoning [Isa.1:18]. They think Divine Thoughts, because their minds have stored up His precious Word. They hold a ***“straight course in the truth”*** [2Ti.2:15]. The mind of one really spiritual is truly an intellectual garden of Divine Symmetry and Beauty. It is

prolific with the profoundest thoughts about Christ and His salvation. They stagger and silence the wisdom of men. Only the mind of spiritual believers can grasp the deep and rich and beautiful truths outlined in this Song of Songs.

“And the hair of thine head like purple.” What is more charming than a wealth of flowing hair on a woman’s head? It is her beauty, her glory. The purple color suggests her queenly fitness to be Solomon’s bride. ***“The king is held in the galleries (“tresses” [RV]) thereof,”*** indicates how fascinating they were to him. He was caught and entangled in the charming ringlets, or curls. We have the spiritual application of the hair in 1 Corinthians 11. The Church is subject to Christ as Her head. Women, praying or prophesying with their heads covered, show the dependence of The Church upon Christ. He is the glory of The Church, because He is her Head. Some saints take the place of absolute weakness and glory in it. They are wholly and continually dependent upon Jesus for everything. They refuse to trust themselves, or any other arm. To trust Christ is their glory, their charm, their purple hair. This is the chief qualification for the Bridehood. And this simple, confident attitude of saints toward Christ charms Him, captures His heart. He allows Himself to become caught and entangled in the flowing tresses of our weakness. We hang on His strength and He hangs in our confidence. Glorious union indeed!

“How fair and how pleasant art thou, O Love, for delights.” [SSg.7:6]

Here the King sums up all the sweet titles in one—***“O Love.”*** He does not even say, ***“my love,”*** as formerly. He is overwhelmed with her beauty and perfection. He has found in her what He longed for. Now, she is far more to him than a lady friend (Hebrew: RAYAH). She is a charming stature of **LOVE** (Hebrew: AHABAH). Solomon gazed upon his spouse, beholding the ten entrancing features here described, beginning with the feet and climaxing with her royal hair, and he was moved to exclaim aloud, “O Love, how fair and how pleasant art thou for delights” (delicacies). He is carried away with the object of his affection, seeing her in her entirety. Every member and function of her body is perfect. He sees no blemish, no lack in any of them. As a culminating tribute (praise), he shouts, ***“This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to its clusters” [SSg.6:7].*** The ***“palm tree”*** is here meant the date palm, as suggested by the clusters. Because of its leaves, bark, juice, and fruit, it has always been a very useful palm in Arabia, Syria, and adjoining lands. It grows under adverse conditions; hence, we read that ***“the righteous shall flourish like the palm tree” [Psa.92:12].*** It is erect and stately. In spite of trials, Solomon saw in the Shulamite beautiful stateliness, life, and vigor; and, he saw the promise of fruition. Their union was to be a waving triumph over his foes and a typically productive home. She satisfied him to the uttermost. He was ready to be joined to her in holy wedlock.

Will our heavenly Solomon find such a company of saints? After scrutinizing His own, within and without, through and through, will He be perfectly satisfied with any of them? For He ***“walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks” [Rev.5:1].*** He is weighing the people in the scales of Divine Truth. He is searching and separating His own into different grades, as the 7 letters to the 7 churches of Revelation 2 and 3 indicate. Some saints are overcoming some things, like those of Pergamos and Thyatira. Others are overcoming all things, like those of Smyrna and Philadelphia. Yes, Christ will have a band of believers who will be as perfect and beautiful in His eyes as was the Shulamite before Solomon. Otherwise, the chief purpose of redemption would not be reached.

Study Paul’s commendatory words to the Philippians. He enjoyed their fellowship. They were partaking of grace with him. They always obeyed his instruction, in his absence as well as in his presence, a rare trait. Hence, he called them his ***“joy and crown” [Phi.4:1].*** Paul records no complaint against that assembly, even as John records no fault in the Smyrna and Philadelphia saints. He espoused the whole Church to Christ [2Co.11:2], and sought by his

teaching and prayers to **“present every man perfect in Christ”** [Col.1:28-29]. Some saints have accepted their espousal and are yielding to the correction and instruction, the sifting and cutting, the polishing and refining, which make for perfection and prepare for the Bridehood of Christ. Solomon could not prepare his bride. That was left for her to do. But our Solomon prepares His Bride for Himself, by working in her all His holy and sweet will, through the rugged and delicate workings of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. The Apostle Paul said and still says, **“the Word of God...effectually worketh also in you that believe”** [1Th.2:13]. What can be more comforting than that? Only believe what is written. God does the rest. Hallelujah! Jesus Christ will have a people that unspeakably please Him and perfectly satisfy Him. They are flourishing now like the palm tree. Behold their waving branches of triumph. See the clusters of fruition. Who bears the fruit of the Spirit and is useful perpetually like the bridal saints? Surely, it will not be long until the heavenly Bridegroom summons His fully prepared ones to glory.

And more...After this overcoming company will have been in glory less than 6 years, the time will come that both they and Christ will be fully ready for the nuptials. He will be filled with deep admiration and overmastering love for His Bride; for she will stand before Him full-grown; full-orbed, fully matured in her faith toward God and in her love for Jesus. She too will be absolutely satisfied with Christ alone—not simply as her Savior, nor as the Lord of battles, nor even as the King of kings; but she will love and adore Him as indeed her Bridegroom. Wondrous prospect His! Wondrous hope ours! Wondrous the mutual union! Oh, Jesus, haste the day!

THE MARRIAGE HAS COME

“I said, I will climb up into the palm tree. I will take hold of the branches thereof.” [SSg.7:8]

How beautifully picturesque and modest are the figures of speech employed by the Holy Spirit. Elsewhere, He speaks in unveiled terms, declaring that **“marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled”** [Heb.13:4] because it was ordained of God. It is the climacteric relationship in the natural, because it figures the culminating purpose of the new creation—**“the marriage of the Lamb.”** Through sin, Satan has painted it over with blush and shame. Therefore, it is also written, **“But whoremongers and adulterers, God will judge”** [Heb.13:4]. The King appropriated the affection which captivated His heart. With what result? There should be fruitage, as expressed by the **“clusters of the vine.”** The glory of the marriage relation among the Hebrews was multiplication by many births. Rebekah’s home folks **“blessed her, and said to her, be thou the mother of thousands of millions”** [Gen.24:60].

