

BROKEN FRAGMENTS

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SO THAT NOTHING IS LOST
Jn.6:13

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By
Steve Phillips

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INTRODUCTION

God speaks in images of the commonplace. Through lowly parables, sublime truths emerge by employing the things of earth to unveil those of heaven. Concealed to the casual glance are storehouses of undisclosed wealth in the Word of God. Gold is not gathered on the surface. Hidden treasures must be searched out ere their riches are discovered and possessed by the seeker. Shadowed in the narratives of Scripture are portraits of Christ and saving grace that the Spirit of God illumines radiantly to refresh and invigorate every seeking soul.

Peculiar among the sacred writings of the Scriptures are the books of Esther and the Song of Songs. In neither one is the name of the Lord to be found, yet both illustrate the ways and work of God among His people. Esther's extended parable portrays that of the Holy Spirit within the individual believer, while the Song paints a portrait of Christ's love for His church and of hers for Him.

Solomon penned an inspired trilogy that chronicles the journey of the soul from utter vanity in the world to utmost rapture in glory. Spiritually, the sequence moves first from Ecclesiastes, then to Proverbs, and finally climaxes in the Song of Songs.

Ecclesiastes traces the discovery of the absolute vanity of all things under the sun and the conclusion of the matter having considered all: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. Proverbs takes up where Ecclesiastes leaves off. It commences in chapter one with the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of knowledge, and concludes its discourse on the way of wisdom by recounting the excellence of the virtuous wife.

From that eulogy of this noble wife, we are led in his third book to a portrait of intimacy and union between the Divine Husband and His espoused Bride. Proverbs thirty one recounts with admiration the commendable care and loving service of that devoted woman. But this faithful labor of love is not the end of our being brought into oneness with our Bridegroom on high.

Here in the Song under the motif of Bride and Bridegroom is revealed the pinnacle of the ways of the Lord in seeking and saving that which is lost. Beyond the fear of the Lord enjoined in Ecclesiastes, and surpassing that of servanthood commended at the conclusion of Proverbs, is the intimate dignity of bridal union. It is this that Solomon's Song brings before us.

This theme has often been alluded to in the Scriptures but here is unveiled in its most glorious and rapturous fullness. "As the Bridegroom rejoices over his Bride, so shall the Lord our God rejoice over you" [Isa.6:25]. The tender words of Ezekiel 16:8 describe the Lord spreading His skirt over Israel at the time of love so that she became His. Christ is Husband indeed to His beautiful and loving Bride, the church [Ephesians 5:23,27], who awaits the longed for day of marital bliss at the marriage supper of the Lamb [Revelation 19:7-9].

But before that glad day, love must bud and blossom ere such a fragrance wafts upwards to His, and our, delight. Solomon's poem traces the spiritual movements of the soul from longings to realization, from prospect to possession, aspiration to consummation, from hesitancy to confidence, immaturity to fullness, and from vacillating affection to love's vehement and inextinguishable flame.

The Bride must progress from her consciousness of being blackened and coarse [1:6] to being altogether beautiful and without blemish in His sight [4:17]. From needing restoration from by-paths of barrenness she moves to reclining in His loving embrace [8:3]. Pastures of nurture must give way to mountain heights of fragrance in rarefied heavenly realms [8:14]. It is necessary that her neglected vineyard [1:6] yet would prolifically yield 1,000 shekels for her Beloved [8:12].

Winter's repast [2:11] must burst forth in bounteous precious fruits both new and old stored up for His delight [7:13]. Self-seeking ease [3:2,3] needs to be cast aside in order to leap with Him on Hermon's peaks [4:8]. From hearkening to competing voices [1:6; 2:15] to attending to her Beloved alone is the certain end of the movements of grace [8:13]. Willful neglect and discipline's scourge [5:3-7] must be replaced by love's willing union and caressing embraces [7:10-13].

Thus from a variety of considerations, the Song narrates the progressive development of love's ever deepening stream. Though she is the Bride, her growing affections are matured into a consistent and fervent constancy as she responds to the intimacy of His love. And thus does her shallow apprehension become expanded into a broad and delightful comprehension, both of what He is to her, and what she is to Him.

The soul of an individual and that of the church must necessarily pass through successive stages in its maturation. It is impossible that transformation by the renewing of the mind could ever take place while the

body is defiled in carnal lusts. And correspondingly, neither can a luxuriant ecstasy of spiritual union be known while the understanding is infantile and stunted.

Of concern in the Song is not that of repentance from corrupting carnality. She can hardly be deemed a Bride who wantonly pours out her lust in fornicating passion. Languishing in drunken vomit renders her unfit to drink His chalice of love surpassing that of wine. A compromised conscience engaged in dubious and devious dealings and dripping with the acid of contention and strife, disqualify from even approaching the Beloved, much less partaking of love's intimacy.

These are the worldly lusts and fleshly snares of death that must be conquered by repentance's grace in the initial and early stages of the spiritual journey as noted in Ecclesiastes. Unless that wholesome hatred of evil born out of the fear of the Lord has captured the heart, the deeds of the flesh will not be denied or put to death. And apart from this, one is incapable of spiritual progress in any capacity; conversion has not yet taken place. Simply stated, the soul that has not repented of the vanities of this corrupt world can never experience the love of Christ.

But once the external, hateful, enfeebling, and corrupting deeds of the flesh have been forsaken and mortified, the soul is then prepared to enter wisdom's school of mental renewal. Proverbs is the classroom where this instruction is gained, the soul enlightened and enlarged, and the former defiled bodily members become harnessed by truth's transforming power into instruments of righteousness.

Truth liberates the bound soul from the graveclothes of sin and death, while strengthening it to walk in newness of life, and enliven its progress unto fruitful service. Thus when the soul's fallow field has been broken up by the plowshare of truth, its stones removed, and its noxious weeds have been uprooted and burned, there then are prepared a fertile bed for love to flourish.

Love cannot be cultivated in the soil of corruption and ignorance whose thorns and thistles are permitted to remain and choke the sprouting of love's bloom. It is this blossoming of devoted affection that Solomon's Song depicts in its successive stages; first the blade, then the bud, followed by the matured grain in the head at the season of love's in gathered harvest [Mk.4:28,29].

This progression from conversion's inception to love's culmination is noted in 2 Peter 1:5-7. The platform upon which the spiritual life stands is that initial introduction of faith and moral excellence apart from which the journey has not yet begun. Fearing God and keeping His commandments according to Ecclesiastes' final assessment of everything under the sun, sets the steps in paths of faith and moral excellence.

Peter goes on to say that to this, knowledge must be added. With this, Proverbs wholeheartedly concurs. It is the truth of heavenly wisdom imparted that leads to the development of the soul in self-control, perseverance, godliness, and brotherly kindness.

The crowning virtue of this blessed progression is that of love, that splendid consummation of the ways of the Lord's fashioning grace. It is the grandest pinnacle of blessedness, both at the conclusion of Peter's progressive outline and of this capstone of Solomon's trilogy, the Song of Songs.

But the movement towards that union of bliss so desired by the Lover of our souls is all too often neglected and retarded by the very church of His espousals. O how fickle and vacillating is the devotion of even the Bride of Christ's desire! How intermittent is her repose upon the Beloved, how often distracted and stupefied by complacency and sluggishness of heart! What extremes of intimacy and estrangement are recounted in this moving saga of love!

She at once pours forth the warmth of fervent desires for a holy union with her Beloved [1:2-4]. Yet cascading from those same lips so soon thereafter is the lamentable confession of a shameful fruitlessness [1:5-6] along with the embarrassing admission that the way of restoration is unknown to her [1:7,8].

Nevertheless, He loves her still. She is brought to His table and then tenderly escorted to their bed whose overarching banner is love, where His left hand is under her head and His right hand embraces the darling of His bosom [1:12-16; 2:6].

But once again, we discover Him without, moving upon the heights, leaping upon the hills, while a wall, a window, and lattice separate the devoted pair. Even yet He calls for her to arise and join Him in concert amidst the things above [2:8-15]. Though her womanly heart is stirred, rather than arising in response to His voice, she urges Him to turn back to join her where she was comforting herself [2:16,17].

She is alone there in bed; no embrace, no delight in loves, and no word from His mouth or kisses from His lips to meet hers [3:1]. O how pathetic the noble and delightful Bride has become! Now alone, wandering in the blackness of midnight, she roams city streets seeking Him who can only be encountered where He is in heavenly places [3:1-3].

Once again, however, communion of purest marital bliss was restored to their mutual satisfaction [3:4 - 5:1]. But how inconsistent is our devotion to Him who loves to the uttermost! Delay of response to the

expressed longing of the Bridegroom, leads to His grieved withdrawal from her unwilling breast [5:2-6]. She must then learn through discipline's rod and shameful exposure that His love cannot be slighted and ignored [5:7].

But, thank God, the love of the Lord Jesus does not wax and wane as does our own. He is found by her seeking heart and love is restored when she recounts the excellence of her Beloved with sober, penitent, and affectionate remembrance [5:10 - 6:9]. It is then that they enter that union of love's unending ecstasy that no torrent of earth can quench [7:1 - 8:14].

Come; let us now reverently glimpse the details of this most sacred and rapturous union between God and man. This is a Song that can only be sung by those whose fervent desires to love the Lord Jesus compel them to pour out their hearts unreservedly unto the honor of Christ alone. None others will join in this chorus. And so may we note well the movements of the soul leading to an increasing intimacy with Him who has loved us so, that we might attain to the spiritual bliss of Christ's pleasure in the Bride of His endearment.

Each verse of the Song will be written out preceding the comments following. The speaker will be identified at the beginning of the quote indicated by a bold abbreviation. **BG** = Bridegroom, **B** = Bride, **C** = Companions, and **HS** = the Holy Spirit.

