

Notes on
**Song of
Solomon**

by Anton Frey



The Song of Songs which is Solomon's

FOREWORD

These notes on the Song of Solomon – the result of considerable research – are purposely oriented toward what we are sometimes prone to call, “the Harvest Message,” as it was proclaimed by that “wise and faithful servant” (Matt. 24:45), the Laodicean Messenger (Rev. 3:14), Bro. Chas. T. Russell. We found, however, that he had written very little on the Song of Solomon; and we wondered, “Why?” It seems to us now, that it was because of the fact that the period subsequent to the 1914/1915 date, is by way of inspiration, reflected therein! It will be recalled that for some time, based on certain parallels, it had been expected that not only would the “Times of the Gentiles” end then, but that the Church would be glorified at the same time. But, before that date had fully arrived, Bro. Russell already saw that while the Gentile times would then end, it would not also be the time for the glorification of the Church. (See *R5449:2,4*) What he did not know was that the Church would be here for a considerably longer period than he had anticipated. This period, we believe, is by way of inspiration, reflected in the Song! The disappointment served its purpose, for it “weeded out” some; but the true Church, the “espoused virgin” class, did not become alarmed, since it was evident that the heavenly Bridegroom was not disturbed; for it seemed that He felt it was more important, at this time, to make His “fairest among women,” His bride, the Lamb’s Wife! (Compare Cant. 2:8, 9, 17, with Cant. 4:8)

And, while it is true that for the elect’s sake “those days should be shortened” (Matt. 24:22), this will not be at the expense of the “espoused virgin” class, that is still endeavoring to make their “calling and election sure.” (2 Pet. 1:10) Surely, we are thankful for this seeming extension of time. Let us strive, dear friends, to make the very most of it!

Anton C. Frey

THE SONG OF SOLOMON

CHAPTER 1

1. The song of songs, which is Solomon's.
2. Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth; for thy love is better than wine.
3. Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth, therefore do the virgins love thee.
4. Draw me, we will run after thee: the king hath brought me unto his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.
5. I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon.
6. Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me; my mother's children were angry with me: they made me the keeper of the vineyards: but mine own vineyard have I not kept.
7. Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?
8. If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy ways forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.
9. I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.
10. Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold.
11. We will make thee borders of gold and studs of silver.
12. While the king sitteth at his table my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.
13. A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me: he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.
14. My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi.
15. Behold thou art fair; my love; behold thou art fair: thou hast doves' eyes.
16. Behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed is green.
17. The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir.

CHAPTER 2

1. I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.
2. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.
3. As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.
4. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.
5. Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love.
6. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.
7. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.
8. The voice of my beloved! Behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills.
9. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice.
10. My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.
11. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.
12. 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;
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for the vines have tender grapes.
16. My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies.
17. 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.

CHAPTER 3

1. By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not.
2. I will rise now, and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth: I sought him but I found him not.
3. The watchmen that go about the city found me: to whom I said, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?
4. It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: 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.
5. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.
6. Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?
7. Behold his bed, which is Solomon's; threescore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Israel.
8. They all hold swords, being expert in war: every man hath his sword upon his thigh because of fear in the night.
9. King Solomon made himself a chariot of the wood of Lebanon.
10. He made the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the midst thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.
11. 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.

CHAPTER 4

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Thy neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.
5. Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.

6. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.
7. Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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!
11. 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.
12. A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.
13. Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard.
14. Spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices;
15. A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.
16. Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

CHAPTER 5

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?
4. My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him.
5. I rose up to open to my beloved; and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock.
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.

7. 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.
8. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love.
9. What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? what is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?
10. My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.
11. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven.
12. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set.
13. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.
14. His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl: his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires.
15. His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.
16. His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 6

1. Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seek him with thee.
2. My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.
3. I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.
4. Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.
5. Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thy hair is as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.
6. Thy teeth are as a flock of sheep which go up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them.
7. As a piece of pomegranate are thy temples within thy locks.
8. There are threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number.
9. 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. The daughters saw her, and blessed her;

yea, the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.

10. Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?
11. I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded.
12. Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Ammi-nadib.
13. 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.

CHAPTER 7

1. How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hand of a cunning workman.
2. Thy navel is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor: thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies.
3. Thy two breasts are like two young roes that are twins.
4. Thy neck is as a tower of ivory; thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim: thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon which looketh toward Damascus.
5. Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple: the king is held in the galleries.
6. How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!
7. This thy stature is like to a palm tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.
8. I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples;
9. 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.
10. I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me.
11. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages.
12. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranate bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.
13. The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

CHAPTER 8

1. O that thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! when I should find thee without, I would kiss thee; yea: I should not be despised.
2. 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.
3. His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me.
4. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: what shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?
9. 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.
10. I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.
11. Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; he let out the vineyard unto keepers; every one for the fruit thereof was to bring a thousand pieces of silver.
12. My vineyard, which is mine, is before me: thou O Solomon, must have a thousand, and those that keep the fruit thereof two hundred.
13. Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it.
14. Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.

A WORD WITH REGARD TO THE USE OF SYMBOLS

In order to relate the SONG OF SOLOMON to the love-life of our Lord, it becomes necessary to use symbols. Yet the use of any object as a symbol *does not involve its relationship to anything, or everything, else*. A circle may be used to symbolize “endlessness”— eternity: yet this does not necessarily involve the fact that in a circle every point of it is equidistant from its center; nor that there are 360 degrees in a circle. These facts are *not relevant* to the purpose.

Blue is a color often used to symbolize faithfulness; yet its use as a symbol does not involve the fact that it can be the blue of the sky, the blue of the ocean, or the blue of a piece of material.

In the SONG OF SOLOMON, we have used the female breasts to symbolize an outgoing love – from one life into that of another. This does not involve the fact that only a nursing mother (married, or otherwise), can have milk-giving breasts! Not even the fact that the female breasts may be used to symbolize femininity, or beauty, is relevant here. In our symbolism, we are concerned only with this specific purpose, for which the female breasts were intended by the Creator. All else, is here, irrelevant! Let it be noted how the Apostle Paul uses the symbol, for he, who spoke of the Church of this Gospel age as an “espoused virgin” (2 Cor. 11:2), also declared that he (a member of this virgin class) had been a “nursing mother” to those of Thessalonika. (1 Thes. 2:7 – *Way’s Translation; An American Translation*).

Anton C. Frey

NOTES ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON

1:1 – Many and varied indeed, have been the interpretations of this most beautiful of poems – here called a song of Solomon's. Solomon has been rightly accredited with having written many songs (1 Kings 4:32), but this, by a general consensus of opinion, is regarded as the greatest – in fact, it is called "The Song of Songs."

Nor need it be assumed that this song depicts the love-life of Solomon himself, though it has been suggested that it is "the love-story, or love-song of the gifted and glorious King of Israel, in the days of his purity when his heart was true to a single bride," and that this bride was none other than that Shunammite who comforted David in his declining days. (1 Kings 1:1-15) We are inclined, however, to think that this "song" was given to Solomon by inspiration, to depict that ideal love-life which was one day to subsist between Christ Jesus (the heavenly bridegroom) and the Church (the "espoused virgin" – the called-to-be, bride, the Lamb's wife)!