One of these days, the proclamation will be heard in heaven, **“Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready”** [Rev.19:7]. Oh, what a day that will be! That will be the day of all days for Jesus and His people. That will be the day of supreme triumph. A great multitude will shout, **“Alleluia: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth”** [Rev.19:6]. The Man Christ Jesus, and His Queen (The Bride) sitting by Him, will occupy the throne of the universal empire. It will be a day of the unparalleled display of The Bride’s queenly attire; the most costly and splendid, the most sublime expression of love and worth that any king could bestow. **“And to her was granted that she should be arrayed** (mark the language, **“arrayed”) in fine linen, clean** (pure) **and bright; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of saints”** [Rev.19:8]. That will be a day of unspeakable and intoxicating festivities, the beginning of the fullness of **“the general assembly,”** or the heavenly panegyric [Heb.12:23]; where myriads of angels will stand and gaze, and representatives of all ages will be gathered. Therefore, John was bidden to write, **“Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb”** [Rev.19:9]. Not the Bride only, but all who shall be there, will be blessed beyond telling. No such banquet, for no such wedding

was ever known before, and there will never be anything like it again. Can you conceive of a honeymoon lasting 1,000 years?

The wedding feast will no doubt continue 1 year, after the custom of Jewish marriages. ***“When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war: neither shall he be charged with any business; but he shall be free at home one year and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken”*** [Deu.24:5]. This certainly is full of meaning to us. The great marriage banquet in the skies will last for 12 glorious months. How can the reunion of saints of 6,000 years break up in less time than that? Impossible! While Satan is fiendishly enjoying his dupes on earth, and the Antichrist is having his fling, our Bridegroom will be exulting over the results of His redeeming work and profoundly enjoying the worship and adoration of His people. For 1 year He will lose sight of earth conditions, not be charged with business, and not go out to war. Oh, how our Jesus will revel in the midst of the people who have believed on His name. Tongue and pen are too tame to attempt to describe it. We must wait till we are there.

After the heavenly banquet is over, our Bridegroom, as King of kings and Lord of lords, will come out from heaven to assert His blood-bought rights. In his vision, John saw Him and the armies of heaven (the saints) descend on white horses (symbols of Divine Power) to wage war against the armies of the world. He will subdue all His foes, and cast the beast (the Antichrist) and the false prophet into the lake of fire, and the devil into hell for 1,000 years. Then, the fruitage of the heavenly union will begin to be fully manifest. Today, the fruit bearing of Bridal saints is rather like the service of a friend, or like that of children growing up into manhood. But then it will be preeminently as the fruitage of husband and wife.

After the wedding feast in the air is over and Christ descends with His Bride to possess His rightful possessions on earth, the Jews will accept Him as their Messiah. Then the prophet's questions will be answered: ***“Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Shall a nation be born at once?”*** [Isa.66:8]. Yes, so it shall be. After that, ***“the elect*** (no doubt the 10 tribes of Israel) ***will be gathered from the four winds*** [Mat.24:31]. ***“And so all Israel shall be saved”*** [Rom.11:26]. ***“All Israel”*** means the natural line of Jacob who will accept Christ, for all the devotees of Antichrist will be slain through the vengeance of the Lamb [2Th.2]. Finally, the Gentiles will also be saved, as we read in Acts 15:17: ***“All the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.”***

Thank God, the millennial period will record great revivals. Today, men glibly talk about taking a whole city for Christ, though none has ever done it, not even Billy Sunday; for it is not Scriptural. But, after the wedding in the air, salvation will flow, not only city-wide, but nation-wide. Hence, John concludes the great world-wide revival by saying, ***“And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it*** (the holy city); ***and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it?*** [Rev.21:24].

Beloved Reader let us not forget this fact, that we are called to be a vital portion of that same holy city. It is our privilege to be members of the Bridal Company, the most essential feature of that city. God forbid that we should slight our privileges and miss the acme of our high calling in Christ.

“And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved, that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak.” [SSg.7:9]

This is Solomon's last lavishing tribute (praise) of his bride. It is a diversion from his usual utterances, which expressed what she was to him. In this case, it is what she is to others. The phrase, ***“my beloved,”*** causes the turn. What does he mean by ***“my beloved?”*** We find the answer in Song of Solomon 5:1 where he said, ***“Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.”*** My notes on the latter entreaty there are evidently incorrect (see notes on SSg.5:1). Solomon

spoke those words, and not the Shulamite. No doubt, his “**beloved**” in Song of Solomon 5:1 and 7:9 signifies his mother and brethren. Though he loved the “**fair**” one, the choice one above all others; yet he enjoyed the fellowship of his friends and relatives also.

After their marriage, he finds that his bride is not snobbish toward his friends and relations; but she appreciates them for his sake and treats them with the kindest courtesy. Her warm words of tender praise of “**his beloved**,” his mother and sisters and brothers, are like the most costly wine. Her remarks about them are so soft, sweet, smooth and gracious, that they glide through the lips while they sleep.

Here again is precious instruction for us. This verse suggests the buoyant blessing that shall flow to Israel from Christ through the Bride of the Lamb after the wedding feast in the sky. The phrase “**my beloved**” finds an explanation in citations like the following. “**Of Benjamin, He said, The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him**” [Deu.33:12, also Psa.60:5]. The oft-repeated references to the coming of the Lord in power and glory always include His Bride, though it is not so expressed. “**Those that are asleep**” speaks of those of Israel in their graves. In the margin, they are mentioned as “*the ancient*.” The resurrection of the Old Testament saints cannot come until after the wedding in the air, as if the voice of the Bride, filled to the uttermost with the Spirit, should awaken them. Ezekiel saw 4 living creatures come from the north out of the midst of a great whirlwind of cloud and fire. They “**ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning**” [Eze.1:14]. No doubt they figure the full overcomers with Christ bringing blessing to Israel after the nuptials in glory. Oh, what a vast, honored, and glorious ministry they will have in fellowship with their Lord. The Bride may have the most hidden place with Christ now; but she will be the most spectacular and important figure by and by. Hallelujah!