The translation itself appears in *italic script* and is a composite of English versions and literal renderings from the Hebrew in order to most clearly convey the meaning of the text. The English meaning of the Hebrew names will follow in brackets [].

A Glossary of the principal spiritual meanings of the terms used in the Song is found at the conclusion.

CHAPTER ONE

Summary: Awakened desires for an affectionate intimate union with Christ, her Beloved, prompt His church to solicit kisses from His mouth. Though painfully conscious of unworthiness and neglecting to attend to her own fruitfulness, He nonetheless does not despise, but directs her to pastures of restoration. It is then that they abide together in dwellings of mutual delight.

[1-2]

The Song of Songs which is Solomon's.

B *May He kiss me with the kisses of His mouth!
For Your love is better than wine.*

There is no higher song that may be sung than this of the fervency of Christ's love for His church and the affectionate response of His Bride for Him alone. It is one thing to be guided by the hand to walk in company with Him along the way; it is another altogether to be ardently embraced. Performing useful service dutifully and responsibly cannot be compared to being kissed with the kisses of His lips.

Her desire for kisses is not a lusting of burning passions such as those of the harlot who seizes and presses her mouth to the lips of any male she encounters [Prov.7:13]. Far from it! Hers is rather the expression of a purified and trembling hope that He may likewise wish to kiss her.

Will He desire and delight in me as I do Him? He indeed does and kiss her He will, but not as an impulsive imposition of affection by a Jacob upon a Rachel, attracted by what met his eye and apart from her consent [Gen.29:11,17]. Both must be willing, for it is mutual delight alone that nourishes love.

Love's kiss is not that of a servile subject prostrating before Omnipotence [Ps.2:12], nor that from the lips of a wayward wench, now penitent with tears [Lk.7:38]. The kiss longed for surpasses that upon the neck to restore the prodigal from the slop of swine and mire of wanton women [Lk.15:20]. All of these have their proper place, but that is not what is longed for or could be fitting here.

To experience the intimacy of Divine affection, to be encircled by everlasting arms in a loving embrace is her ardent and consuming thought. Can any joy on earth be compared to this? Never; all earthly delights fade as hollow imitations, as temporary stimulants that can only inflame for a season [Ps.104:15]. There is no love like that of Christ for His Bride, a love to the uttermost, the very flame of the Lord.

[3]

B *Your oils have a pleasing fragrance,
Your Name is like ointment poured forth;
Therefore the virgins love You.*

What rival perfumes of earth can compete with the delightful fragrance of Christ Himself [Eph.5:2]? It is this fragrance of Christ unto God that is the aroma of life unto life [2 Cor.2:14-16] and enamors the heart. Poured out and alluring, all purified souls become captivated with the sensitive inhaling of His oils. It is the excellence of His Name that is a bouquet of spice to the soul.

The Name encapsulates in a single designation the essence of Christ's moral perfections. Compressed in that Name above all names is the strength of a boundless nature that unfolds its sweetness when poured forth. Such attractiveness can only be produced by the multiplied blend of rare spices mixed with the oil of the Holy Spirit [Ex.30:22-33] cascading upon His head and releasing their compelling scent to the sensitive of soul.

Has this fragrance ravished your heart? Are you drawn and aroused to seek out the source of this unique perfume of Divine excellence in Christ? What are we truly seeking amidst the downward pull of life's distractions? May Christ's beauty arrest and attract our hearts to enter into the satisfaction of love's fullness.

[4]

B Draw me!

C We will run after You!

B The King has brought me into His chambers.

C We will rejoice in you and be glad
We will remember Your love more than wine.

B Rightly do they love You!

Let us now introduce the characters presented before us in this Divine drama of love. In the text of the Song, the different speakers are often identified by the use of male or female pronouns in the narrative. There is, of course, the Beloved Bridegroom who portrays the Lord Jesus Christ. His Bride, the Shulammitte, illustrates the church in her honored and privileged glorious consummation. Associated with her are her Companions, the Daughters of Jerusalem, those who are attracted to the excellence of the Groom, but further removed in apprehension and affection than she who is the Bride indeed.

These are the primary characters throughout the unfolding scenes of the Song. The following paraphrase will clarify the interchange that takes place here in verse four:

B - Draw me, my Beloved!

C - We will also run after Him!

B - The King has brought me into His chambers.

C - We will rejoice in you, the Bride, and be glad; we will extol His love more than wine.

B - Rightly do they love You, my Beloved.

O let us cry out with her to be drawn into blissful chambers of the Lover of our souls! She was indeed drawn by cords of love into His chambers, not as a potential candidate undergoing interview, but as the delightful one of His heart.

Daughters of Jerusalem gaze on with joy, but with distant detachment, from entering that intimate scene. Enthusiastic but ignorant, they admire with approval and a measure of appreciation, though they have not tasted of the ecstasy themselves. These Companions are those true virgins who are inclined towards Christ and spiritual things, yet who need to grow in knowledge and understanding before the Lord Jesus becomes their sole worthy object of devotion.

Let us not be content to abide in their company, pleasant as it may be. Let us fervently desire to enter as the Bride and not merely satisfied to remain as spectators, only seeing Him from afar without reposing in His embrace.

[5]

B I am black but lovely, O Daughters of Jerusalem,
Like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon.

But such an entrance into closest proximity awakens at once the profound contrast between what she is outwardly and how she is bedecked within. Blackened by a scorching sun under the withering dryness of this desert world, there appears no comeliness to those who judge by appearance and not by Divine assessment. Without is seen the darkened and coarse tents of Kedar [Darkness] by blind beholders who lack insight due to spiritual dullness, Companions though they may be.

But within, seen by Him who looks upon the heart, are the beauties of Solomon's very own tapestries, arrayed in splendor and adorned by grace. Such wondrous knowledge is pleasant to her soul and thus she is emboldened to call to Him and draw near to His bosom, conscious as she is of utter unworthiness.

O delightful Bride, let us not shrink back from pressing on to know His love which surpasses mortal knowledge! Despite our painfully obvious imperfections, we will surely find a kindly reception from Him who loved the church and gave Himself up for her.

[6]

B *Do not stare at me because I am black,
For the sun has burned me.
My mother's sons were angry with me;
They made me caretaker of the vineyards,
But my own vineyard I have not kept.*

The passive and spiritually slothful among the brethren will always criticize inward progress of a worshiping soul that they remain ignorant of. To them, the Bride is to serve their ends though it is to her own demise and neglect of her Beloved. Anger wells up at any rebuke of their own lack of fervor and suggestion that their unwilling hands assume responsibility for their own spiritual progress.

It was even so with Christ's very own disciples. Indignantly they demanded, "Why this waste?" [Mt.26:8,9], when that precious ointment was "squandered" by Mary in anointing her Bridegroom beforehand for burial. But the Lord Jesus' rebuke remains one and the same for all such would-be servants, "Let her alone."

Devoted love poured out in worshipful abandon is ever the highest attainment and greatest delight to the heart of Christ. Do not allow even well meaning Companions to dissuade you from loving the Lord Jesus with all your heart, soul, and mind.

The woman of Proverbs thirty one may be legitimately engaged as "caretaker of the vineyard," evidenced by her diligent provision for household members. But here, she who desires the kisses of His mouth, who esteems His love above the most exhilarating joy that earth affords, cannot be thus engaged.

Martha was a caretaker of the vineyards while neglecting her own [Lk.10:38-42]. How subtly does service draw our hearts away from our One worthy object of devotion! Is it not so? Distracting occupation with heavenly tasks has sapped many a soul from communion with Christ Himself. May we gain instruction from Mary who truly attended to her own vineyard and thus bore a hundredfold, fruit which will not be taken away from her.

In the Song, the vineyard is examined frequently to discern its progress towards fruitfulness. Fruitfulness precedes intimacy and must be jealousy guarded and attended to. Without it, there is nothing desirable and alluring to the Beloved if He encounters barren and withered branches. O may we bear fruit, yea, much fruit, and that abiding fruit of goodness, righteousness, and truth [Eph.5:9] so that He may be glorified and come to partake of its bounty!

[7]

B *Tell me, O You whom my soul loves,
Where do You feed Your flock,
Where do You make it rest at noon?
Why should I be like one who veils herself
By the flocks of Your companions?*

Whenever something arrests, retards, or spoils this bounteous process, in the immediate context of the chapters, there is mention made of His pasture. Food from His shepherd heart is what restores and enlivens the fruitful process. Being bereft of that fruitful end is sure evidence of having neglected the means afforded along the way. She senses the unproductiveness of her soul's endeavors, yet she must admit ignorance of where and how to come under His shepherd's leading.

How shall the soul be restored to paths of righteousness, pastures green, and still waters of repose? By seeking His shepherd care in His meadows of rest and reposing unalarmed in His delightful shade even during the shimmering swelter of noonday's scorching rays.

O why should we attach ourselves to the flock of others even though that of His Companions? Is it for earthly shepherds that we veil ourselves so that we might associate with their fold? Far from it! The longing of the Bride is to abide under His watchful eye, be led by that tender hand, and be carried in the bosom of Him who lays down His life for the sheep.

May the church of His possession turn from its barrenness to earnestly seek the richness of His lavish fields of abundance! There the Great Shepherd of the sheep will complete in her every good grace, working in her what is well pleasing in His sight, even unto the glory of endless day.

[8]

BG *If you do not know, O fairest among women,
Follow in the footsteps of the flock,
And feed your little goats beside the shepherd's tents.*

Surely the way of restoration lies in walking in the ancient paths, those well worn ruts of righteousness, by following the trail that the godly of every generation have trod. There, in His Word and there alone, do we find food from our Beloved's pasture, rest beside untroubled refreshing springs, and drink to the revitalizing of our wearied souls. There we may receive from His own shepherds who, knowing the verdant richness of Immanuel's land, will lead us to feed therein. This truly is caring for our own vineyard; feeding from His Word and reclining in His shade which produces comely fruit for His pleasure.