The setting is, of course, oriental; and the figures used are very strong, and –

"To one who sees only the surface meanings, it appears to be a setting forth of earthly love, expressed in a too florid and oriental style. When the real significance of the Song of Solomon is revealed to the heart, however, all such questions fade away, leaving only those that are spiritual ..." (*Christ and His Bride*, MacIlravy.)

The Apostle Paul seems to have caught a glimpse of this most exquisite figure when he endeavored to portray it by way of the earthly affections. He spoke

"...of the love of the husband and the wife he lifts our thoughts above the earthly type to our deeper union with the Lord, and with a depth and vividness of meaning that can scarcely be expressed in words and can only be understood by the heart that lies on the bosom of its Lord he says, 'This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church ...'" (*The Love-Life of the Lord* – Simpson)

While there is romance here, involving as it does a man and a woman, it is not intended to be erotic! If we can but imagine such a love as subsisted between Father Adam and Mother Eve in their original creation, wherein even their nakedness was but the symbol of purity – the state in which they both came from the hand of God – I think we can come quite close to the ideal set forth in this "Song." The "handsomeness" of Adam in his physical stature, and the exquisitely beautiful "form" of Eve, we may accept as having been intended to reflect, figuratively, i.e., spiritually speaking – that which must of needs be found in Christ Jesus, the heavenly bride-

groom-to-be; and His "espoused virgin" – the Church, called to be his bride! In this "love-song" she tells of what she sees in Him, that makes Him so adorable to her; and He tells of what in His pure eyes He sees so exquisitely beautiful in her! and which makes Him so desirous of making her His bride – His wife!

1:2 – Evidently taken to task by the daughters of Jerusalem (professed Christians), for the depth of her consecration, and her hanging-on to His every word, she (the espoused virgin – the Church) while even in His (the heavenly bridegroom-to-be's) presence, answers them with a "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth" (those most intimate and blessed assurances of His personal love for her); then turning toward Him she adds, "For thy love (as evidenced in the precious promises and overruling providences) is better than wine" (such doctrines as are intended to make glad the heart of man – Psalms 104:15). The present relationship (identification) with Jesus surely affords the true saint of God much more real joy and heart-happiness, than the mere understanding of the doctrines, which later, nevertheless, afford an intellectual appreciation of things divine.

1:3 – She continues, still addressing Him, "Because of the savor of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth." There is something here which causes us to think of the anointing of Israel's ancient High Priest, Aaron. (Psalms 133:2) The holy anointing oil with which he was anointed, consisted of olive oil, in which there were suspended four fragrant spices – myrrh, sweet cinnamon, calamus and cassia. (Exodus 30:23-25) Of course, Aaron was a type of our blessed Lord Christ Jesus, who in due course was anointed with the antitypical anointing oil, the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16; Luke 3:22; Acts 10:38; Hebrews 1:9) and in which "holy anointing oil" there were also suspended the "spicy ingredients." And, as Aaron's anointing upon his head extended also to his garments (Psalms 133:2), making both redolent with the fragrance of his spices; so too, Jesus' anointing of the Holy Spirit extended beyond his immediate person to his very garments, by way of which others might breathe in, as it were, His healing virtues. (Matthew 9:20-23; 14:36; Mark 5:30; Luke 6:19) It is interesting to note how closely the "antitypical ingredients" correspond to those of the original anointing oil; for example

myrrh – corresponding to Jesus' consecration of himself to the heavenly Father's will. Myrrh is very bitter to the taste, but yields a sweet fragrance to the smell. So Jesus' consecration may at times have been very hard on his flesh (perfect though it was); yet it was for this very reason that his consecration was a "sweet savor" unto his Lord.

cinnamon – corresponds to Jesus’ faithfulness and loyalty to his heavenly Father. (John 8:29) Cinnamon comes from the bark of an evergreen tree – a member of the laurel family. Since evergreens do not go through the cycles of change each and every season as do other trees, they become a most apt symbolism for constancy!

calamus – corresponds to the long-suffering kindness of Jesus. He had a love that could suffer long and still remain kind. Calamus comes from a reed plant which perfumes even the instrument used to cut or bruise it. Concerning Jesus we read: “when he was reviled, he reviled not again...” (1 Pet. 2:23), but rather blessed. (Matt. 5:44)

cassia – corresponds to Jesus’ self-denials in the interests of others. Cassia is both an unguent and a perfume. An unguent is used to allay pain from burns, sores, etc.; and surely, Jesus, at the cost of his own vitality (virtue) often healed, i.e., allayed the pain and “sores” occasioned by sin! As a perfume, cassia was often used at funerals to cover up the foul odors produced by the decomposition of dead bodies. Jesus too, like unto his Father, wherever he found it possible, would see the good rather than the evil in those with whom he came in contact. Jehovah God refused to see the iniquity and perverseness in Israel of old, when Balak sought to have them cursed. (Num. 23:21) And Jesus made no pharisaical tirade against the woman taken in adultery. (John 8:3-11; see also *R3434:4*) This was the “cassia” ingredient of Jesus’ anointing!

“The thought of ointments and fragrant spices and sweet odors suggests...reminds us that the sense of smell has its spiritual counterpart as well as the other senses. There are characteristics of Christ which can only be appreciated in this way; they are not to be discerned by seeing or hearing or feeling or tasting, but by scent. This is a distinct quality of spiritual apprehension clearly recognized in Scriptures.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 9).

Rotherham renders Isa. 11:3, as follows: “So will he (Jesus) find fragrance in the reverence of Yahweh; and not by sight of his eyes will he judge; nor by the hearing of his ears will he decide.”

The anointing of the holy Spirit which came upon Jesus, made him then and there CHRIST JESUS, for Christ means anointed. It is no wonder then that the espoused virgin, the bride-to-be, declares that the

“fragrance” is identified with his very name; and that, “therefore do the virgins (the pure in heart) love thee.” That is, they appreciate his holy spirit of dedication to his heavenly Father’s will.

“The virgins’ are marked by capacity to discern the precious fragrance of Christ, and it causes them to love Him. It is hearts uncorrupted by the world whose affections are awakened and moved in this way; they can scent the sweetness and fragrance of the Beloved. Mary of Bethany had scented it, and it called forth in response the devotion expressed by her costly ointment being put upon his feet. It indicated her appreciation of His ointments, and the love awakened by them in her heart. The greatness of the person of Christ, the holy fragrance of His Name, is perceived by a capacity given of God, but which is found as ‘chaste virgin’ conditions are maintained...” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 10)

1:4 – Thus, by these fragrances of His anointing, has she been drawn to Him; but this is not enough to satisfy her soul hunger for the more intimate fellowship with Him; therefore does she cry, “Draw me (‘still closer’)!” nor is this the cry of but a single saint of God; no! It is that of every one of the pure in heart, so she adds, “we will run (follow) after thee.” While there is a sense in which He is *always* with her (Matt. 28:20); He is also her “forerunner” into the “Most Holy” where He went to prepare, as it were, a place for her! (John 14:2)

However, He, as King, did bring her into his chambers; and so she declares, seemingly to the daughters of Jerusalem (professed Christians): “the King hath brought me into His chambers (the ‘Holy’ – the spirit-begotten condition).” Then again speaking for all of the pure in heart (the espoused virgin class), she says to Him, “We will be glad and rejoice in thee” (Psa. 32:11); “we” (the Church throughout the whole Gospel age) “will remember thy love.” And He did prove that love for her when he gave His life for her on Calvary’s tree. (Eph. 5:25) “We will remember Thy love more than wine: the upright love Thee.” “Wine” is here symbolic of doctrines. The knowledge of the doctrinal features of God’s plan, can through a stimulation of the intellect, induce a certain degree of gladness (Psa. 104:15), yet this can never compare with the exquisite joys of that intimate fellowship with Him, in which He reveals Himself to us by way of the “kisses of His mouth.” (Cant. 1:2)

The enjoyment of this intimate love comes to us sometimes, when after faithfulness and loyalty to our heavenly Bridegroom-to-be, we are misunderstood, berated, evilly spoken of, and even despised by those of whom we might have expected nobler things. And because we still sojourn in the flesh, we feel the “hurt.” How sweet, at such times is the assurance that comes to us of his ever-abiding love as evidenced in the overruling

of some particular earthly experience on our behalf; or the kindly word of comfort, cheer, or commendation from some humble soul who in the contemplation of our faithfulness, has himself been blessed!