THE FINAL RESPONSE OF LOVE

“I am my Beloved’s and his desire is toward me.” [SSg.7:10]

We have already seen the gradation of the Shulamite’s devotion to their King; but a review of it will be profitable. First she said, “**My Beloved is mine, and I am his; he feedeth among the lilies**” [SSg.2:16]. Her interests were preponderant; her possession was chief. She loved him then, but not unselfishly. Nevertheless, he was patient. He kept pouring upon her his heart-melting affection. Later on, she was compelled to exclaim, “**I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine**” [SSg.6:3]. This time she put his right to her first, but still reserved a claim upon him. She was not yet wholly taken up with her lover himself; therefore, she added, as before, “**He feedeth among the lilies.**” She admired his choice of boarding houses and of associations. Nevertheless, His patience never ceasing; His love never waning; His devotion augmenting, He triumphed at last. The wedding was arranged. The marriage came. The wedding bells chimed out their mutual joy. The honeymoon was wonderful. The fair one found in her Beloved more than she could have hoped for. His devotion to her was exquisite. His love was sweet and deep and real. Therefore, she lost sight of everything else. She could speak only of her Bridegroom himself. She gave him, not simply priority, but the entire ownership of love. “**I am my Beloved’s,**” she cried, without any thought as to whether he belonged to her or not. She knew that she, and no other, was her Beloved’s. The evidence was there “**His desire is toward me.**” Every divinely ordained marriage is like that. So it will be with the Bride of Christ.

She has been acknowledging Him as her only Head while on earth, and the only One to trust. In the glory, she will announce His entire ownership of love. “**I am my Beloved’s,**” she will exclaim. “**He has redeemed us and washed us in His own blood**” and has “**made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign over the earth**” [Rev.1:5-6] will be her clarion shout. Others will be His servants; but she will be His Choice One. Others will praise the Lord; but the Bridal Company

will love and adore Him as indeed the Bridegroom. She will have a place near His heart and in and around the throne, which others will not possess. In a pre-eminent sense, our heavenly Solomon will show that His **“desire is toward”** those who will be His **“darling”** [Psa.22:50]. How He will ENJOY His people. The JOY set before Him will then begin to be fully and gloriously realized. I repeat it, how He will ENJOY His own? Three years of rejected, maligned ministry; 3 hours of garden suffering such as no tongue can describe; 6 hours at Calvary, 3 of which were separation from God—**“He tasted death for every man.”** Who but He knows the depth of that most painful separation? Three days in the dark tomb? These last 72 hours seemed like an age to Him. **“The earth with her bars was about me forever”** [Joh.2:6]. Now, 2,000 years waiting for the calling out and preparation of His Bride. Do you suppose that Jesus will truly, deeply, really most affectionately revel in fellowship with His princely people? He shall indeed **“see the travail of His soul and be SATISFIED”** [Isa.53:11]. Then it shall be said, **“Thou hast kept the good wine until now,”** [Joh.2:10], and **“I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people”** [Isa.65:19].

THE WEDDING TOUR

“Come, my Beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.” [SSg.7:11-12]

A Scriptural honeymoon followed that marriage. The wedding tour suggested by Solomon's bride was far different from those of modern times. She did not care to make a long, expensive trip to see the sights and visit places of art and amusement. She had ceased to live for herself, but is now interested in Him alone. Now, she is delighted with the privilege of accompanying him to the plains and fertile fields of his vast domain for the profit of his subjects and for the honor of her lover. His domain was her domain. Was she not the queen? Of course her queenly breast heaved with yearnings over the people for her Bridegroom's sake. His subjects were her subjects in fellowship with him. Should she not look after them? **“There will I give thee my loves.”** There, in the midst of profitable and praise-worthy activities, will I bestow upon thee my fervent affections. I am no doll; neither do I desire to be dandled in ease and luxury.

So it will be with the Bride of the Lamb. While on earth, she ceased to live for herself. She learned the unchanging delight of living for the welfare of other people by the strength of her absent Lord, which she appropriated daily through faith. Finally, she wins Him as her Bridegroom. The wedding feast of a year's duration and their glorious honeymoon being over, she will be eager to return with her victorious Lord in great power and glory to the same fields of former action. The Bride will have an immortal body, **“fashioned like unto the body of His glory”** [Phi.3:21 RV]. Leaning upon the almighty arm of her Beloved, she will share personally and richly with Him in all His world-wide interests and conquests. Therefore, John says, **“I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called FAITHFUL and TRUE, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war...His name is called THE WORD OF GOD. And the armies in heaven followed Him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean”** [Rev.19:11-14].

The principle cohort in **“the armies in heaven”** will be the Bride of the Lamb arrayed in **“fine linen, pure and bright”** (RV). John saw this same cohort in his earlier visions, not yet as the Bride, but simply as full-overcomers. For example, the 4 living-ones and 24 elders worshipping [Rev.4:5], several of them giving orders [Rev.6], and the 7 trumpet angels of [Rev.8]. By their activities in heaven, so intimately associated with the King in programming the happenings of the few years preceding the wedding, they will manifest their worthiness for the Bridehood. What a highly honored place some saints will have together with Jesus in heaven (during those years of darkness and gloom on earth), in which He will begin to **“put down all rule and**

authority and power" [1Co.15:24], that He may reign in peace and righteousness. The saints will be joined with Christ in judging the world. To Him be high and eternal praise!