[9]

BG *To Me, My love, you are like My mare
Among the chariots of Pharaoh.*

See how He now praises her! Amidst the warring multitudes of this world with Satan at its head, she, in power, beauty, and grace, bears Him throughout the land in victorious dignity. Pure of breed and of vibrant sculptured form, she is outstanding among all the maidens and alone qualified as the single object of His heart.

How do we bear Him aloft, how is He lifted up as King by us, His church? Can He rightly describe us as His Bride in this way? May it ever be so that there might be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations.

[10,11]

BG *Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments,
your neck with chains of gold.*
C *We will make you ornaments of gold
with beads of silver.*

What adornment captures the admiration of the Beloved and endears her to His heart? Golden ornaments with strands of silver beads grace her cheeks and decorate her neck. He beholds that flashing sparkle of golden glory, the very glory of God caressing the loveliness of her face. Silver's redemption purchase price encircles with beauty her graceful neck, which supports every worthy thought and affectionate gaze.

This is what thrills the heart of Christ, to behold the glory of God and redemption's results in the face of His darling. This is the high calling of the Bride for whom He laid down His life. May He find in us what that greater than Solomon longs for, and so may He behold the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

Yet such attractiveness falls short of the ultimate outcome that love's bounty will produce. Her Companions cannot beautify the hidden person of the heart which is what the Bridegroom deems as precious. External adornment is the best that they can offer; true comeliness must be cultivated within.

In the culmination of love's progression, external ornaments are left aside altogether. What the Bride has become in and of herself is then His whole heart's delight, apart from any contributing attractiveness [7:1-9].

The descriptions of the qualities, excellence of character, and desirability of each other are expressed in the Song when they become manifest and are apprehended. Her character and appreciation are emerging and developing; His are constant and abounding. He commends when hers blossom forth, no more as a hidden potential, but as an evident realization. She praises Him when that which has been present all the while in the Beloved, is at last recognized by her increasing affectionate faculty of perception.

[12]

B *While the King is at His table,
My spikenard sends forth its fragrance.*

What fragrance of Christ unto God wafts heavenward to the delight and allurement of our Beloved King of Glory? When we recline with Him at His table of remembrance, does our perfume ravish His heart? Like Mary of Bethany, do we pour forth this precious ointment upon His feet in deepest humility of devotion so that His house is filled with the fragrance [Jn.12:3]?

Does the sweet scent of ardent affection rise to enrapture the Lord Jesus with His Bride when gathered to break bread? Surely if this be so, He will seek the source of such sweetness that He may draw near in enjoyment of the darling of His good pleasure.

[13,14]

B *My Beloved is to me a bundle of myrrh
which lies all night between my breasts.
My Beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms
in the vineyards of Engedi.*

He, to her, is as the delightful fragrance of crushed myrrh which only releases its odor when beaten and bruised. It is Christ's suffering love in being wounded for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities that she cherishes in the ardency of full affection. This she clasps close to her heart, kept by enamored devoted love throughout the night of His rejection here in this darkened evil age. He Himself is her hidden, private, and secret rapture, treasured upon breasts of fond affection.

Outwardly, His loveliness is her beauty and adornment. Clusters of pungent pure white henna blooms are her glory. He is this to her, a fragrant glory of purity. This is to be found at Engedi, the stronghold of the King [I Sam.23:29] in the region of flowing streams of abundant life [Ezek.47:10]. May Christ be so to us, our glory, beauty of holiness, and refuge from whence abundance of life overflows!

[15]

BG *Behold, you are fair, My love!
Behold, you are beautiful!
Your eyes are like doves.*

Her attractive beauty initially, as it always must be, is her gentle and peaceful eyes like those of doves. This is what from the onset He longs to gaze into, eyes that are pure and steadfast in their singleness of desire [Mt.6:22]. These are the inner lamps of the soul, clear and unclouded, focused and attentive. O may there not be discovered dimness, or much less darkness, when the Beloved turns His penetrating yet loving gaze upon us. What does He behold when looking into the eyes of His Bride? And what does she see when peering out upon Him?

[16]

B *Behold, You are handsome, my Beloved!
Yes, and pleasant! Also, our bed is green.*

The bridal bed of love is verdant with life, decked out with all that is suitable for the habitation of God [Isa.60:13]. The bed is green – full of life flowing sap to sustain fruitfulness even in days of drought, vibrant and productive, quite unlike that dry tree of the eunuch who has no spouse of love [Isa.56:3]. Thus does Christ's love for His Bride culminate in the union of life in mutual rapture. It is this that the soul of the church is being prepared for during days of separation here below in this world. May we be found to be so in that glad coming day.

[17]

B *The beams of our houses are cedars,
Our rafters are firs.*

We occupy with our Beloved, not a single dwelling alone, but rather houses crafted of cedar beams [I K.6:9; 7:12]. The church abides both in a glorious temple as well as in the private inner chambers of His domicile. We move with our Great Solomon as a Queen in the temple of His majesty while equally embracing Him as His devoted lover within His own abode; outwardly holy and glorious, inwardly fervent in affection.

CHAPTER TWO

Summary: Love must arise spontaneously without artificial incentives, being aroused by a deepening knowledge and desire for Christ. Though a distance still separates us from our Beloved, He yet with gracious longing, calls His church to blossom forth from a barren bleakness and join Him in the things above. But magnificent as is His offer, sadly self is still evident in her appeal for Him to turn aside and join her, rather than arising to ascend at His loving appeal.

[1,2]

B *I am the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valley.*
BG *Like a lily among thorns,*
So is My love among the daughters.

She derives her assessment of herself from His valuation in His sight. This is the true apprehension; what the Bride is to the heart of Christ, not what we esteem ourselves to be. Self esteem is that most wretched of all estimations, proceeding as it does from deceitful hearts inflated by their own conceits. Let us abide with joy in all that Christ Himself has declared His church to be and shun as worthless the bankrupt valuation of men and of self.

[3]

B *Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest,*
So is my Beloved among the sons.
I sat down in His shade with great delight,
And His fruit was sweet to my taste.

O what is Christ to His Bride? He is incomparable among the sons of men! Where else can we repose in a shade that affords relief from the scorching rays of withering discomfort and the sweating toil of this cursed creation? Nothing but partaking of the crisp saturated nectar of Christ's prolific fullness refreshes and invigorates the longing soul! Let us arise and taste and not simply admire. Admiration stirs the emotion, partaking nourishes and delights the inner man with love's sweetness.

[4-6]

B *He brought me to His banqueting house,*
And His banner over me is love.
Sustain me with raisin cakes, refresh me with apples,
For I am lovesick.
His left hand is under my head,
And His right hand embraces me.

What a haven this description affords the soul of the church as she passes through this wearisome world! In Christ there is a private environment, a place of secret and sacred refuge. Come and partake of a joy in His house of wine that exceeds any delight upon earth while reposed under His overarching banner of love!

There we may abide unmolested, invigorated by His stored up raisins of sweetness. These are the preserved and concentrated delicacies derived from Christ, the True Vine. Unspoiled, unfermented, and apart from fleshly dissipation is the fruit stemming from our Beloved that abides to gratify the soul in vitality and joy.

Christ is the refreshing portion of every longing soul. Truly, His fruit sustains love, and there is none other that nourishes and satisfies like the love apples of the Lord Jesus. Yes, let His Bride recline here, caressed by His fondest embrace within His chambers of love. This is life, yea, and life abundant indeed!

[7]

BG *I charge you, O Daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles or by the hinds of the field,
Do not arouse or awaken love until it pleases.*

At this juncture, when fully yielded to the advances of Christ's love, the Daughters of Jerusalem are charged: If, like the gazelles, you truly love with purest affectionate breasts [4:5; 7:8] and if you are moving nimbly as the hinds in step with things above [Ps.18:33], then do not arouse love until it pleases.

Love, if genuine, must be the spontaneous affection of heart that is aroused by no artificial enticements and certainly not by coercion. Above all, the Lord values that voluntary delight in His person and the ardent desire to know and love Him. True love springs up from the pure fount of appreciation of His excellence apart from considerations of self and void of unworthy motives.

It is the prerogative of the Bridegroom alone to awaken love [8:5]. Any other source is a polluted spring and a trampled well, muddied and spoiled by the efforts of men. Love for Christ must arise without pretense and intimidation, being a free and guiltless response to the loveliness of His peerless person alone.

[8,9]

B *The voice of my Beloved! Behold, He comes,
Leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.
My Beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.
Behold, He stands behind our wall;
He is looking through the windows,
He is gazing through the lattice.*

O how quickly the scene of our soul's landscape can be altered! What petty carelessness shifts the scenes from rapturous embrace within chambers of love to the distant call of her Beloved echoing on hills of separation! Behold Him now on the heights; swift in movement as the gazelle [2 Sam.2:18] and full of ardent longing as a hart ascending to lofty water brooks [Ps.42:1].

He is without in fullest liberty and movement in the heights while she abides alone groveling in the things below. No more is His left hand under her head with love's right hand embracing, here He is now outside the wall looking in, seen only in part through shifting shadows filtered through the concealing lattice. But, bless the Lord, though separated from the desire of His heart, He yet sees and calls.

[10-13]

B *My Beloved spoke and said to me:
BG Arise, My love, My beautiful one, and come away.
For behold, winter is past, the rain is over and gone.
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of singing has come,
And the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.
The fig tree forms its early fruit,
And the vines in blossom have given forth their fragrance.
Arise, My love, My beautiful one, and come away!*

Warmth of desires [1:4] may cool. What once was an all consuming passion can equally decline into low ebb of complacency exposing the mire of neglect where there once was a springing stream of devotion. It is from this dull and disinterested valley of unresponsiveness that Christ's word echoes from the surrounding hills, "Arise, My love, and come away!"