It is in this way that our Beloved puts his left hand, as it were, under our head and embraces us with his right hand (Cant. 8:3), giving us at the same time “the kisses of his mouth.” (Cant. 1:2) How can we help but love Him, whose love for his espoused virgin is so sweet and pure!

1:5, 6 – But the daughters of Jerusalem (professed Christians) look at her askance, as if wondering at her presumptiveness! Addressing them she says, “I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not so upon me (*Leeser*), because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me; my mother’s children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.”

Though she is meek and lowly, ever recognizing her own unworthiness of grace and favor, the daughters of Jerusalem (nominal Christendom) think she is presumptuous for even thinking that she could become the Bride of the King. She admits, “I am black. I have not made myself this way; but heavenly disciplining has; and whether you will believe it or not, there is a comeliness about me, which comeliness it is evident, my Beloved appreciates. If you will have it, or will see it, there is a beauty in this combination ‘black’ as the tents of Kedar, and ‘comely’ as the curtains of Solomon.”

Kedar was the son of Ishmael (Gen. 25:13), and may thus stand for the Ishmaelites or Bedouins, who to this day (we understand) live in tents made of black goat-hair.

However, the reference to the “curtains of Solomon” we do not think meant either the Veil which in Solomon’s Temple separated the Holy from the Most Holy; nor to any curtains which may have graced his palace! We are inclined to think that what she really had in mind was the curtains of the ancient Tabernacle (Exod. 26:1, 14); and which Tabernacle was the forerunner of Solomon’s Temple. The ancient Tabernacle was made of curtains, whereas the Temple was made of quarried stones and cedar wood. (1 Kings 6:7, 9)

That ancient Tabernacle, while it was the dwelling place of Jehovah God, was also the place from whence the High Priest Aaron, in his garments of typical “glory and beauty” with the crown of gold upon his head, emerged at the end of the Day of Atonement to bless his people with peace. But Aaron, in these regal garments was, in a sense a type of the greater Solomon, who in due time will emerge from the great antitypical Tabernacle to bless all the families of the earth, as the Melchizedek priest, “first by interpretation King of righteousness, and *after that also* King of Salem, which is King of Peace.” (Heb. 7:2)

Let it be remembered that the ancient Tabernacle was covered with curtains, the outermost of which being dark of “unsightly” seals’ skins; while the innermost curtain was of beautiful white linen and interwoven threads of blue, purple, and scarlet. Thus, like the curtains of the Tabernacle the Bride-to-be, though outwardly “black” (of a mean appearance), was within “comely” – glorious (Psa. 45:13); and, as was the Tabernacle of old the temporary abode of Jehovah God, so too is she (while still tabernacling in the flesh) the dwelling place of God. (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16)

“...‘My mother’s children were angry with me’ brings out another character of exercise through which the spouse has had to pass, and this is specially painful as being on the part of her kindred. It is surprising in one way, but it is true, that the desire to be near the Lord, and to enjoy His love, often calls forth bitter feeling on the part of true believers. No heresy has been more spoken against than a practical desire on the part of the saints to be in separation to the Lord.

“Persons may pass from one sect to another without much feeling being aroused, but if the true affections of the spouse begin to be manifested, and there is a desire to be wholly for the Lord’s pleasure, in separation from all that is not of Himself, her ‘mother’s children’ become angry. They would have her to be occupied in keeping vineyards which yield something to them rather than in keeping her own vineyard wholly for His pleasure. Indeed, almost any manner of so-called Christian work is thought to be more useful and necessary than to keep our own vineyard exclusively for the pleasure of Christ. The separate path and the holy associations that are suitable to the spouse will never commend themselves to the carnal mind. We ought not to expect the approval of the unspiritual, though we should be desirous to have the commendation of the spiritual...” (Coates – *An Outline of The Song of Songs*, page 18)

“She neglected her own vineyard while she tended those of others. Her own was grown over with weeds, while she helped others. There are many like her today – they give their services to others and neglect the nourishment of their own souls. How can you have a basket of firstfruits if you neglect your own vineyard? It is impossible to obtain fruit without labor. Martha was so busy serving others that she did not choose the good part like her sister, Mary. There are some who teach others and do not take time to be taught...” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 67)

1:7 – “It is as one disciplined by faithful love, and conscious, too, of diverting influences at work, that the spouse turns again to the One whom her soul loves. But she turns to Him now in shepherd

character. She recognizes that he has a flock which He feeds, and to which He gives rest, and to be with Him and his flock is her great desire. She does not wish to be roving beside the flocks of His companions. She has not succumbed to the efforts of her mother's children to hinder or divert her, and she now turns to her eternal Lover that He may tell her how to distinguish between His flock and the flocks of His companions. Her heart perceives a more subtle danger. It is not now a question of those who are in manifest opposition to Him, or to her; the flocks are not looked at here as the flocks of bad men, or even of men who are His rivals; they are the flocks of His companions. She has a fine sense of discrimination. Some might feel that to be beside the flocks of His companions was a good place, and quite near enough! How many are content to be beside the flock of some earnest and devoted servant of Christ. That is a good place surely, but it is clearly suggested by the enquiry of the spouse that there is a better place. Her exercise was not to miss the best that was available. For her there is only one flock that is supremely attractive, and that is the flock which He tends and leads and feeds. Do we covet to know the precious reality of a place where He feeds His flock, and makes it to rest? Do we in our hearts know how to contrast that with the flocks of His companions? Or have we thought that they are all really alike, and that there is little or nothing to choose between them? To the heart of the spouse to be roving beside the flocks of His companions would be to miss His company, and His leading and feeding. To her this would be a great loss, and she felt assured that it would be a loss from which His love would shield her. Even His companions may become a distraction from Himself, and, however excellent they may be, they are to be shunned if they detain us from that unique place where He feeds His flock, and makes it to rest.