The vineyard and vine in the Song of Solomon refer especially to Israel. **"For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant"** [Isa.5:7]. The Apostle Paul, who doubtless will be in the Bridehood, being indeed a pattern Bridal saint, maintained the deepest yearning for them. He exclaimed, **"I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart for my kinsmen according to the flesh"** [Rom.9:1-3]. He never lost that desire. That same love, unhindered by a perishable frame, will fill the heavenly Bride as well as her Bridegroom. Hence, **"He shall assemble the outcasts of Israel and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth"** [Isa.11:12]. Christ will **"be glorified in His holy ones and...admired in all them that believe on Him...in that day"** [2Th.1:10].

"There will I give thee my loves," will have its wonderful fulfillment also in the anti-type. The Bridal saints will love their glorious Lord in glorified bodies. The groaning to be delivered will have passed forever. Their love for the heavenly Bridegroom will flow forth like a warm ocean current; unceasing, unhindered and unchanging. With most people, love wanes after they are married a while. They appear common to each other. Matrimony in the Lord is sure to grow deeper and sweeter. How much more will the hallelujah union of Christ and His Choice One be. Even now we have sweet, tender, deep, melting communion with Jesus. Our heart is enraptured with His love. Tongue cannot express the throbbings of joy and ecstatic bliss. Sometimes it finds an outlet in cries bathed in glad tears; other times we are silent with unutterable delight. If it is so wonderful now, what will it be when we are with Him and like Him yonder? How much more will we pour out our heart and soul in unending devotion then? If we enjoy the Lord so deeply here amidst trials and tempests, in bodies of humiliation, tantalized by Satan and mocked by men; if the full overcomers before the wedding will **"cease not day and night, saying, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come"** [Rev.4:18], how gloriously and vehemently and effusively will we not behave ourselves after being joined to the Lord in glory. I think Ezekiel paints our decorum, burning coals of fire, like the appearance of lamps going up and down and running and returning like flashes of lightning; and, the noise of the wings as great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech (the wings will shout), as the noise of an host [Eze.1:13-14, 24]. Surely the saints will extol the Bridegroom then.

"The mandrakes give forth fragrance, and at our doors are all manner of precious fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my Beloved." [SSg.7:13 RV]

The mandrakes (love apples) remind us of Rachel's deep desire to glorify her husband, Jacob, by bearing him a son. The mutual love and fellowship between Jesus Christ and His redeemed **"darling"** will never want. The fragrance of the Bride's love apples for her Lord will pervade the heavens with its pure sweetness. At the supper prepared for Jesus in Bethany, Mary anointed His feet with a pound of very costly ointment, and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment [Joh.12]. That is a faint picture of the profuse and capturing aroma of the Bride's mandrakes in glory. Furthermore, it is quite customary for a young woman, who is contemplating marriage, to dry some apples and peaches, to can some strawberries and currants, and make jells and preserves. Perhaps she says nothing about them to her lover until after the wedding. She may surprise him by saying, "These I have laid up for you."

When on earth, Jesus seemed to be surprised at the faith of some. He said of one, **"I have not seen so great faith, no not in Israel"** [Mat.8:10]. He appeared to be amazed at the liberality of the poor widow, who gave into the treasury **"all she had, even all her living"** [Mar.12:44]. He sat over against the treasury and gazed upon her, though she possessed only **"two mites."** Will He be happily surprised in that coming day of glory at the love laid up in the upper shelves of some hearts? Will He then find some results of the toil and tears of the Bride, of which she is now silent?

Will she be able to point, with loving pride, to “*old fruit*,” some of Israel saved at the beginning of this age, because she prayed for “*the peace of Jerusalem*” [Psa.122:6]? Will she have some “*new fruit*,” some Jews or Gentiles saved near the end of this age, with which to rejoice her Bridegroom? Such a prospect should not seem strange to us. Be it remembered that as a Man, Christ does not know every detail of the future. It is written that the Son, as a Servant, does not know the day nor the hour of the darkening of the sun and moon, etc. [Mar.13:32]. Let us, then, press on, gather largely, and lay up abundantly for the eternal comfort and nourishment of our heavenly Bridegroom.

Jesus saw the fig tree leafing out, and was surprised that it had no fruit upon its branches; for fig trees bear fruit before they produce leaves. The Jews were covered with religious leaves. They had the profession and forms of piety but they bore no fruit of faith in, and obedience toward, God. Therefore, Jesus marveled at them. Some saints seem slow to see and speak. Outwardly they do not bear much promise. Apparently they may not be laying up much for the Lord. Maybe they are very poor financially or in natural gifts. Wait. The Holy Spirit knows their hearts, their purpose, their inward loyalty, their loving surrender, their blooming hope. If they do not surprise the Bridegroom with their fruits (new and old), they will however astonish some of their fellows in that day. Who would have supposed that Jael had the wisdom and courage to give the final blow to Sisera [Jdg.4:27]?

ONWARD, UPWARD, HOMEWARD

ONWARD, UPWARD, HOMEWARD.
JOYFULLY I FLEE
FROM THIS WORLD OF RUIN
THAT HOLDS NAUGHT FOR ME.
ONWARD TO THE GLORY,
UPWARD TO THE PRIZE,
HOMEWARD TO THE MANSIONS
BUILT IN THE SKIES.

ONWARD, UPWARD, HOMEWARD.
HERE IS NOT MY REST;
FOR I TREAD THE DESERT,
WHICH MY LORD HAS PRESSED.
ONWARD TO THE BANQUET,
UPWARD TO FAME'S HALL.
HOMEWARD TO THE CITY,
WHICH SHALL NEVER FALL.

ONWARD, UPWARD, HOMEWARD.
IT IS ONE GLAD RACE.
BOUNDLESS JOY AWAITS ME,
WHEN I SEE HIS FACE.
ONWARD TO THE WEDDING
UPWARD TO THE THRONE,
HOMEWARD TO THE BRIDEGROOM—
HE MY VERY OWN.