When the Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in His wings, will we awake from hibernation and also arise, pushing through earth's imprisoning soil to stretch forth tendrils of expectant new life? O what can we say to our Beloved to justify continuing in winter's stark apparent lifelessness? Yes, life may be present hidden beneath our rough outer bark, but it lies unmoved within as a cold dormant sap that no more courses in budding bloom.

Too often has the church been silhouetted against the slate of a cheerless grey horizon. Wind swept barren twigs, naked of leaves; have risen heavenward with trembling gnarled fingers void of fruit, only to be met with a dark winter's frigid stare. The dreary gloom of the soul's season of fruitlessness has drawn to a close; Spring has dawned with its joyous singing.

Bride of the Beloved, the time is past; the voice of the Heavenly Dove is calling you to arise and come along: Abandon the cold barrenness of your hardened soil, yield to Christ's embrace, and enter His fragrant fields of fruitfulness.

All of nature instinctively arises from its hibernation into the freshness of new life in response to the summer's advent. Will you, My love, do the same at the beckoning of your Beloved? The question is for us.

[14]

BG *O My dove, in the clefts of the rock,
In the secret place of the cliff, let Me see your countenance,
Let Me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet,
And your countenance is lovely.*

Public display is not what Christ desires. Loveliness beheld in private is what He earnestly seeks. O what are we to Christ in the secret place? What does He behold there, what tones grace His ears? Are we comely to Him in form and sweet of voice?

Let us enter the clefts of the rock even as Moses was hidden there and behold the glory of the Lord [Ex.33:22]. Surely we shall catch a glimpse of that same glory when, as a Bride, we unveil ourselves before His loving gaze, and He in turn rests His eyes upon that glorious countenance of the prize of His heart.

[15]

Brothers *Catch the foxes for us,
The little foxes that spoil the vines,
For our vineyards are in bloom.*

Whose voice will we give heed to? Shall we arise and proceed in loving fellowship with our Heavenly Groom, or shall we hearken to the voice of men, even our brethren, who would solicit us to turn aside unto their concerns? Let us remember soberly that tending the vineyards of her brothers was a snare to her spiritual vitality [1:6]. O Bride of the Lamb, do not allow the pleas of men to turn you aside from tending your own vineyard and going out after Christ with obedient steps of ardent desire!

Little foxes do indeed spoil the blossoming vines, and they must be eliminated from the vineyard with diligent militancy. They ruin the fruit by destroying the early signs of new life. Development into a harvest of joy is cancelled because its initial progress has been cut off by that crafty fox of old that first spoiled Eden's bounty.

It is not against elephants of carnality that we need to keep vigil; those were cast out in the soul's early history during the Ecclesiastes stage. Rather, it is against the wiles of the little foxes that will ravage the now fruitful progress; little foxes of neglect, irritation, sloth, and uncharitable thoughts.

It is the seemingly insignificant troubled waters of the inner man that frustrate progress in intimate oneness with Christ. He who is faithful in a very little thing will be faithful also in much; and the converse is also all too true. And if fruit will reach maturity's fullness, each must attend to his own vineyard. None else can keep it for us.

[16,17]

B *My Beloved is mine, and I am His.
He feeds His flock among the lilies,
until the day dawns and the shadows flee away.
Turn, my Beloved, and be like a gazelle
Or a young stag on the mountains of Bether.*

As thrilling to the heart as is the thought that My Beloved is mine, there is something greater far than that. Such expressions of delight yet have a scent of self about them. Her focus is upon what He is to her and not what she is to Him.

Witness the progress of soul when she exclaims in 6:3, "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine." Here He has the first place, but not the exclusive place; space is still afforded for herself. But compare these with that of her final settled confession in 7:10, "I am my Beloved's and His desire is for me."

Here is the final outcome of the development of grace in the Bride of His desire: Self is lost sight of altogether as He has become all and all to her. May the Lord Jesus fill such a place in the affections of His Bride that He might indeed have "preeminence in all things" [Col.1:18].

Truly Shepherd care and food from His rich pasture is needed to restore the soul. But how often we partake to no profit! She now knows the way of restoration that she was ignorant of in 1:7,8, yet even the Word of Christ does not suffice to renew communion if His church does not arise and come.

O Bride of the Lamb, opportunity is afforded to you as long as it is still called today. But when the shadows flee away and darkness steals over the fields, she herself will be plunged into gross darkness if she has not arisen to join Him in the light of day.

Arising swiftly, obediently, and gladly, is our only option to reestablish affection's fellowship. Let us not craft compromising alternatives of our own benighted invention. May we ever beware of that wretched demand from an estranged heart that would require Him to turn from His course and come to walk in our way!

Will He turn aside at our beck and call? Do we actually expect that He will hearken to our voice while we have disdained to respond to His own? It could never be! Such a Bride must abide alone upon her self conceived mountains of Bether [Separation/Division]. He will not join her there.

CHAPTER THREE

Summary: Communion with Christ will never be realized while we seek our own desires in neglect of His good will. Christ will not be encountered roaming through the alleys of man's city. The church must seek Christ where He may be found, though it be through discipline. May we not let Him go! Cling to the King of Glory, waiting the coming glad day of marital bliss!

[1]

B *On my bed in the nights I sought the One I love;
I sought Him, but I did not find Him.*

She ought to have been running with arms intertwined with those of her Beloved in the daysprings of heavenly communion. Instead, she is settled alone upon her bed, nor more green as in 1:16, but one of willful neglect – no embrace, no delight in loves, and no word from His mouth or kisses from His lips. Truly this is a soul abiding in darkness and futile longings.

He will never be encountered on our terms in a self-conceived search, vainly seeking Him where He cannot be found. Is this not the empty claim of a pharisaical charade? “O, how I long to know the Lord; I really want to please Him!” Then arise from your self-deceived bed of hypocrisy and seek Him where He may be found. We discover to our shame and rebuke that the Lord of glory is not at our beck and call as some dutiful lackey. Failing to hearken to His voice results in His refusal to respond to ours.

[2]

B *I will rise now and go about the city;
In the streets and broadways, I will seek the One I love.
I sought Him, but did not find Him.*

O how that frigid and hateful pronoun, “I,” surfaces repeatedly at this juncture! Her arising now was in self-will, not in response to His voice in the slightest. And did her guilty seeking lead to recovering the Beloved's abiding presence? It did not.

Christ is not to be found in the streets and broadways of our self-appointed course. He is moving in the things above, not wending His way through man-made byways and back alleys of human invention.

[3]

B *The watchmen who go about the city found me –
Have you seen Him whom my soul loves?*

Why is a Bride wandering in the blackness of midnight, roving through city streets seeking Him whose call was to arise and run with Him in the light of day and among the things above? Truly the watchmen will find her. It is not without discipline that He is encountered when once we have slighted and refused His beckoning call to move in company with Him.

The watchmen guard against improprieties in the night, to accost, convict, arrest, and punish waywardness in the darkness. It is a humbling and shameful thing to come to the attention of the watchmen. Her expectation in soliciting their assistance was vain; the Bridegroom does not roam in the darkness through the streets of man's city. Watchmen will never encounter Him there, much less a Bride.

[4]

B Scarcely had I passed by them, when I found the One I love.
I held Him and would not let Him go,
until I had brought Him into my mother's house,
And into the room of her who conceived me.

Separation may result from a number of causes. The subtle coolness of the Bride's self occupation is sufficient to estrange ever as much as a Jacob's fierce resistance in self will. Hers was not a wrestling of contention and fleshly belligerence as was his, but arose out of an unconcerned reluctance to respond to the expressed desires of His heart. In the end, both clung to their Lord; Jacob, in order to gain blessing for himself, and the Bride in order to bring her Beloved to the chamber of love's bestowal. Hers was the better and nobler portion.

[5]

BG I charge you, O Daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles or by the hinds of the field,
Do not arouse or awaken love until it pleases.

Clinging leads to communion restored and a caution renewed [2:7]. Let there be no artificial manipulative influences or motives to arouse My Bride's love and longing. It is for Me alone to awaken purity's desires.

[6-8]

HS Who is this coming up from the wilderness
Like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
With all the merchant's fragrant powders?
Behold, it is Solomon's couch,
With sixty mighty men around it,
Of the mighty men of Israel.
They all hold swords, expert in war;
Each man has his sword upon his thigh
Because of terror in the nights.

Can there be a more arresting sight than the King of grace Himself approaching majestically with girded mighty sword in victorious procession with garments exuding fragrant myrrh and all scented powders [Ps.45:1-8]? He marches in the triumph of redeeming grace with smoking clouds of fragrant incense [Rev.8:4] ascending to cover the mercy seat [Lev.16:12,13] and comes forth to speak peace to the Bride of His espousals.

[9,10]

HS Of the wood of Lebanon
King Solomon made for himself a carriage.
He made its pillars of silver, its support of gold,
its seat of purple, its interior paved with love,
By the Daughters of Jerusalem.

The Greater Solomon moves through the world in the Divine glory of redeeming grace. His carriage in which He rides is crafted of aromatic planks that flourish in the pure snows of Lebanon [Whiteness]. So too was a noble vessel prepared for our Lord Jesus to come into this world with the fragrance of a consecrated pure humanity grown to majestic proportions, lofty in grandeur, and magnificent to behold.

He Himself is the unshakable support that upholds the glory of Solomon's temple, and that in a two-fold manner. Those dual pillars that all in His house rest upon are Jachin [He shall establish] and Boaz [In Him is strength] [I K.7:21], both mighty columns of silver's redemption purchase price.