"...She has a sense of how that place surpasses in excellence the flocks of His companions; she desires to be exclusively for Him, and to be near Him where His direct and personal shepherd care can be known." (Coates – *An Outline of The Song of Songs*, pages 19-21)

1:8 – O how much He appreciates her expressions of love and devotion (the daily testimony of her life; her prayers; the songs and hymns of praise). And, though somewhat chagrined at her inquiry anent the feeding and resting place of His flock (as He was also at Philip's request to be shown the Father – John 14:8, 9), He does not chide her; but in loving kindness, and very tenderly, lets her know what *He* thinks of her (so different from what the daughters of Jerusalem think), "If thou knowest not, O thou fairest among women (church organizations,

etc.)..." Just what is it that makes her the fairest in His eyes? Is it not the love of Him for which she separates herself from all else (mother, father, brother, sister, and even from herself – in self-denial, Matt. 16:24; Luke 14:26); and because on learning what pleases Him and makes Him happy (the doing of His heavenly Father's will – John 8:20), she immediately (without delay) sets about the doing of the same!

Before continuing to tell her what *He* thinks of her, He answers her inquiry, "go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents (under-shepherds' tents)."

"...She is to mark the footsteps of the flock, and follow them. She is not to follow traditions, or men, but in the footsteps of the flock. Those footsteps may be hard to find: but there are those who follow 'righteousness, faith, love, peace, with those that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.' (2 Tim. 2:22) They seek to carry out His authority.

"There are under-shepherds who are real pilgrims and strangers here. You can tell by their tents that they are not earth-dwellers, but men who desire a better country. Peter was a real under-shepherd who fed the lambs of the flock." (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 69)

"So He wants to give us rest, to cover us with His shadow, to make us sit down under it with great delight. But we must sit down if we would know His rest. We must cease from our own activity and we must be willing to go into the shadow, lost to the sight of ourselves, lost to the sight of others, overshadowed by what they might call gloom, or even shadow...the most that we need to do to get rest is simply to rest, to cease from what we are thinking, questioning, planning, fearing, to suppress ourselves, to stop thinking, to stop trying, to stop listening, to stop answering the tempter, to hide our heads on the bosom and to let Him think and love and keep, seeing nothing but the shadow of our Beloved, which hides everything else, even the light of our way, from our view." (Simpson – *The Love-Life of The Lord*, page 34)

"She must hasten on after the flock that follow Him; she must see that every one in her flock of kids is with her in the same path; she must take the same care of the kids, that the under-shepherds take of the larger sheep. She must feed them beside the tents of His faithful shepherds. She must not despise those shepherds who are chosen by Him and are faithful; for they are dear to His heart and suffer many things for his sake." (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 65)

1:9 – He then continues to tell her what she so much likes to hear from His lips, "I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots."

“...The horses of Pharaoh’s chariots were brought out of Egypt (2 Chron. 1:17), and the price Solomon paid for them was one hundred and fifty shekels of silver. They were known all over the world for their beauty and swiftness. They were broken and submissive, ready to serve and do their master’s will. They were under his control and trained to work together. We have been brought out of Egypt (the world), and the price paid for us was not one hundred and fifty shekels of silver, but the precious blood of Christ. Have our wills been broken, so that we are now submissive to Him, intelligent to know His will and ready to do it? We should be under the control of Christ, and striving together for the faith of the Gospel.” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 69)

1:10 – He goes on to say, “Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold.” The words “of jewels” and “of gold” do not appear in the Hebrew text; yet the sense of the passage would be incomplete, thus an interpolation is not unreasonable. *Leeser* renders the passage: “Comely are thy cheeks between strings (of pearls), thy neck with rows (of jewels).”

The cheeks themselves often bespeak the health of the individual; when they are white, ashen or pale, it is indicative of poor health; when rosy, of the flush of good health. Thus the expression “thy cheeks are comely” has the significance that the bride-to-be is not merely beautiful to behold, but that she is also in the glow of spiritual health. This comeliness, however, is enhanced by the “row of jewels” – “the string of pearls.” Perhaps these were earrings. In any event, these are the “gems” of divine truth, which have the tendency to enhance our “appearance” making us really beautiful in His eyes! As for the “chains” – the “rows of jewels” – perhaps this would have reference to such graces as “mercy and truth” which when bound “about thy neck” (Prov. 3:3) will further enhance our beauty.

“...Eastern women enhance their beauty by strings of jewels hanging down upon their cheeks, giving their faces the appearance of being framed in jewels. It is this custom that is here used to describe the bride’s face, ornamented with the attributes and graces of the Lord; for the jewels are symbolic of the comeliness of Christ.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 71)

1:11 – Continuing He says, “We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver.” There is not much unanimity of thought on the part of the translators, with regard to the Hebrew word *tor* here rendered “borders.” The rendering we like best is that of the *Jewish Publication Society* which reads: “We will make thee circlets of gold with studs of silver.” And, if the “we” here means both the heavenly Father and the Son, we may be very sure that the “circlet” they are preparing for the bride-to-be,

will be that crown of which Paul speaks as a “crown of righteousness” (2 Tim. 4:8); and Peter, as a “crown of glory” (1 Pet. 5:4); and Jesus, himself in His last message to the church, calls it “the crown of life” (Rev. 2:10), signifying immortality – the divine nature. (1 Pet. 1:4; 2 Pet. 1:4) The “silver studs” may here signify the fullness of redemption to the “so great salvation” since silver is sometimes the symbolism for redemption!

1:12 – It is again her turn to speak. She says, “While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.” He has already been referred to as a shepherd (Cant. 1:7); though also as King (Cant. 1:4); and the table now spoken of is none other than the one of which David prophetically spoke, as having been prepared for him in the very presence of his enemies. (Psa. 23:5) Here she may, as a sheep of his flock, both feed and rest (Cant. 1:7) without fear of being troubled or molested, in a familiarity which will flood her soul with a joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Pet. 1:8), and a peace that flowing like a river, surpasses all (human) understanding. (Phil. 4:7)

“...As partakers of the Lord’s table we participate in a joy and satisfaction that lies completely outside the whole course of things in the world. The saints are thus unified in mind and affection as having spiritual joys in common, and they are separated by the character of their joys from this present evil world. People who have interests in common, even in the world, delight to come together, and there is no bond there that is comparable to the bond which links together those who are partakers of the Lord’s table.

“But what is prominent in this Scripture is not the wealth of the provision on the King’s table, nor the communion of those who partake of it, but the wonderful Person whose table it is. To see Him in relation to it, as supreme in the administration of divine wealth of blessing, awakens deep appreciation in the hearts of those who love Him...” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 31)

And so it is that she says, “my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof.” Spikenard becomes a beautiful symbolism of the love, adoration and devotion of the espoused virgin for her Beloved. And He, the King, is extremely fond of the fragrance of “spikenard.” Knowing this, she, in love, and with deliberation, causes her “spikenard” to yield its fragrance toward Him; and how very pleased and delighted He is! We cannot help, in this connection, but think of Mary of Bethany again, who on the occasion of one of his visits to her home, broke her alabaster box of precious ointment of spikenard, and anointed the feet of her beloved Jesus; and we are told that the fragrance thereof filled the whole house. (John 12:3)

“...It was the music of His voice, the majesty of His word, that cast its spell over Mary’s soul in that

hallowed hour. She sat at the feet of Him who spoke as never man spake, and the very sound of His voice was enough to ravish her heart. (Cant. 4:9) She could not help but listen with the ear of love. ...She chose her place so that she could *reward the Savior* with rapt attention of a heart that was held by the hush of His voice. She was willing to leave all, that she might learn of Him. Oh to be more like Mary, at Jesus' feet!" (Loan – *Mary of Bethany* – page 34)