MARY M. BODIE

DIV.8, THE EMULATION OF LOVE [SSG.8]

“Oh, that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! When I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea, and none would despise me. I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mother’s house, who would instruct me: I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate. His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me.”
[SSG.8:1-3]

Who is the woman that speaks in this 8th chapter? Who can it be that expresses such deep desire for the fellowship of the King? It cannot be the Shulamite. This chapter is not a repetition of the preceding portion. That would contradict the finale reached in Chapter 7. The Holy Spirit never contradicts Himself and makes no useless repetitions. What one false prophet called “the mistakes of Moses” are simply blunders of the wisdom of men, the fallacies of Satan. There are no writings anywhere as marvelously harmonic and consistent as the 66 books of the Bible.

Another woman was gazing upon Solomon and desiring His attentions. There was another actress in that sacred drama. If possible, she too would win the King’s heart; therefore, her language was similar to that of the Shulamite. We have here another scene from a different viewpoint. She saw that it was too late to have the first place with Solomon. The Shulamite had already filled that place in his heart. Nevertheless, she coveted his love anyway; therefore, she tactfully appeals to him. She cries for his friendship as a brother. As King, he seemed too far away, too unapproachable; but, if he were a brother, she could reach him. No one, not even the Shulamite, could despise her for loving him as a brother. Furthermore, if he were her brother, she assures Solomon that her mother would teach her how to treat him. She entices him by suggesting a feast. She said, ***“I would cause thee to drink of spiced wine of the juice of my pomegranate.”*** The woman was neither poor nor indolent. She grew her own pomegranates and made her own wine. So, she reasoned, if he could be induced to drink of her best mingled wine, he certainly would show her his ardent attention and grant her not only the protection of his royal arm but would also reciprocate her love. Such is the import of Verse 3.

Of whom then is this 2nd lady a figure? Of course, she cannot figure the heavenly Bride of Christ, ***“the Lamb’s wife”*** of Revelation 19. Who then? The query of Verse 5 suggests the answer. This woman typifies the Bride of Jehovah on earth. She is **Hephzibah** (***“My delight is in thee”***) [Isa.62:4]. She is the full overcomers from Israel, even as the heavenly Bride is the full overcomers out of The Church. David expressed the spirit of this company in saying, ***“My soul followeth hard after thee; thy right hand upholdeth me”*** [Psa.63:8]. Ruth and Esther are types of the noted of Israel who, after the wedding in the air, will be ready to be joined to Jehovah as His queen on earth. Some of the worthies of Hebrews 11 will no doubt be in that company.

What is the meaning of the plaintive cry, ***“O that thou wert as my brother?”*** We answer. Under The Law, Israel could not approach into God’s presence; they needed a go-between. If they could come to Him as a man, no one dared to object or despise them. And, He certainly would receive them. Jehovah was God to Israel, and they saw that He was to be their husband; but He was far away. He was not human; therefore, they cried, saying, ***“O that thou wert human! O that the Lord would come down to earth and be born of a woman. Then we could understand and reciprocate His love. If thou wert born as I was born, then I would know that thou dost understand my feelings.”*** Is it not written that He was ***“touched with the feeling of our infirmities, tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin”*** [Heb.4:15]? But that was the Man Christ Jesus, God manifest in the flesh, the God-Man.

Therefore, when Israel sees Jehovah as the Man, it will be wonderful. When they behold Him coming from glory as the God-Man, it will be easy for them to receive and embrace Him. That is the kind of lover that Israel will have. That is the kind of lover that we, who hope to be the Bride of Christ, now have. He came to earth and identified Himself with us in our sin and shame, that we might be identified with Him in His righteousness and honor; and so that He might love us and that we might love Him. Knowing him thus, we can enter into His feelings and He into ours. Many believers live at a painful distance from the Lord because they have not learned Christ as human, and as their elder Brother. He is to them only a great and mighty God.

“I would kiss thee,” the woman said. As God, Israel felt that He would despise her, being little and ordinary, and remembering too, that she had failed Him. But as Man, He would understand her and she could kiss Him, that is, bestow her love upon Him, and expect it to be reciprocated. Praise God! That is just what will happen...read and marvel:

“Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed, neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame; for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth and shall not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband. The Lord of hosts is His Name, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. The God of the whole earth shall He be called; for the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.” [Isa.54:4-7]

Ruth and Boaz wonderfully enlighten us at this point. In our song, Naomi represents ancient Israel and answers to ***“My mother.”*** Ruth represents the Bride of Jehovah, the coming “Hephzibah,” and answers to the yearning woman in our lesson. Boaz, who became Ruth’s kinsman-redeemer, answers to Solomon and represents the Son of God who took upon Himself a human body. ***“When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them (Israel) that were under the law, that we (Israel) might receive the adoption of sons” [Gal.4:4-5].*** Thus, Christ, God’s Son, through His redemption, became Israel’s Elder Brother. ***“For which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren” [Heb.2:22].*** Now, they can come boldly unto a throne of grace and obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. The heavenly Solomon must hear the cry of the 2nd lady.

“I would lead thee and bring thee into my mother’s house, who would instruct me.” Our songstress was an Israelite and so was Solomon. But who does her mother figure? The mother represents the whole house of Israel. Not all of Israel will constitute the Bride of Jehovah, but only a special, chosen portion of them, even the full overcomers among them, like Daniel, Abraham, Jeremiah, etc. As Solomon was of Israel; so was Jesus Christ. Nationally, Israel was His mother even as Mary was His mother personally. One day He asked, ***“Who is my mother and my sister and my brother?”*** Knowing that the audience could not answer it, He answered by saying, ***“He that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven; the same is my mother and my sister and my brother” [Mat.12:48].*** All who believed God were the means of bringing Jesus on the scene. If Abraham had not believed God, the promised seed would not have come. God uses men and women to bring His purposes to pass; hence, His Son could never have been born of a woman, never could have taken on humanity if some people had not believed. Thanks to His name; He saw to it that some did believe. Abraham’s faith gave to the Father that wonderful Son, of whom Isaac was only a type.