He rests against the golden back of an untarnished and undimmed Divine glory. The King of glory is seated upon a throne of purpled royal splendor and its entire interior is devotedly paved with love's luxuriance. This is His environment and grand deportment as He passes among men: glory, redemption's purchase price, majestic sovereignty to establish in might all who join Him in the train of His love. And He is coming thus to meet His awaiting Bride. O may we keep our garments unspotted for that glorious day!

[11]

HS *Go forth, O daughters of Zion,
And see King Solomon with the crown
With which his mother crowned him
On the day of his wedding,
The day of the gladness of his heart.*

Can you see the tiara of glory resting upon His brow of majesty? It is none other than His crowning virtuous wife [Prov.12:4] who rejoices His heart and redounds to His renown. Truly this is the doing of the Lord by crowning Him thus with so excellent a diadem [Prov.19:14; 18:22], one fashioned by His mother; that true Sarah, the Jerusalem above [Gal.4:26], who graciously fitted her to be the glorious Bride of His nuptials.

CHAPTER FOUR

Summary: The true estimate of what the Bride is can only be discovered through Christ's Word who beholds what He alone can perceive. May the church ever respond with welcome reception for her Beloved, who comes to partake of her choice fruits.

[1]

BG *Behold, you are fair, My love!
Behold, you are beautiful!
Your eyes are like doves behind your veil.
Your hair is like a flock of goats
Descending from Mount Gilead.*

How beautiful is the devoted Bride refusing to let go of her Beloved! Her eyes again, as they did initially in 1:15, are what arrest His heart with delight. These are no wanton eyes [Isa.3:16] of brazen flashing to seduce and captivate [Prov.6:25], but are pristinely pure, gentle, and godly which are kept in modesty for Him alone discreetly concealed behind her veil.

And behold the glorious locks of her hair [I Cor.11:15] a living outward evidence of the testimony obtained flowing down from Gilead's [Heap of witness] heights.

[2]

BG *Your teeth are like a flock of shorn sheep
Which have come up from their washing,
Every one of which bears twins,*

And none is barren among them.

Pristinely white and fully formed with none missing, she has a strong capacity to assimilate His food. By reason of consistent feeding she has grown to a stature to receive and digest meat with godly discernment [Heb.5:14]. Lips of the infantile may be capable of receiving milk, but that is all. Strong meat is for a fully formed and mature Bride who delights in His ever deepening nourishment contained in His Word. Such capacity renders her beautiful to behold.

[3]

BG *Your lips are like a scarlet thread,
And your mouth is lovely.
Your temples are like a slice of a pomegranate behind your veil.*

Here are purity's lips marked by redeeming grace with which to affectionately press to those of her Beloved's, fully prepared to receive His reciprocating kiss of endearment. That lovely mouth whose voice has been so often longed to be known [2:14] is now opened uttering words of love that caress His ears with delight. And on the right and the left of her lovely face are temples of prolific meditation, beds of fruitful thoughts behind her veil; a mind that is stayed upon her Beloved and kept for Him alone.

[4]

BG *Your neck is like the tower of David, built for an armory
On which hang a thousand shields, all shields of mighty men.*

O precious tower, armory, and shield of a neck that remains upright and steadfast to defend from all assaults to wander to the right or the left and turn her aside from her Beloved!

[5]

BG *Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle
which feed among the lilies.*

O how breasts of devotion ravage the heart of Christ! Behold those identically formed twins coming forth with that uniformity of love's pregnant affectionate fullness! These are not twins of diverse and antagonistic natures such as Esau and Jacob, but ones with a complementary testimony of united ardent tenderness that swiftly respond to love's advances as does the gazelle [2 Sam. 2:18]. Turn to the left or gaze upon the right, an identical flame of pure desire burns within her bounteous bosom for the Beloved of her soul.

But such affection must be nourished in purity's fields of lilies ere it increases into fullness of love at the dawn of eternal Day. Breasts of devoted ardor do not grace the infantile and immature [8:8], but must be nurtured by habitual feeding upon the richness of Christ's fertile field of love. May we not neglect the Word of our Good Shepherd found in this lily pastureland, but perpetually partake of the loveliness of the Lord Jesus encountered therein that will ensure development unto an intimacy of satisfaction.

[6-8]

BG *until the day breaks and the shadows flee away,
I will go My way to the mountain of myrrh
And to the hill of frankincense.
You are all fair, My love, and there is no blemish in you.
Come with Me from Lebanon, My bride,
With Me from Lebanon. Look from the top of Amanah,
From the top of Senir and Hermon,
From the lion's den, from the mountains of the leopards.*

His realm is in the heights of heavenly places: His call is to that most pleasing of all odors, that of excellence of character, to drink in the refreshing purity of Lebanon's snows [Jer.18:14], where she will become rooted and fragrant [Hos.14:5,6], both lofty and glorious [Isa.2:13], and to abide in Amana [Constancy], the abode of a sure and settled provision.

Come, Bride of the Lamb, and ascend embraced in everlasting arms unto the peak of Hermon [Devoted] from whence you can gaze down with Him in expanded vistas from His vantage point above [Col.3:1-3]. This is where He desires us to be without fear, where the kings of the kingdoms are subdued.

Yes, you can pass before the den of lions while treading through the leopard's lair. All have been subjugated by the Lord on high [Isa.11:6], on whose mountain nothing shall hurt or destroy, even forevermore [Isa.11:9].

[9,10]

BG *You have ravished My heart, My sister, My bride;
You have ravished My heart with one look of your eyes,
With one chain of your necklace.
How fair is your love, My sister, My bride!
How much better than wine is your love,
And the scent of your perfume than all spices!*

There is a decided unearthliness about a heart that flows with the well-springs of love for Christ. Nothing on earth can approximate such love that transcends the natural, having its source in the everlasting hills of a Divine fount.

His heart is ravished as He but glimpses in her what He Himself has kindled within her breast, even love for Him which proceeds from Himself. And thus the mystery of love's unseen impulses are laid bare; love is from God [I Jn.4:7] so that we thus love, because He first loved us [I Jn.4:19].

[11]

BG *Your lips, My bride, drip as the honeycomb,
Honey and milk are under your tongue,
And the fragrance of your garments
Is like the fragrance of Lebanon.*

What can compare to the supreme blessing of love's fragrant and fruitful abundance descending from heaven and filling our mouths with its sweetness [Deut.26:15]? All that the Lord has promised as an inheritance in the fatness of His Canaan is found upon the lips of Christ's Bride. And truly, the mouth speaks forth that which fills the heart. Church of His delight, may the richness of His milk and honeycomb abide within that this may be the testimony upon our lips.

[12,15]

BG *A garden locked is My sister, My bride,
A spring shut up, a fountain sealed.
A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters,
And streams from Lebanon.*

O may we keep our springs of love ever fresh and undefiled from the contaminating death swirling about in earth's polluted atmosphere [Num.19:15]! See to it that the wells of affectionate refreshment are secured from the noxious fumes of this world! Let us resist intrusion into the sacred chambers of our hearts as stoutly as a

castle's stony bulwark. And may He alone who has the key of David [Rev.3:7] be admitted within its enclosure to imbibe what has been stored up for Him alone, even love's reservoir of crystalline purity.

[13,14]

BG *Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates
With pleasant fruits, fragrant henna with spikenard,
Spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon,
With all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes,
With all the finest spices.*

A variegated bouquet of garden incense wafts their delectable sweetness heavenward. Some emit their scent when dampened with distilling dews. Others radiate their pungent nectar under the excitement of the sun's caressing beams. And then there are those whose perfume is only awakened when pierced and crushed, releasing their sap's sorrowing aroma.

In any and every condition of life, there is afforded the grace of emitting the fragrance of Christ unto God. The greater the variety of flowers and fruits cultivated therein will only adorn and enhance the desirability of the Beloved for His garden of delights. Yes, even sufferings' blooms arise with their own compelling sweetness.

[15]

BG *A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters,
And streams from Lebanon.*

From the lofty realms upon Lebanon's snowcapped slopes of Hermon, descend purity's refreshing and revitalizing streams, saturating the verdant meadows of the plains and springing up in pools of perpetual freshness. So does the life and grace of that living water from the Holy Spirit, ever well up to everlasting life in the soul of Christ's Bride, descending from on high to His thirsty lowlands below.

[16]

B *Awake, O north wind, and come, O south!
Blow upon my garden, that its spices may flow out.
Let my Beloved come to His garden
And eat its choice fruits!*

A calm warming breath from the south wafts its comforting zephyr amidst the fragrant blossomed delights that comprise the Bride's fertile enclosed field. A bouquet of delicious aromas floats alluringly over those secluded walls, being borne aloft by the south wind's gentle messenger. Those spices will permeate the atmosphere of love and compel the Lover of her soul to enter and imbibe what has been stored up for Him there.

But there are two winds that are spoken of here. Though it is the chilling and buffeting gales from icy northern regions that whip and torment the fragile succulents within her private garden, she yet welcomes them. Whatever may be the impelling cause for fragrance to attract her Bridegroom to come and eat of its choice fruits, let it come. Indeed, "the Lord has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm" [Nah.1:3]. Shrink not from the north wind's severe mercy; it only serves to hasten the Beloved's willing steps to flee into His garden of love.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary: He comes in to her and joyously tastes of her delights. But, alas, how self can so soon spoil our communion with Christ! Failing to respond to His loving voice leaves us bereft of His nearness which can only be restored through discipline's stern scourge. Recounting to our souls the perfections of Christ, rekindles holy desires for the spiritual breach to be mended.