"...She did what pleased the Lord; she illustrated the noblest and truest qualities of the feminine heart, love, devotion, fidelity; she spoke by actions rather than by words, and the perfume of her acts of love and kindness and adoration of her Lord have come down through the ages, filling the entire church of Christ with the sweet odor of the perfume she poured upon his head and subsequently upon his feet..." (R3877)

1:13 – She now tells what her Beloved Lord means unto her. "A bundle of myrrh is my well beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts." The female breasts are beautiful. They are soft; and they are tender; and as the poet so well expressed it: "charms meant alone for lover and for child." They are, therefore, a strong symbolism of a most personal and tender, outgoing love! The fact that there are two would seem to suggest two aspects of this love: one, manifesting itself in self-denial (1 Cor. 13:4, 5); the other in the act of cheerful giving unto others. (Prov. 11:12; 2 Cor. 9:7) The espoused virgin reserves this place of a most intimate, personal love, for Him alone – her true Lover! He, of course, enjoys "resting" there so close to her heart, especially during this "nighttime" of His rejection. Yet, He rewards her for this blessed privilege, by breathing out upon her the fragrance of His own dedication and consecration to His heavenly Father's will, here represented by the myrrh!

"...He is so precious to her that she says: 'My Beloved is unto me as a bundle of myrrh that lieth betwixt my breasts...'

"In eastern countries, much is made of costly oils and perfumes. The women use these costly perfumes freely, concealing in their bosoms little bags of aromatic herbs, or a small cruse of aromatic oil, which perfumes their whole person. But it is not such myrrh, aloes or cassia with which the bride's person is perfumed; deep in her heart dwells her Beloved. Christ Jesus is pictured here as a bag of myrrh, a cruse of sweetness, of preciousness, of fragrance, of perfume, that will perfume every part of her being." (MacIlravy – page 86)

"She is consciously near Him, and has a deep sense that His love has suffered immeasurably that He might have her there. It is not only that He has made atonement; He has done that perfectly, and she knows it, and is in the peace of knowing it.

But He has suffered that she might have the nearest and most intimate place of association with Him, and that she might know and enjoy His love in that place.

"...He went that way that she might become possessed of Him, and that He might possess her, for her complete satisfaction and for His.

"What a comfort to the heart of Christ that the sufferings of His love should be cherished between our breasts all through the night of His absence and rejection here! Indeed, His suffering love will have a place throughout eternity in the hearts of the redeemed." (Coates – page 35)

1:14 – Continuing, she says, "My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi." The Hebrew word *kopher* which in the *A.V.* is here rendered "camphire," is by *Leeser*, left untranslated; but the *Jewish Publication Society*, *Rotherham*, *Moffatt*, *Meek* (*An Amer. Trans.*), and the *Standard Revised Version*, all render it "henna" or "henna-flowers." "Henna-flowers are heavy with fragrance, and hang in beautiful cream white clusters against their bright green leaves." Those here mentioned grew in the renowned vineyards of Engedi. Eastern women were wont to carry these flowers as an adornment.

"Just as the myrrh was hidden away in the bosom and perfumed the person from within, so the henna-flowers were used by oriental women to deck and adorn their persons without. The fragrance of the myrrh is perceptible to others, but they neither see nor know where it is hidden. The henna-flowers are not only smelled, but seen and admired by all. The Beloved, as the cluster of henna-flowers, is that decking and ornamenting ourselves with His attributes in our daily walk, which is seen, recognized and enjoyed by all about us. But before we can be adorned with this outward adorning, He must become to us as a little bundle of myrrh.

"...He is a cluster of henna-flowers in the vineyards of Engedi. Engedi was famed for the aromatic flowers and shrubs that abounded there. But all that have ever filled those fragrant vineyards could never convey even a shadow of the meaning of Christ's beauty and fragrance.

"There are all kinds of imitations of the heavenly perfumes and precious attributes of Christ; but all that anybody puts on which are imitations of the real Christ, will never look nor smell like Him. We may put on the human humility, but it is no more like the humility of Jesus Christ than anything else that is human is like God. We may put on longsuffering unto stoicism, but it is no more like the longsuffering of Christ than any attribute is like an attribute of God. We may put on human

sweetness and attractiveness, which may seem fragrant to those who cannot discern the difference, but none of these are any more like the fragrance of Christ than the odor of ill-smelling weeds is like the pure fragrance of the lily of the valley.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride* – pages 80-93)

1:15 – In full appreciation of her beautiful sentiments concerning Himself, He now resumes by saying, “Behold thou art fair, my love; behold thou art fair; thou hast doves’ eyes.” How thrilled He is with her beauty; He tells her twice that she is fair in His eyes. Yes, she is fair; and one particular feature of her beauty is her eyes – doves’ eyes, as it were.

“‘Thou hast doves’ eyes.’ The dove speaks of purity and fixed affection. When the dove chooses a mate, they are marked by undivided affection until the end of their days.... She has also the single eye for him.” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon* – page 74)

“The dove is always constant to one mate, and there is such a love and devotion between them as is found with no other bird. Though they quarrel, they make up with a love and intelligence that is found in no other creature excepting with man.

“The dove’s constancy to one mate is an emblem of the Christian whose eye is single to Christ and to His Glory. We are not told that the bride’s eyes are as hawks’ eyes, or like vultures’ eyes, which are looking for carrion and are cruel and relentless. She is not going around with wandering eyes, and untrue to her Lord, but her eyes are patiently fixed upon her Lord; and with wide-open eyes, untouched by slumber or heaviness, does she watch for the first ray of the dawn of His appearing.

“The dove knows the seasons and the time of her return; she always comes to meet the sun and the balmy air of spring; and the bride of Jesus Christ knows the times and seasons. While she does not know the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man cometh, she is not a child of darkness that that day should overtake her as a thief.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 94-95)

“...She has spiritual perceptions, and that makes her very attractive to Him. She has given expression to the place which her Beloved has in her heart, and it is this which makes her so fair in His eyes. Our beauty under the eye of Christ consists in our appreciation of Him. It is that which marks his saints off from all others...” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 38)

1:16 – How precious to her are His words of love and endearment! He has called her “my love,” and has declared unto her “thou art fair.” Yet, in her contemplation of His words she finds herself unworthy; and

accordingly responds, “Behold, thou (not I) art (the) fair (One); yea, (the) pleasant (One too).” She knows that whatever of comeliness and beauty there is in her that delights her Beloved’s heart so, is but the result of her breathing-in, as it were, the “fragrance” of His consecrated life (myrrh – Cant. 1:13). By way of such contemplation, there came about in her a transformation, until she was more and more conformed to *His image*. (Rom. 12:2; 8:29) Thus, through beholding His glory she is changed “into the *same image*, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.” (2 Cor. 3:18)

She adds, “also our bed is green.” It seems to me this has reference not to the future life of the bride and groom, but to the present, while she as the espoused virgin still sojourns in the flesh; and, to the place where He, as the heavenly Father’s great under-shepherd, and she, as a sheep of his flock, lie down, as it were, to rest (not to sleep!) in the “green pastures.” (Psa. 23:2) It is here that He sometimes finds it necessary to make her lie down. Yet is not this the very thing that she once had sought for? (Cant. 1:7) The “green pastures” not only bespeak rest, but also the place where a table is spread in the very presence of her enemies; yet where these cannot harm, for the “rod and staff” are with the shepherd for the comfort and protection of the sheep. (Psa. 23:4, 5)

1:17 – She continues, “The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir.” While still resting in the “green pastures” they speak about their home – “our house” – the “beams” of which are of cedar, and the “rafters” of fir – materials similar to those of which the ancient Temple was built. This is significant, for it suggests that “the house” being built for them, is according to Jehovah God’s own specifications. It is the home of which the Apostle Paul speaks as “the building of God, an house made without hands, eternal in the heavens.” (2 Cor. 5:1)

“...It was shittim wood that was used in the tabernacle, which was for the wilderness. It was for a moveable tent, with dust for its floor. The temple was of cedar wood, and its floor was of gold. It spoke of durability and stability. We now dwell in bodies which are crumbling to dust. We know full well that we must shortly put off these tabernacles, but the new building will be a building of God, a house not made with hands. We long to be released from this tent we now have, to receive that house which death cannot touch, and where decay can never come.