“My mother would instruct me,” said the woman. A wise mother always teaches her daughter how to act toward a young suitor. She can speak from experience, as well as from observation. Is it not wonderful? The whole house of Israel has taught certain saints among them how to qualify to be among the Bride of Jehovah. They have been teaching me also how to prepare for the Bridehood of Christ. Jehovah uses the lethargy and disobedience of some believers to

stir up others to zeal and loyalty. The dire results of their conduct are a standing warning to those who will heed it. Then, the Lord's kindness and special favors upon those who believe Him and seek Him with all their heart are great encouragements to be full overcomers. They stimulate faith and obedience. Each faithful man and woman in Israel became a powerful example to all those who came after him. Huldah was stimulated by Deborah and Jael, and the prophets were driven on by the lives of the patriarchs. They will win their prize, even Jehovah as their Husband. All of them are encouraging us to forge ahead for our prize, Christ as our heavenly Bridegroom.

The spiced wine of the pomegranate finds its application by referring to Isaiah 24 and 43. The time will come when the remnant of Israel will **"lift up their voice; they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord, they shall cry aloud from the sea"**. All joy and mirth will be restored in the land. They will drink wine with a Son. The merry-hearted will return. The mirth of tabrets, the noise of the rejoicers and the joy of the harp will resound [Isa.24:7-8, 14]. Israel will again buy **"sweet cane"** for the Lord, and intoxicate, or abundantly moisten Him with the fat of their sacrifice [Isa.43:24]. Indeed, they will accept God's Son as the all-sufficient Sacrifice. **"Then will the Lord be jealous for His land and pity His people. Yea, the Lord will answer"** [Joe.2:18].

LOVE'S LONGING ANSWERED

"I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please. Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth: there she brought thee forth that bare thee. Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned." [SSg.8:4-7]

The unnamed lady of our song first entreated King Solomon for a place in his heart. Then, as by the authority of hope, she exhorted the daughters not to interfere with her love affairs. And then, there seems to be a pause in the drama, followed by a sudden surprise. A charming woman is beheld in the distance; awakening in the audience an enquiry as to who she is. The answer is not stated; but the remainder of Verse 4 and the 2 following verses imply that it is the lady, who had just sung out of her yearning heart. Her plaintive solo was heard. Her desire was granted. She won the King's attention; they are seen together coming up from the wilderness. She is leaning on his arm.

We have already showed that the second lady in this interesting drama figures a choice company of overcoming saints in Israel. Malachi no doubt describes them in saying:

"Then they that feared the Lord spoke often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." [Mal.3:16-17]

Jehovah will have a great box of jewels. Among them will be one **"pearl of great price"** [Mat.13:45-46] in heaven, **"The Bride of the Lamb,"** and, another jewel, or **"special treasure"** [Mat.13:44], in the earth will be the "Hephzibah" of Jehovah. Hear what God says to her.

"Thou shalt also be a crown of glory, in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land anymore be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzibah (*"My delight is in her"*), **and thy land Beulah** (*"married"*); **for the Lord delighteth in thee and thy land shall be married."** Nor are these all the sweet things that He whispers to His earth-adorning jewel.

There is more. ***“As the bridegroom (Christ) rejoiceth over the bride (the Lamb's Wife), so shall thy God rejoice over thee”*** [Isa.62:3-5].

NOT ALL ISRAEL THE BRIDE

Surely the half-hearted and unspiritual of the house of Jacob will not be in the Hephzibah class. Lot was righteous in his standing, but not in his state. Some of the kings of Israel were self-willed and unfaithful. They sinned and repented. They were not steadfast. How can such be counted in the queenhood of the holy God? No doubt there are others also of the Old Testament who will not be in that company. For example Enoch and Elijah, who had an out-translation, and Moses, who had an out-resurrection. Those who were raised from the dead when Jesus was raised [Mat.27:52-53]; will they be in that company? They ***“obtained a better resurrection”*** [Heb.11:35], even as Enoch and Elijah obtained a better translation, as compared with the rest of Israel. No doubt they will have a better or higher place than the others. Are they not already in heaven as ***“the spirits of just men made perfect”*** [Heb.12:23], or as having their glorified bodies? Will they not be present at the wedding in the air? No doubt the Bride of Jehovah on earth will be constituted of full overcomers of Israel, whose bodies are still in the tomb, and of those of Israel, who will ***“endure to the end”*** [Mat.24:13] of the Tribulation (have a physical deliverance). The woman in the wilderness of Revelation 12:6 suggests who will make up that company.

“I raised thee up under the apple tree. There thy mother brought thee forth; there she brought thee forth that bare thee.” Here, Solomon is the apple tree to which the Shulamite had likened him early in their acquaintance. He was useful and practical in his life. Now that this second woman sought his love, he reminded her of the kingly care heretofore. She was born and reared in his royal domain. He, the apple tree, had overshadowed her. Thus, although he had not acted like it, he assures her that long before he had given her a place in his heart. Song of Solomon 8:6 conveys the same thought, and indicates what sort of response he expects from her.

THE TEST OF BRIDEHOOD

“Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm; for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave. The coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.” [SSg.8:6]

This is the voice of Solomon to the second lady friend. He intimates what devotion he expects from her if she becomes his wife. Her love to him must be undivided and constant. Her whole heart must be given over to him, and her arm continually hanging on his. He will love her unto death, and he expects her to love him in the same degree. He is jealous over her, and expects a jealous love from her, even a vehement flame.

Jehovah loves His people with an everlasting love. He says, ***“I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy”*** [Zec.1:14]. The people of Israel who shall constitute His Bride will reciprocate that jealous love. Loyal and true hearts will fill up that company. The indifferent and slothful need not hope to be in it. In the past, Israel ran after other lovers; she flirted with the nations and leaned upon their worldly arms. But His queen cannot be of that sort. She must have a single eye to Him alone. Her whole heart will be given over to the Lord, and she will depend entirely and only on Him. Because of Israel's former departure from the Lord, the declaration is that ***“The flashes of jealousy are as flashes of fire, a very flame of Jehovah”*** (RV). Paul, speaking for Christ to The Church, said, ***“I am jealous over you with a jealousy of God”*** [2Co.11:2].