[1]

BG *I have come to My garden, My sister, My bride;
I have gathered My myrrh with My spice.
I have eaten My honeycomb and My honey;
I have drunk My wine with My milk.*
HS *Eat, O friends! Drink, yes, drink deeply,
O beloved ones!*

He comes in to her and partakes of the sweetness and delights found in her; myrrh [4:14], honey, wine, and milk [4:10,11]. The Holy Spirit says: "Eat, friends; drink, yes drink abundantly, beloved ones!" May the produce of our hearts be for His pleasure and delight alone as we recline in this Divine affectionate fellowship!

[2]

B *I slept, but my heart is awake. A voice!
My Beloved knocks -*
BG *Open for Me, My sister, My love,
My dove, My perfect one;
For My head is drenched with dew,
My locks with the drops of the night.*

She sleeps, yet is awake. As dull and self-complacent as we may be, as unconscious of the activities of life in the light of day, and however muddled our minds may be with distorted imaginations and unreal dreams during our seasons of lying in the dark, nevertheless, there is an irresistible faculty in the heart of Christ's true Bride that thrills at the sound of His voice and stirs her inward parts with longing, though the feet may yet be tardy in rising to open to the Beloved of her soul.

Are you still sleeping? Arise, the betrayer is at hand [Mt.26:45,46]. Let us not sleep as others do, but let us be alert and sober [I Thess.5:6]. Indeed, the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak [Mt.26:41].

He is outside seeking entrance, knocking to solicit her loving embrace. She here resembles the church of Laodicea; rich, comfortable, needing and desiring nothing in her own self-occupied ease and assessment, thoroughly callously careless of Christ's concerns.

[3]

B *I have taken off my dress, how can I put it on again?
I have washed my feet; how can I defile them?*

O wretched self-occupation! How grievous is the disregard of our Beloved's desire! All loving words of appeal were sucked into the black hole of self's bottomless abyss. Christ had become an inconvenience to her.

Love had burned down to an ash heap of smoldering stinging smoke, refusing to be refueled by her own disdainful hands.

The charge to not awaken or arouse love till it pleases, finds its chilling counterpart in the willful lethargy of a Bride whose love for self was aroused which effectively quenched what many waters cannot. O let us not be deceived! Love does not seek its own [I Cor.13:5]. Seeking one's own interests and not those of Christ Jesus evaporates the well springs of love, leaving only dried cracked cisterns upon the sun baked shifting sands of self.

[4-6]

B My Beloved put His hand by the latch of the door,
And my heart yearned for Him.
I arose to open for my Beloved,
And my hands dripped with myrrh,
my fingers with liquid myrrh on the handles of the lock.
I opened for my Beloved,
But my Beloved had turned away and had gone!
My heart went forth when He spoke.
I sought Him, but I could not find Him;
I called Him, but He gave me no answer.

She who was to Him as a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon [4:15], has become a mocking mirage; no warmth of welcome, no joyful entrance, much less a fond embrace and kiss of love. Grief stricken, He withdraws from the coolness of her unconcern back into the dew drenched darkness, leaving her in silence's solitude.

Tardiness of response to the longing of the Bridegroom is a breach of love itself. O Bride of Christ, let us soberly rehearse and gain instruction from the chilling progression attending all self-willed neglect: Dullness leads to distance, departure, darkness, and discipline.

[7]

B The watchmen who went about the city found me.
They struck me, they wounded me;
The keepers of the walls took my veil away from me.

Can there be a more solemn scene than that of a Bride encountering the watchmen in the dead of night? They are not mild as before [3:3], for when a degree of intimacy has been enjoyed and known, discipline becomes more severe if the heart once again regresses into self-occupation. Wounds to the flesh are inflicted, for it is the flesh that needs rebuke and restoration. Her veil is torn from her as it had become only a vain external show of exclusive devotion which had since waned and vanished. Bruised by His scourge and stripped naked of all pretense, she is exposed to the eye of all in that coldness of estranged love.

[8,9]

B I charge you, O Daughters of Jerusalem,
If you find my Beloved,
That you tell Him that I am lovesick!
C What is your Beloved more than another beloved,
O fairest among women?
What is your Beloved more than another beloved,
That you so charge us?

Do not be deceived. No assistance from others can restore the heart to leaning upon her Beloved. It is she who must arise and pursue and ardently seek. Recourse to others, pure as they may be, in our search for Him whom we have spurned, is worse than vain as it solicits the arm of the flesh to aid the Spirit.

How can those who are not the Bride join her to find a Bridegroom that they do not know? These Daughters of Jerusalem had not even apprehended His supremacy of character in unrivaled distinction among the sons of men. Ignorance of Christ renders us useless, both to ourselves, and to others.

Let our own souls join with her as she recounts the excellence of her Beloved as surpassing that of all others.

[10]

B *My Beloved is white and ruddy,
Outstanding among ten thousand.*

He indeed is white: To behold Him is to encounter purity's perfection incarnate, majestic as the Ancient of Days Himself [Dan.7:9] and exalted in unstained glory [Rev.1:14]. Behold Him, vibrant in health and flushed with that coursing flow of unseen life within [Lev.17:11] that is revealed in the radiant ruddiness of His face!

[11]

B *His head is like the finest gold;
His locks are like clusters of dates, and black as a raven.*

Every contemplation and expression, all desires and decisions proceeding from His fitly proportioned head, radiate with gold's untarnished Divine glory. And His locks remain sweetly full and black as midnight with no evidence of graying decline; abiding unchanged yesterday, today, and yea, forevermore.

[12]

B *His eyes are like doves by the rivers of waters,
Bathed in milk and fitly set.*

When bridal eyes are turned towards those of her Beloved's, they appear as bathed with milk. Truly, all of His perceptions are undefiled and clear having passed through the washing of the milk of the Word [I Pet.2:2]. Behold those piercing eyes, fitly set displaying no dimness and penetrating even to the hidden chambers of the heart.

Yet they infiltrate as doves, gentle in compassion and tender in mercy: Yes, so He is to the darling of His bosom. Yet to His enemies who would not have Him reign over them, His eyes flash with a flame of fire which will consume His adversaries [Rev.1:14; Heb.10:27]. May we not shrink from His all-searching gaze, it is only to discern and reveal what is within which He alone is capable of beholding [Ps.139:23,24].

[13]

B *His cheeks are a bed of spices, banks of scented herbs.
His lips are lilies, dripping with liquid myrrh.*

O Bride of Christ, recall to your heart those sweetly scented cheeks that tenderly give expression to His wholly desirable countenance that you might be stirred with longing to behold His face! What will it be when the lips of our Beloved overflowing in suffering love are pressed to His Bride's in the unending embrace of eternal Day?

[14]

B His hands are rods of gold set with beryl;
His abdomen is carved ivory inlaid with sapphires.

All of His skillful works, the uplifting kindness of supporting care, and those gentle caressing intimacies are performed by glorious hands of Divine love. Everything He touches and fashions is done so to the glory of God.

His belly encloses delicate inner parts, bowels of mercy, tenderhearted compassions, and affectionate longing desires. All are preserved in the unwavering solidity of pure ivory's smoothly polished whiteness, laced with the precious treasure of protecting love.

[15,16]

B His legs are pillars of marble
Set on pedestals of fine gold;
His countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.
His mouth is full of sweetness. Yes, He is altogether lovely.
This is my Beloved, and this is my friend,
O Daughters of Jerusalem!

He stands immovable in unshakable stature, never weakening or faltering in His glorious and magnificent stance, even unto eternity's continual timeless Day where He shall stand truly as the Last [Job 19:25]. Every Word proceeding from His mouth is full of sweetly nourishing delight [Deut.8:3; Jer.15:16].

This is the testimony of the Bride concerning her Beloved. Is this how we perceive Him? How will we respond to the inquiry, "What is your Beloved more than another beloved, that you so charge us?" May our own hearts be filled with such a reply.

CHAPTER SIX

Summary: The church must resort once again to feeding in His green pastures which alone can reinstate the soul. Then her Beloved will reunite their bond of love which exalts her far above all who are noble upon earth. Thus favored, no more will she hearken to other voices and be turned aside into a camp separate from the love of Christ.

[1]

*C Where has your Beloved gone, O fairest among women?
Where has your Beloved turned aside,
That we may seek Him with you?*

How can they find Him if they do not search where He may be found? Ignorance of the ways of the Lord will prevent the soul from encountering Him, much less from loving Him. There is a decided difference between moving in concert with the Bride and following her directives and seeking the Bridegroom Himself. Abraham walked with God while Lot merely walked with Abraham, and the Daughters of Jerusalem follow in Lot's steps.

[2,3]

*B My Beloved has gone to His garden,
To the beds of spices, to feed His flock in the gardens
And to gather lilies.
I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine.
He feeds His flock among the lilies.*

It is one thing to know where Christ can be found, it is another to arise, seek, and meet with Him there. O how many there are whose knowledge is not complemented by a corresponding communion! Feeding amidst His lilies is the certain means of encountering Him who delights to restore the soul of His erring flock and set their feet once again in paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

She is the garden [4:12-16 and 5:1] and knows it very well.

[4]

*BG O My love, you are as beautiful as Tirzah,
As lovely as Jerusalem, awesome as an army with banners!*

Despite her tardiness, He looks beyond the momentary breach of her customary endearing devotion and lauds her beauty, as magnificent as Tirzah [Pleasure/Beauty] itself. Truly this is a love that covers a multitude of sins [Prov.10:12] that magnifies His glory in overlooking transgressions [Prov.19:11]. Yes, in His sight she is as gorgeous as beauty itself and as lovely as the tabernacles of His dwelling, the very longing of His heart [Ps.84:1,2].