“There is another house, which is the abode of the saints, and where we shall be at home with the Bridegroom. It is called by the Lord, ‘My Father’s house,’ and we await the moment when the heavenly Bridegroom shall come and take us there. Of that we can truly say, ‘The beams of our house are cedar, and our rafters of fir’.” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, pages 75-76)

Evergreens, such as the cedars and firs – because they do not follow the seasonal cycles of life and death, as do other trees – are symbols of everlasting life. They are also, because of their aromatic oils, impervious to the encroachments of insects. Just so, by virtue of the power of the holy Spirit, the “house” being prepared for us in heaven, will be impregnable against *all* that is evil!

My Lord has garments so wondrous fine,
And myrrh their texture fills;
Its fragrance reached to this heart of mine,
With joy my being thrills.

In garments glorious He will come,
To open wide the door;
And I shall enter *my heavenly home*,
To dwell forever-more!!!

2:1 – Again, He speaks, this time to declare, “I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.” For one thus to speak of himself, would indeed be most egotistical; unless, of course, it should be the One actually represented here – the bridegroom-to-be, Christ Jesus. We do know that there never was another so meek and lowly as He. (Matt. 11:29) It is possible that these expressions – the “rose” of Sharon, and the “lily” of the valleys – are intended to convey just this thought! Most scholars are agreed that reference is not to the “rose,” nor to the “lily” as we know them. (See *Appendix “A”*) We believe, therefore, that they are symbolic expressions, akin to the one which Jesus used when he spoke of the “lilies of the field” (Luke 12:27-28) having reference then to some humbler flower, perhaps the daisy. (See *Appendix “B”*)

The significance of “Sharon” is *the plain*; and like “the valleys” where the “lily” grows, bespeaks a *low-lying* terrain. Flowers growing in such terrain, may quite aptly reflect the “beauty” and the “fragrance” of Him, who, *though once in the form of God*, made himself of no reputation (emptied himself), taking upon him the form of a servant, made in the likeness of man, “and being found in fashion as a man, *humbled* himself, and became obedient unto death, even the (humiliating) death of the cross.” (Phil. 2:6-8)

“...Our Lord Jesus, ‘the beginning of the creation of God,’ was willing in harmony with the Father’s plan to *humble* himself, to take a lower nature and to do a work which would imply not only a *great deal of humiliation*, but also a great deal of pain and suffering. The Apostle points out how the ‘Only Begotten’ proved his willingness *and humility* by complying with this arrangement; and that after he became a man he continued of *the same humble spirit*, willing to carry out the divine plan to the very letter, by dying as man’s ransom-price; and not only so – when it pleased the Father to require that the death should be a most ignominious one in every respect, perhaps beyond the requirements of the ransom merely, he did not draw back, but said: ‘Thy will not mine be done,’ and stooped even to the ignominious ‘death of the cross.’” (R2228:2)

2:2 – Having identified Himself, He now proceeds once again to tell her of what and how He thinks of her: “As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters.”

“‘As the lily among thorns’ she is seen in harmlessness, simplicity, and irreproachableness in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation. (Phil. 2:15) There is no description here in detail, such as we find further on in the book, of different features of her beauty in His eyes. That comes in, as it would appear, to move her, to stimulate her affections into activity, that she may be drawn into concert with Him by the impelling influence of His thoughts of love. But here he does not dwell on detailed features of her beauty, but her general characteristic. She is the lily among thorns; she is in moral contrast with all her surroundings; He adds no more; His words, though few, give her heart to know that He is content with her; she is what He can delight in; no more is needed.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 43)

“The Lord would have her follow in His footsteps; as she beholds Him in His beauty, in His fragrance, and His humility, she hears Him say: ‘As I am, so are ye in the world. He that saith He abideth in Me ought himself also to walk even as I walked.’ To be like unto Him, she must go down into the fertile Valleys, and there must she abide. She must draw strength and nourishment from the hidden springs and the rich soil of His Word, and His life must flow into her until she blossoms out in His likeness...

“All other daughters are but thorns, and they are surrounded by thorns; but the beautiful lily has no thorns growing upon her. In her words, there is nothing which is sharp, and wounds her Lord and those around her. There are no unkind actions growing upon this plant that is being prepared for the Garden of Heaven. There are no unworthy, uplifted attributes found upon the one whom God will choose as the bride of His Son. He has invited many to be the bride; but though many have received the invitation, only a few will He choose...

“...He would have her conformed to His image, with every attribute adorning her and with every likeness to Him perfected; with every perfume and beauty manifested upon her and in her life. He would have her so perfectly partaking of this likeness, that she shall be as a lily among thorns. She must be harmless, yet steadfast. She must be humble, yet standing in pure dignity. She must be upright and beautiful, contending earnestly for the Faith once for all delivered unto the saints. She must be spotless and fragrant, each lily in the company standing for His glory and His delight alone.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 104-105)

2:3 – It is now her turn to speak, and she begins by describing Him in the same strain: “As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, *so is my beloved among the sons...*” The rendering of the Hebrew *tappuach* by our English word “apple” in the *Authorized Version*, has been called into question. Some authorities believe it might more correctly have been rendered “quince;” others, “citron;” and still others, “pomegranate.” We, however, consider “apple” to be a correct rendering, or at least a reasonable one. (See *Appendix “C”*)

She likens Him to the apple tree – a fruitbearing tree, then compares him to other sons of men, who, beside Him, appear but as forest trees, with many leaves (professions), but no fruitage (spiritual graces)!

“...‘As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.’ As an apple tree is marked for fragrance and fruit among the trees, so is her beloved among the sons. He is as different from them as the apple tree from the wild forest trees. So the Lord Jesus is ‘fairer than the children of men’ (Psa. 45:2), the firstborn among many brethren, and ‘Great High Priest’ among the priests...” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 79)

She says, “So is my beloved...”

“How we rejoice that we have proven there is fruit upon Him; and by feeding upon Him, we too bear fruit to His glory. He is our Storehouse, He is the only fruitful Tree, and we can get nothing outside of Him, but we can get everything in Him. The more we feed upon Him, the more we abide in Him. The more He feeds and nourishes us, the more He becomes manifested in our lives to the glory of God. There is none other like Him among all the sons of men...” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 109)

And, as if talking to the daughters of Jerusalem about Him, she adds; “I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste.” What a blessed place to *sit* down and to rest – in His Shadow! What cause for *delight*! Just to *sit* in His presence in sweet contemplation of His wondrous character; and to breathe in the sweet fragrance of His fruitage; and also to feed thereon; and to drink in the sweet cadences of His voice as He pours forth unto us those precious and wonderful words of life and love. Yes, indeed, how sweet to the taste!