“Love is strong as death.” Such was the love of some saints in the past. They died for the truth; They were martyred for their faith in God. The vehement flame of love for Jehovah burned in

their souls. Yes, it consumed them. Such saints will be in the Bride of Jehovah. Before the Lord will be revealed from heaven, there will be some of Israel of that same fiery, self-denying type on earth. They will suffer for the truth, and be jealous for God. They will be among the Bride of Jehovah, as well as those of Israel who will be raised from the dead.

BRIDAL DEFICIENCY

"We have a little sister, and she has no breasts. What shall we do for our sister when she shall be spoken for?" [SSg.8:8]

We have no clear clue to the exact identity of this immature member of a household in Solomon's time. She desired the special attention of King Solomon. No doubt, she was of marriageable age; but because she was not fully developed she was not ready for marriage.

Whom does the little sister typify? Evidently she typifies Judah. When He shall be revealed from heaven, the full overcomers of Israel will be ready to be joined to the Lord but Judah will not be ready. Judah will be unconcerned about the Lord, giving glory to the nations, when He begins to deal with her. She will miss the Bridehood of Jehovah. Her undeveloped condition and the cause of it are indicated in Ezekiel 23. She was flirting with the world. In fact, the Bride of Jehovah must come from the whole house of Israel as her mother. Nevertheless, Judah shall be spoken for, and she shall have a place.

"If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver; and if she be a door, we will inclose her with boards of cedar." [SSg.8:9]

Silver always speaks of redemption. Joseph's brethren sold him to the Ishmaelites for 20 pieces of silver [Gen.37:28]; but afterwards he became, as it were, their redemption. Judas sold Jesus, his Redeemer, for 30 pieces of silver, the price at which men valued Him (see Zec.11:10-14).

Jesus was crucified just outside of Jerusalem, on Judean soil. The palace, or tower, on Judah as a **"wall,"** will be an eternal reminder of where redemption was wrought. Thus, Judah will be a wall for all the world; a wall of separation from everything sinful and unclean. Judah, as the **"door,"** is the channel of salvation to all men, based upon the redemption, expressed by the **"palace of silver."** Because Jesus, our Redeemer and Savior, sprang out of Judah **"Salvation is of (literally "out from") the Jews"** [Joh.4:22]. Therefore, Judah brings Christ to all people.

The **"boards of cedar"** speak of the humanity of Christ. The boards were from a tree which was cut down and sawed. Christ was that Tree. He, as a Man, was cut down for us. Thus, redemption and salvation have come by **"the man, Christ Jesus"** [1Ti.2:5], **"to the Jews first"** [Rom.1:16], then through them to all men.

"I was a wall and my breasts like towers; then was I in his eyes as one that found favor." [SSg.8:10]

At the beginning of the chapter, the lady, who sang first, sings here. She was a great wall. She was fully grown, fully developed, and ready to be shown special attention. This speaks again of the Bride of Jehovah. The full overcomers from the whole house of Israel will be fully ready for their glorious union with the Lord, when He shall be revealed from heaven.

"And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God. We have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the Lord. We have waited for Him. We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." [Isa.35:9]

“Solomon had a vineyard at Baalhamon. He let out the vineyard unto keepers. Every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.” [SSg.8:11]

Baalhamon (“*lord of a multitude*” or “*one who rules over a populous place.*”) Solomon’s dominion was vast and his subjects many. In 1 Kings 2 and 4, we read that...

“His kingdom was established greatly...Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and making merry. And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river (Euphrates) unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt. They brought presents and served Solomon all the days of his life. He had peace on all sides round about him, and Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon....They lacked nothing....And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore. And Solomon’s wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country and all the wisdom of Egypt; for he was wiser than all men.” [1Ki.2:12 and 1Ki.4:20-21, 27, 29-31]

Solomon’s far-reaching dominion speaks of the reign of Jesus Christ over the world. His kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom and His dominion from sea to sea. He shall reign over the kingdom of His father David, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.

Jesus will be Lord of a multitude and over a populous area, even “**King of kings and Lord of lords**” [Rev.19:16]. There will be plenty of keepers throughout His domain. His loyal servants will abound. All the nations will serve and acknowledge His lordship.

The “**thousand pieces of silver**” figure the fruits of redemption, which God’s people shall bring to Him. At the beginning of this age, Israel, as a nation, failed to bring in the required results of Christ’s redeeming work. But they will fill up that lack when He returns to their deliverance.

“My vineyard, which is mine, is before me. Thou, O Solomon, shalt have the thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof, two hundred.” [SSg.8:12 RV]

The phrase, “*a thousand vines at a thousand silverlings*” [Isa.7:23 RV], throws light on these verses. Solomon’s vineyard had 1,000 vines for each keeper to keep. Therefore, he expected each keeper to turn in to him 1,000 silverlings (pieces of silver). In distinction from others, the songstress of this chapter had her own vineyard. No doubt, she meant to assure the King that she would not come behind with her vineyard; but that he “*shalt have the thousand*” from it as well as from his own. Those who kept her vineyard for her should have “*two hundred*” for themselves. She declares, “*My vineyard, which is mine, is before me.*” I am looking after it myself. It cannot fail to be productive.”

The wife of Jehovah will have an inheritance of her own. It will be on earth. Jehovah’s dominion and interests will be heaven-wide and world-wide. They will include the interests of the heavenly Bride and of the earthly Bride. The Bride of the Lamb will have an inheritance distinct from the earth-dwelling Bride, and from other companies of believers. She will have her own vineyard, and yet share in all the interests and honors of her Bridegroom, The King universal, whose “**name shall be called wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace,**” [Isa.9:6] for 1,000 years.