[5-7]

*BG Turn your eyes away from Me, for they have disturbed Me.
Your hair is like a flock of goats
Going down from Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of sheep*

*Which have come up from the washing;
Every one bears twins, and none is barren among them.
Your temples are like a slice of pomegranate behind your veil.*

Though commended for her unrivaled beauty, nothing is satisfyingly delightful and comely when self interest casts its grey shadows upon the heart. She is not castigated by Him as wayward and wanton, nor rejected as reprobate and disgusting, yet a breach has surely taken place between her soul and that of Christ.

She has not lost her moral excellence, for her hair, her glory [I Cor.11:15], is yet noted with admiration. Her teeth are still strong and white to feed upon the food of life. The temples of her meditative and fruitful reflections are lauded for their constancy.

But what has interrupted her communion and overcome the Beloved with alarm and confusion, was her clouded vision that had lost its focus. Her eye was no more single; that lamp had dwindled to a dim glow so that devotion's light no longer flooded the recesses of her soul. When we lose love's perspective, estrangement must necessarily enter. Correspondingly, her beauty had become tarnished and greatly diminished in His estimation due to the intrusion of self-occupation. Though she is approved in measure, it is not as in the adoring adulation expressed in 4:3-5.

Here He cannot now extol those lips that once yearned for the kisses of His mouth. Neither can He praise her graceful neck that had since turned aside her gaze from beholding the face of her Beloved. And certainly those breasts of His delight that had coolly waned in affection do not even merit His notice.

○ Bride of the Lamb, guard against the soul's decline in devotion by the subtle, though real, shifting of focus prompted by self-interest. Though you will not be cast away as a worthless stranger, but all of life's activities will sink down to the low level of the tedious and tasteless. A grieved Christ is a terrible burden to be born in the bosom of the desirable Bride of His espousals.

[8,9]

BG *There are sixty queens and eighty concubines,
And virgins without number.
My dove, My perfect one, is the only one,
She is the only one of her mother,
The choice one of her who bore her.
The daughters saw her and called her blessed,
The queens and concubines, and they praised her.*

Whether they may be Queens, concubines, or virgins, she admits of no rivals. The Bride stands alone as peerless among the most exalted, most intimate, and purified maidens of earth. All are in agreement; she is blessed by the daughters and praised by queens and concubines alike.

The Bride is the unique child of that true Sarah, the Jerusalem above, who is mother to all of her offspring who are born by grace [Gal.4:26].

[10]

C *Who is this that looks down like the dawn,
As beautiful as the moon, clear as the sun,
As awesome as an army with banners?*

Once again, the Daughters of Jerusalem display their superficial acquaintance, not only of the Bridegroom [5:9], but even of the Bride herself. The things of the light, a dawn's new day, a moon's shimmering illumination, and the full orb'd blazing Sun of Righteousness, they do not yet comprehend. A distant association renders the soul incapable of beholding what the Beloved sees in the pleasant Bride of His espousals.

[11,12]

B *I went down to the garden of nut trees
To see the fruits of the valley,*

*To see whether the vine had budded
And the pomegranates had bloomed.
Before I was even aware, my soul set me
Upon the chariots of my noble people.*

Seeking fruitfulness with diligent concern gains a victory as awesome as a bannered army. Unconsciously, without recognition of self, or by comparison with others, and apart from ambition, the fruitful soul is launched into the highest sphere of renown. Truly, humility and self-forgetfulness are the lowly paths to exaltation.

It is then that He recounts in chapter seven, the fullest and most rapturous rehearsal of her magnificence and of His delight in this most excellent among the maidens.

[13]

C *Return, return, O Shulammité;
Return, return, that we may look upon you!*
BG *What would you see in the Shulammité -
as it were, the dance of two companies?*

She no more has ears for distractions and demands of others. Forevermore only One voice will she heed, only one sweet note will impel her feet.

Will she enjoy a dance apart from her Beloved? Can she endure being parted from His graceful arms that guide her in love's embrace to the delights of a perfect oneness? Never again shall she turn aside from His voice, His desire, His love to the uttermost.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Summary: It is then that the church is unveiled in all her glory at the time of consummation and ecstasy of Christ's heart to which she eagerly yields with wholehearted abandon.

Here there is no mention of the lips; the kiss was but an introduction to what is now before Him. Teeth are not noted, as the time of feeding upon His Word has already sufficed to develop her into the darling of His heart's desire. Those temples of fruitful understanding have contributed their portion in maturing love's fullness and are therefore not now the focus of His pleasure.

The time of the consummation with its ravishing delights has arrived and she is unveiled unadorned before Him. Disrobed of all external allurements, she herself is ravishing in her own unrivaled beauty kept apart for Him alone.

What could possibly be added to her comeliness by perfumed allurements, embroidered gilded garments, or dangling gems on costly chains [4:9-11]? It is the inner preciousness of fully proportioned character and exclusive devotedness in love's fervency that enraptures His heart.

[1]

BG *How beautiful are your footsteps in sandals,
O prince's daughter!
The curves of your thighs are like jewels,
The work of the hands of a skillful workman.*

O how those once reluctant yet undefiled feet of disinterest in the dreary bedchamber of neglect [5:3] have now become the objects of His delight. How beautiful on the mountains [Isa.52:7] now are her feet which have led her to this climatic union of love's purest pleasure!

What a polarity of contrast with that wayward wench of Israel in whom was found, from the sole of her foot to the crown of her head, nothing but wounds, bruises, and festering sores [Isa.1:5,6]! Christ's Bride, may this sobering comparison impel us to arise with faithful steps [Eph.6:15] to present ourselves with glad abandon into the embrace of Christ.

The Bridegroom beholds in her what none other is privy to; the curves of her thighs like jewels. Uncovered to Christ's eye alone, they are a treasure exposed prepared by His own master craftsmanship unto His good pleasure. Here, unveiled and unashamed, she yields herself unto that enraptured consummation so often longed for.

To her Beloved Groom, disrobed from all external adornments [1:10; 4:9], the Bride presents herself to Him in all her glory, having no spot, blemish, or any such thing [Eph.5:27]. She is wholly His, completely for His satisfaction in an unreserved willing abandon to love's luxuriance.

[2]

BG *Your navel is a rounded goblet;
Which never lacks mixed wine.
Your belly is like a heap of wheat
Fenced about with lilies.*

Her sculptured navel, which once connected her to life's sustaining source during the season of her development, now is a cup of varied delights brimming over in the days of her prime. Life received, nurtured,

and matured, leads to unbounded delights to the Beloved of our souls. There is nothing barren about her beautifully adorned and fruitfully abundant belly. All is fully formed to receive her Beloved and recline in His delight.

[3]

BG *Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle.*

There is no hesitancy remaining within her breast, but rather swiftness in flight to lovingly press her bounteous affections into the bosom of her Beloved [4:5].

[4]

BG *Your neck is like a tower of ivory,
Your eyes like the pools in Heshbon
By the gate of Bath Rabbim.
Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon
Which looks toward Damascus.*

A pure fortified tower of strength supports every loving thought and all fervent desires with a steadiness of clear perception to remain immovable in love's constancy of devotion to her Beloved.

The untroubled pools of her eyes mirror the azure expanse of heavenly realms, reflecting the things above. Though a multitude of daughters traverse to and from through Bath Rabbim's gate [Daughter of a multitude], she remains placid, unmoved by the restless masses whose own reflective waters are scattered by wind-swept considerations below.

And O how that elegantly proportioned nose breathes in the atmosphere of Lebanon's heights of purity and fragrance, refusing to be choked with the dust and smoke along the concourse of man's city here below! Here for the first time is she described thus.

No more is she to be found wandering through the darkness of the habitation of men and under discipline's rod. She has now joined Him on the peaks of heavenly breezes, now as a tower of strength. None can assail her to be dragged captive from there to descend to the polluted air of earth.

[5,6]

BG *Your head crowns you like Carmel,
And the flowing locks of your head are like purple threads;
The King is captivated by your tresses.*

The magnificence of her beautifully formed head is recounted here for the first time. Not merely the glory of her hair as in 4:1, but praised are now all of her faculties of perception. She hears His voice, breathes His air, sees His face, and tastes of His sweetness. Such comeliness is truly a crown of glory that captivates the heart of the Beloved with amorous affection.

Once lowly in descent from Gilead's hill of witness [4:1], those flowing locks have now ascended to become a captivating purple royalty; truly a crowning renown of queenly delight, having been patiently cultivated in Carmel's [Fruitful field].

Surely the woman is the glory of the man [I Cor.11:7] and her hair her crowing magnificence [I Cor.11:15]. And so her glorious and excellent character, grown into full and flowing tresses, has exalted her as the honorable crown to His head [Prov.12:4].

[7,8]

BG *Your stature is like a palm tree,
And your breasts like its clusters.
I said, "I will climb the palm tree,
I will take hold of its fruit."*

*Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine,
The fragrance of your breath like apples,*

Behold her beauty, graceful as the towering palm, upright and embracing the skies [Jer.10:5]. No dwarfed and withering fruits are to be found in her; No, not at all. She flourishes in bounteous fruitfulness in the courts of the Lord; ever bearing, full of sap and spiritual vitality [Ps.92:12-14]. And this is not all, she is all glorious within having a multiplied testimony of fruitful uprightness within the temple of Solomon himself [I K.6:29-35].

Can He resist a union with such a devoted darling of His delights? Will He not rather ascend and partake in purity's satisfaction of all that she has reserved for Him alone in the glad day of eternity's consummation? O who can describe the rapture of the wedding of the Lamb when the Bride has made herself ready through love's ever increasing affectionate longing?

[9]

BG *and the roof of your mouth like the best wine.
B* *it goes down smoothly for my Beloved,
Flowing gently through the lips of those who fall asleep.*

Here is love's completed union; resting in a consummated embrace with a mutual exchange of devoted delights. His love that exceeds all earthly joys [1:2] flows gently into her willing awaiting lips. While her own, the best that earth affords, passes tenderly into His satisfied mouth in a gladdened interchange of love.