“...It is when sitting in His shadow, that she finds delight; it is when she takes refuge in Him, that she is hidden away from the enemy, from the plottings of men, from the strife of tongues, from the heat of the day...”

“It is not only to find the one Apple Tree, but it is to take up our abode under the shadow. It is not only to taste of its fruit, but it is to eat and be filled with all the fruit that grows upon this...Tree; it is to feed upon Him continually until we are strong

in Him, and in the power of His might.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 110)

In this connection, we cannot help but to recall once again the little home in Bethany, on the occasion of Jesus’ visit, when Mary chose to sit in His shadow – at His feet; there to feed and feast upon Him, whom she loved. (Luke 10:39)

“...She was seated on the floor at His feet like one whose sole business was to hear, and she drank in His words with all the thirst of *eager delight*. She was not just a casual hearer, like one whose heart was unmoved or whose mind was far away. She listened with the loyal spirit of *ardent love*, like one who gave heed to what she heard. She may have known that the Master had once voiced the wish that men would come and learn of Him (Matt. 11:29), and she knew how precious were the hours spent at His feet. There were lessons of wisdom to learn in the school of Christ and words of truth that fell from His lips that she would never hear again, and she would listen like one whose heart was ready to respond to the softest whisper of that voice...” (Loane – *Mary of Bethany*, page 33)

2:4 – Seemingly, still talking to the daughters of Jerusalem, she continues: “He brought me to the banqueting house (house of wine – margin), and his banner over me was love.” The banqueting house suggests the place of fellowship; and, as the house of wine, also conviviality! This, we believe, is intended to reflect the state and condition wherein the espoused virgin Class finds herself, when in sweet and blessed *fellowship* (Psa. 133:1), she is engaged in the study of God’s Word, thus becoming, as it were, better and better acquainted with her heavenly bridegroom-to-be. Some, though not all, of the joy (gladness) of this *fellowship*, quite naturally results from the deeper understanding (imbibing) of the doctrines (wine) concerning our unseen Lord. (1 Pet. 1:8) Since it is the love of Christ that constrains us (2 Cor. 5:14) so to come together, is it any wonder that the banner over us – His banner – is *love*!

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian *love*;
The *fellowship of kindred minds*
Is like to that *above*.

2:5 – “Stay me with flagons,” she continues, “comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love.” One of the happiest renderings of the Hebrew text, that we have found, is that of the *Jewish Publication Society*, which renders it: “Stay me with dainties, refresh me with apples; for I am love-sick.” The overwhelming evidences and assurances of His great love for her; and the contemplation of her own unworthiness, leave her with mixed emotions. On the one hand she is overjoyed; on the other she is dismayed, and grows faint. She is really sick – love-sick! So she now would have more “dainties” (assurances, etc., of His love); and be comforted with “apples” (the fruitage –

spiritual graces) from Him, whom she declared to be her “apple-tree”! (Cant. 2:3) In the appropriation of these unto herself, she will grow more and more like Him, and thus become more and more worthy of Him too.

Have there not been times when we have fainted, as it were, in our souls for a closer nearness unto our blessed Lord, to know his love better; when we would gladly have passed from where we were to be completely lost in that love? If so, at such times we were spiritually “love-sick,” because of these longings and yearnings for the greater love of Him. It will be recalled that surcease from these “pangs” came with the forgetting of the self, and the seeing of Jesus only!

2:6 – Though expressing her ardent, undying love for her beloved, she is not always alert to his “needs;” and sometimes, like the disciples of old in Gethsemane’s garden, she is overcome by the tensions of life – she falls asleep! (Matt. 26:36-43) The placing of his hand *under her head* suggests that she was in a reclining position. He has come to awaken her (Eph. 5:14); and now being awakened, though the daughters of Jerusalem cannot see her in the “secret place,” she speaks loud enough for them to hear, “his left hand is under my head, and with his right hand doth embrace me,” as He draws her closer unto Himself.

You ask “what could the heavenly bridegroom-to-be, possibly need?” Ah, this suggests a most beautiful thought. Though Jesus left the earthly scene over nineteen hundred years ago, he has, as he promised, been present with his beloved ones, all through the age (Matt. 28:20); not merely by way of the Holy Spirit sent forth in His name (John 14:16-18); but also in the “members of his body” (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 6:15; Eph. 5:30); and “their needs” are His “needs.” (Acts 9:5) But, to these also he committed the sweet and precious ministry of service for Him (in His stead) to His espoused virgin – “Love one another” said he, “as I have loved you.” (John 13:34)

O how precious is this privilege of identification with the Lord, and His espoused virgin! Or is it confusing to be represented in both the bridegroom and the bride? It ought not to be, for are we not represented in both the table of the shewbread holding forth the Word of Life, and also in the priesthood that feeds thereat? (T115; 22)

It has been suggested that the left hand being, in a sense, closer to the heart, the placing of it under the head of the espoused virgin to arouse, and to awaken her, might well represent the loving grace by way of which He tenderly alerts her mental (spiritual) faculties. Our human bodies are endowed with five physical senses – sight, hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling, all of which center in the head (the brain); and each of these has, as it were, a spiritual counterpart! (Cant. 6:1) Thus aroused, she is to “see” Jesus only (Matt. 17:8); and the King in all His beauty; and the land that is very far off (Isa. 33:17). She is to “hear” his voice, speaking peace to her soul (John 14:27); and His admonition for renewed faithfulness unto

death. (Rev. 2:10) She is to “smell”, that is, to breathe in the fragrance of His garments; and of His sterling character (the beauty of holiness). (Psa. 45:7, 8; Cant. 1:3) She is to “taste” that the LORD is good, as He manifested Himself through Jesus Christ, our Lord. (Psa. 34:8; 1 Pet. 2:3) She is to “feel” the touch of His left hand under her head, arousing her; and His right hand (the power of His overruling and protective providences) raising her up, and embracing her in His wonderful love.

“...Her head is in His left hand, intimating that every thought of the Church is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ....She not only gets her supplies from Him, but all guidance and impulse also. She is on his left side, the side nearest to His heart. He gives her the near and favored place.

“The right hand of His power which has defeated all enemies is now under her – ‘Underneath and around are the everlasting arms.’ We may have trials, we may have times of sorrow, but we are ever in the embrace of His love. ‘Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end’. (John 13:1)” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, pages 83, 84)

“It is the left hand...under our heads that sustains and supports us when the billows are contrary and raging. We are not always conscious that it is His hand that keeps us from sinking, for the working of His precious left hand is the least seen. But without that we could not receive all He would give and do for us with His right hand.