As it were, the earth-dwelling Bride will vie with the heavenly queen, in turning in the “*the thousand silverlings* (pieces of silver),” the results of redemption. God has said to her,

- “I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations...and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles; and they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations.” [Isa.27:5]
- “Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit.” [Isa.60:35]
- “And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee; the wealth of the Gentiles shall come unto Thee.” [Isa.66:19-20]
- “Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice. Cause me to hear it.” [SSg.8:13]

Other people gave **attention** (Hebrew: QUASHAB) to the King’s voice, as the King. They showed him courtesy as friends; but this loyal lady desired to **hear** (Hebrew: SHAMEA) his voice as her Bridegroom. As the last verse suggests, she longed to enjoy his personal love. Long before, Solomon had made a similar statement to the first fair lady, “**Let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice**” [SSg.2:14]. Likewise, Solomon’s voice was sweet to the 2nd lady. She adds...

“Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart on the mountains of spices.”
[SSg.8:14]

At last, she dared to call the King “**my beloved**.” Before the drama ends and the curtain drops, the unnamed woman ventures to speak to him as indeed her husband. Why this final request of him? Did she want him to depart from her? No. She wished him to regard her as “**a mountain of spices**,” and flourish himself youthfully in token of his love for her.

From Song of Solomon 4:10-16, we learn that the odor, or perfume of the spices, which grew on the mountains, was charmingly sweet and intoxicating. She had before promised to give him of her “**spiced wine**.” Evidently, she offered him a glass of it at this time. As if she were the last one to show him love, and to make his heart merry with “the **“spiced wine”** of her pomegranate, which she had gathered from “**the mountain of spices**.”

All people will acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Almighty God and as King of kings and Lord of lords. They will give attention to His commands. The companions of the heavenly and earthly Brides will give Him due honor as supreme Ruler. But the Bride of Jehovah will want to hear His voice as her Bridegroom. She never would be satisfied with the distant feeling of being only His Friend. She must hear His sweet, tender, loving voice. As David cried, “**Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust**” [Psa.143:8]. She will venture to call Him her Beloved, and expect Him to rejoice over her, even as He will rejoice over the Wife of the Lamb [Isa.62:5]. The Bride of Jehovah will intoxicate her Beloved with “**spiced wine**” of her high praises. She will give Him glory, not only for saving her from the power and oppression of the enemy, but much more, for His Bridegroom devotion to her. No music will sound so sweet to her as the chorus, “**Thy Maker is thine Husband**.” She will “**sing, and break forth into singing**,” because of His love to her. And her deep appreciation of Jehovah’s love for her, will enable Him to flourish Himself with the vigor of eternal youth, like a roe or a young hart, that is intoxicated and overcome with the sweet, fragrant odors of the spices of the mountains.

THE BRIDES CONTRASTED

The Bride of the Lamb will be full overcomers out of The Church, the Body of Christ.

The Bride of Jehovah will be out of Israel.

In what respects will the Bride of the Lamb differ from the Bride of Jehovah? The outstanding characteristic of the wife of the Lamb will be, that she will be Lamb-like; but the wife of Jehovah will be more lion-like. With the Bride of the Lamb, it will be more inward. Therefore, God is working in the heavenly company an inward yieldedness, a giving up, a deep sweetness and gentleness. With the Bride of Jehovah, it will be outward. She will be more mighty, manifestly a greater fighter in every way. In the past, saints stood firm in the face of armies. They were true to God when the axe came down upon their necks, or when they were tortured. So it will be again with the overcomers of Israel. The power of God will overshadow them and make them courageous and strong. They will conquer by resisting and overcoming their foes.

The Bride of the Lamb conquers by giving up. **“Resist not evil”** [Mat.5:39], saith the Lord. We conquer by believing. We win by watching and waiting. ***The weapons of our warfare are not carnal*** (material), ***but mighty through God*** [2Co.10:4]. ***“The Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God”*** [Eph.6:17] is our great weapon, both of offense and defense. Bridal saints in The Church do not fight for their own rights. When Shimei cursed David, he did not let his friends interfere; but he said, He cannot curse me except the Lord allows it. That is the spirit of the Heavenly Bride. Paul describes our bridal robe thus:

“Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man hath a quarrel against any. Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things, put on (as an ulster overcoat) charity (LOVE), which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule (arbitrate) in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body, and be ye thankful. Let the Word of Christ (the Lamb) dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” [Col.3:12-16]

Thus, saints today weave their wedding garments and make themselves ready for the Bridehood of the Lamb.

Beloved Reader, our picture drama is over. The sweet, charming song has ceased. The curtain has dropped. The writer enjoyed deeply the study of this song and the penning of the first notes thereon. But my recent study has been much more profitable, and my revision of the lessons has been far more interesting and glorious than the former. Now, what has the reading of these lessons brought to your heart? I trust that they have magnified Jesus to you, and have created in your heart a desire and purpose to run and win Christ as your Bridegroom, ***“The prize of the high calling of God”*** [Phi.3:14].

SWEET WILL OF GOD

I PRAY, OH LORD, THY WILL BE DONE
FROM MORNING LIGHT TO SET OF SUN.
IN ALL MY LIFE THROUGHOUT EACH DAY,
THY WILL BE DONE IN EVERY WAY,
AND I HAVE NOUGHT AT ALL TO SAY.

I PRAY, OH LORD, THY WILL BE DONE
“TILL THOU CAN’ST SEE IN ME THY SON.
MY EVERY WORD TO BREATHE THY FAME,
AND EVERY DEED SHOW FORTH THY NAME
AND ALL THY HOLINESS PROCLAIM.

I PRAY, OH LORD, THY WILL BE DONE
UNTIL THE VICTORY HAS BEEN WON,
AND EVERY WHIT OF TEMPLE PRAISE,
IN EVERY MOVE AND EVERY PHASE,
THY MATCHLESS NAME TO ENDLESS DAYS.

MARY M. BODIE