[10]

B *I am my Beloved's and His desire is for me.*

John's terse confession, "He must increase but I must decrease" [Jn.3:30], here finds its culmination in the Bride's adoring utterance that she has become the exclusive object of His loving pleasure. The Beloved, His thoughts and satisfying His good pleasure, is now her chief and exclusive delight. Self is forgotten in a cup of love running over that has gladly acquiesced not to seek its own.

[11-13]

B *Come, my Beloved, let us go forth to the field;
Let us spend the night in the villages.
Let us rise up early to go to the vineyards;
Let us see if the vine has budded
And if its blossoms are open,
And whether the pomegranates are in bloom.
There I will give You my love.
The mandrakes have given forth fragrance,
And at our gates are all pleasant fruits, both new and old,
Which I have laid up for You, my Beloved.*

Fruit is both new and old. The old doesn't spoil while the new always brings forth fresh varieties unto His increasing delight. The old abides in an accumulated storehouse of sweetness as ever abounding varieties are added to their bounty. O to be full of what delights the heart of Christ!

CHAPTER EIGHT

Summary: Supported and embraced in love's purest expression, Christ and His church abide in the unmolested union of love's enduring bond. The church has fully developed in affectionate devotion and ever moves in concert with Christ in heavenly realms, even forevermore.

[1-3]

B *Oh that You were like a brother to me
Who nursed at my mother's breasts!
If I found You outside, I would kiss You;
I would not be despised.
I would lead You and bring You into the house of my mother,
She who used to instruct me.
I would cause You to drink of spiced wine,
Of the juice of my pomegranates.
His left hand is under my head
And His right hand embraces me.*

Oneness in life from that identical womb of the heavenly Jerusalem [Gal.4:26] leads to a bold and unashamed display of the worthiness and desirability of so excellent a Bridegroom. Her love had expanded to a pure and all-consuming passion; I found, I kiss, I lead, and I will give.

Profoundly, all that He had been and done to her, she now reciprocates and is to Him. He had found her, kissed her upon the mouth, led her upon mountain heights, and ascended the palm of His desire and partaken of her fruit. This is the grand and glorious climax of the maturation of love's enlargement; that she would be like Him in the abundance of overflowing love.

And shall He be willing to so be found and led to partake of her spiced delights? Yes, behold Him there with left hand resting under her head while enfolding her in His enamored caress.

[4]

BG *I charge you, O Daughters of Jerusalem,
Do not arouse or awaken love until it pleases.*

Truly, love has been pleased to be aroused to this pinnacle of prolific increase [2:7].

[5]

C *Who is this coming up from the wilderness,
Leaning upon her Beloved?
BG I awakened you under the apple tree.
There your mother brought you forth;
There she who bore you brought you forth.*

See her now swiftly moving on love's heights, leaning for support, ardently embraced, and cherished by Her Beloved.

It is the Lord's doing to awaken the heart under the apple tree [2:3]. It is there that we first glimpse Christ as the desirable fruit; One in whose shade the soul can recline in full satisfaction. To be awakened is to be born and brought forth in life.

[6]

B *Set me like a seal upon Your heart,
As a seal upon Your arm;
For love is as strong as death,
Jealousy as cruel as the grave,
Its flames are flames of fire,
A most vehement flame.*

The love of Christ is as permanent as death. His righteous jealousy will countenance no rivals, share no affection. Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus the Lord. Truly we love because He first loved us.

Fasten this seal upon Your heart, my Beloved, as a pledge of unbroken fidelity, both in fervent devoted affection and by way of strongly supporting Your every move in might and, as well, in those gracious acts of kindness. Jealousy is indeed a flaming fire to guard the soul from being seduced from the simplicity that is in Christ [2 Cor.12:1-3].

[7]

B *Many waters cannot quench love,
Nor can the floods overflow it;
If a man were to give all the riches of his house for love,
It would be utterly despised.*

No raging squalls and assaulting tempests can overpower love and quench its tenacious flame. The external raging of the world's buffeting pressures cannot cancel that which has not arisen from below but has descended from heaven's purest heights into the devoted soul.

What God has implanted neither height nor depth nor any other created thing can separate from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord [Rom.8:39]. Can such love be obtained by treasures of earth? Is there something that may be exchanged in order to experience this love? Only prostitutes enter into such despicable arrangements; a chaste Bride, never.

[8-10]

BG and B *We have a little sister, and she has no breasts.
What shall we do for our sister
In the day when she is spoken for?
If she is a wall, we will build upon her towers of silver;
And if she is a door, we will enclose her
With boards of cedar.
B *I am a wall, and my breasts are like towers;
Then I became in His eyes like one who finds peace.**

Walls are protected by towers of silver. It is these varied watch posts of devoted affection that prevent any successful barrage against the walled stronghold of truth's defense of the heart. It is the wall that forms the line of separation from what is outside from that which is within [Ezek.42:20].

A wall consists of individual stones, tightly fitted in orderly fashion and joined according to a master plan which rises upward from a sure foundation. Thus the individual truths of God's Word must be placed one upon another according to His mind before defense and separation are secured.

She is a wall and her breasts are like towers. The Word treasured guards against sin [Ps.119:11]. Delight in wisdom ensures possession [Prov.2:1-11]. The Word eaten leads to joy [Jer.15:16]. Indeed, without breasts formed, she is accursed [I Cor.16:22]. Only with breasts like towers will we find peace in His sight.

[11,12]

B *Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon;
He leased the vineyard to caretakers;
Everyone was to bring for its fruit a thousand shekels of silver.
My own vineyard is before me.
The thousand shekels are for You, O Solomon,
And two hundred for those who tend its fruit.*

O what a startling contrast there is when considering the vineyard of the Well-Beloved in Isa.5:1-7 with her prolific harvest in these verses! Hear the heart rending cries of the Lord Himself recorded by Isaiah, "What more could have been done for My vineyard that I have not done? How then does it bear wild bitter grapes, a worthless yield from all the labor of love bestowed?"

An adulteress will wantonly produce nothing for the pleasure of the Divine Husbandman. Not so the true Bride of His espousals. The fullness of Solomon's fruitful harvest has become hers in like measure [Jn.1:16; Eph.1:23; 3:16; 4:14; 5:18], whose thousand vines yield to its full increase and in no way cursed with briars and thorns [Isa.7:23].

[13,14]

BG *You who dwell in the gardens,
The Companions listen for your voice -
Let Me hear it!*
B *Make haste, my Beloved,
And be like a gazelle or a young stag
On the mountains of spices!*

The call and the wishes expressed by other voices no longer distract her. She is now fully one with Him in His desire and joins Him leaping upon the heights; yea, she is eager to move with Him, no more for Him to turn to her on the Mt. of Division [2:17]. Now nothing can part her from that blissful union and deepest communion that only love can afford.

The end of love's advances is to know Christ fully even as we have been fully known. It is a fullness of knowledge - intimately experienced, no more by sight alone, nor by the hearing of the ear, but in a holy union and entire ecstasy of ardent desire and enraptured embrace, even as Adam knew his wife [Gen.4:1].

He knew Eve, no more as a companion, a helper, admired and desired, but as known fully in that most sacred and intimate of all relations, in the endearing yielded willingness in the act of love that is stronger than death. It is this knowledge that surpasses all knowledge that the Lord Jesus is preparing His blessed Bride to experience in His boundless love throughout the countless ages of eternal day.

And for this, the Bride must make herself ready.
Lovest thou Me?

GLOSSARY

Often in the Scriptures, people, places, and things are utilized by the Spirit of God to illustrate spiritual truths. They become symbolic as a type of abbreviated parable. Some of these are quite obvious to us, such as, Light picturing righteousness and illumination while Darkness portrays sin and ignorance. Others may not be as readily discerned.

The following are the main figurative images employed in Solomon's Song.

Breasts - Affectionate devotion [Prov.5:19]

Bride - The church [Eph.5:23,25; 2 Cor.11:2]

Bridegroom - The Lord Jesus [Jn.3:29; Eph.5:23,25]

Does - See **Hinds**

Eyes - Clarity of singleness of devotion [Mt.6:22,23]

Fragrance - The pleasing perfection of Christ [Eph.5:2; 2 Cor.2:14]

Fruit - Sweetness of godly character [Eph.5:9; Gal.5:22,23]

Gazelle - Swiftness [2 Sam.2:18]

Gold - The glory of God [Job 22:25; Rev.21:11,18]

Hair - Glory [1 Cor.11:15]

Hart - Fervent longing [Ps.42:1]

Hinds - Skillful movement in the things above [Ps.18:33]

Incense - See **Fragrance**

Milk and Honey - Fullness of blessing [Deut.26:15]

Mountains - Heavenly things above [Eph.1:3; Col.3:1-3]

Oil - Holy Spirit [1 Jn.2:27; Zech.4:6]

Pasture - The Word of God [Jer.3:15]

Perfume See **Fragrance**

Pomegranate - A red skinned fruit full of hundreds of clear blood-red juicy seeds portraying Abundant fruitfulness

Purple - Royalty [Esth.8:10]

Roes - See **Hinds**

Shepherd - Christ [Jn.10:14; Heb.13:20]

Silver - Redemption price [Ex.30:11-16]

Spikenard - Fragrance of a precious devoted love [Jn.12:3]

Spring of Water - Refreshing life from God [Jn.4:14]

Stag - See **Hart**

Veil - Exclusive devotion [Gen.24:65; 1 Cor.11:6,10]

Vineyard - Fruitfulness in Christ [Jn.15:5]

Wall - Separation [Ezek.22:30; 42:20]

Wine - Joy [Judg.9:13]

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