“The right hand is the hand of manifest grace, inward love, and joy in Christ, the smile of His approval, the hand with which he molds and fashions the bride. The left hand holds us fast while the right hand deals and works upon the clay of the earthen vessel. The embracing of His hand is so precious as He lets His love fall upon us like dew, as He leads us into deeper revelations of Himself and of that which He has prepared for us. As we see the King in His beauty and behold the land of far distances that lies before us, we are truly overcome with soul-longing for the beautiful land.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 118, 119)

2:7 – Now the daughters of Jerusalem (professed Christians) can neither understand nor appreciate the espoused virgin’s absolute dedication to her Beloved. Her self-denials on His behalf seem so foolish. “Why can’t she enjoy the innocent pleasures of this world like all other good people do?” But they cannot move her along this line at all! They think she is living in a dream-world, and ought to be brought back to the world of reality. Knowing of her keen sense of justice, and her tender love and sympathy toward all unfortunate and oppressed peoples, they seek to *arouse and bestir her love for these* into participation with them in their humanitarian schemes.

She is not insensitive to the needs of the world; but she knows that her heavenly Father will one day right *all* of earth's wrongs, and will bless *all* the families thereof; and to take time for these affairs now, would be merely taking it away from the Lord and his people, to whom *all* her time and talent rightfully belong. She intends, therefore, to do good unto *all men as she has opportunity, but especially unto the household of faith*. (Gal. 6:10) In this way, she will be ministering unto her blessed Lord, but also to his espoused virgin! Accordingly, she addresses herself to the daughters of Jerusalem, in these words: "I charge (adjure) you (earnestly entreat you), O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and the hinds of the field that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till it please (till the right time for it)." (See *Appendix "D"*) She is not afraid that they might awaken or bestir Him, her Beloved, for she knows that He, like unto the God of Israel of old, neither slumbers, nor sleeps. (Psa. 121:4) It is her own propensities to love, and that, perhaps unwisely, that she fears might be awakened.

"How vividly and forcibly, does this warning of the bride express the care we must take not to grieve the Spirit, not to stop the working of our Lord within us. The bride, because of her intimate intercourse with her Lord, begins to realize how carefully she must walk if she would have that fellowship unbroken, and not hinder His dealing. As cautiously as the hunter follows the roe, so must she live and walk. Not only this; every relation must be brought into conformity to this careful walk.

"No animal is as difficult to hunt as the roe or the hind. Only the hunter who has been trained, knows how quiet and careful he must be, how cautiously he must take every step, if he would capture one of these animals. Sounds, unheard by other ears, are quickly heard by the roe or the hind; and they will dart away swiftly, that the hunter oftentimes does not see them go.

"...We must lose sight of all else or any one but Him; we must walk so carefully and obediently, and...put away all the noise and clatter of our own desires and flesh..." (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 121-123)

"...We must be on our watch lest anything should come in and hinder communion. Even in our holiest moments such hindrances come in, and what is spiritual is so easily disturbed and broken, that we must constantly be on our watch. We must be as sensitive as the roe or hind in danger. They hear things imperceptible to the ear of the hunter, and are difficult to hunt, for the least sound disturbs them. We need to watch our thoughts, words, steps, lest communion be disturbed." (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 84)

2:8 – The scene now changes. She seems now to be alone, soliloquizing, thinking of Him, and the lovely things He said to Her. She pictures Him, her Beloved, the One "altogether lovely" (Cant. 5:16); she even "hears" His voice, than which there is not, never was, nor ever will be, a sweeter! It is the voice of "My Beloved." She also recalls the wonderful things He told her about the Kingdom to which He is heir, and of which Kingdom He intends, one day, to make her co-regent with himself. (Rev. 5:10) In her reverie she "sees" it as if already being fulfilled. She visualizes the destruction of the old order in preparation to the establishment of the new: for the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. (Rev. 11:15) She "sees" Him leaping first upon the mountains (the most autocratic governments – Psa. 46:2); then skipping upon the hills (the less autocratic governments) (*D551*); breaking them, as it were, in pieces (Psa. 2:9; Rev. 2:26, 27) during that great "time of trouble" with which this age is to end. (Dan. 12:1; Matt. 24:21)

2:9, 10, 11 – She speaks to declare, "My beloved is like a roe, or a young hart," that is to say, He will be swift to accomplish His purposes. He had promised to come for her. (John 14:3) In her reverie she "sees" Him already standing (present) "behind our wall." What is the significance of this? Ah, He who was once put to death in the flesh, is now "that Spirit" (1 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 3:17); whereas, she is still, so to speak, separated from Him by the "wall" of the flesh – the earthen vessel. (2 Cor. 4:7) However, she "sees" Him through the "windows" (the spiritually enlightened mind), as "He shows himself through the lattice," in the crisscrossing of the events marking the end of the age! She can "hear" Him say, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, come away" – I have come for you, to take you to your eternal home. For you, my beloved, the "winter" of trial and testing to make your "calling and election sure" (2 Pet. 1:10) is almost past. The "rain is over and gone"! In Palestine, there are two rainy seasons, known as "the first" and the "latter" rains. (Deut. 11:14) The Gospel age has also had two such rainy seasons. The first great outpouring of divine truth (the "early rains") occurred while Jesus and his disciples were still sojourning here, at the beginning of this age. The second outpouring of divine truth (the "latter rains") occurred at the time of Jesus' second advent, particularly during the ministry of His seventh messenger – Bro. C. T. Russell. This seems almost to suggest that when the time comes for the espoused virgin (the last remaining members in the flesh) to be glorified, the second outpouring, "the latter rains" (the "harvest message") will have been "over and gone." Do we know where we stand on the stream of time?

2:12 – From her place *within* the "wall" (the earthen vessel – the flesh) she cannot "see" as clearly as He, what is really going on in the earth. Speaking to her, he says, "the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the 'flowers'

appear on the earth; the time of the ‘singing’ (of birds – not in the original) is come, and the ‘voice’ of the turtle-dove is heard in our land.” In Palestine, a country lying in the northern hemisphere, all these signs betoken the return of the sun, and the arrival of spring. Figuratively speaking, a new day, yea, if you please, a new season. “spring” began in October 1874! with the return of our Lord. The “flowers” appearing on the earth, are the signs of the times of the new order – the beginning of the “restitution of all things” spoken about by the Apostle Peter. (Acts 3:21) (See *Appendix “E-1”*) The time of “singing” is to be noted in the song of the masses, of Earth’s Great Jubilee song – sometimes still a bit harsh! (See *Appendix “E-2”*) The “voice of the turtle dove” heard in our land has reference, undoubtedly, to the provisions being made, as it were, to improve the conditions of the poor and the oppressed. These are all signs betokening Earth’s Great Millennial springtime! The reason for suggesting that the “turtle-dove” bespeaks the blessings for the poor, is based on the fact that God himself made provision for the poor, that turtle-doves (which are very plentiful in Palestine during these seasons) might be used by them instead of the costlier animals. (Lev. 5:7; 14:22, 30, 31 etc.) (See *Appendix “F”*)

2:13 – She “hears” Him drawing her attention to the fact that the fig tree is already putting forth its green figs. The fig tree is a most beautiful symbolism of Israel according to the flesh. (Jer. 24:5-7; Matt. 24:32; Luke 13:6-9)

“The sprouting of the fig tree may have been a casual remark, but we incline to think it was not. The peculiar circumstances narrated of our Lord’s curse upon a fig tree which bore no fruit, and which withered away directly (Matt. 21:19, 20) inclines us to believe that the fig tree in prophecy may be understood to signify the Jewish nation. If so, it is being signally fulfilled; for not only are thousands of Israelites returning to Palestine, but the Zionist movement, as all know, has now assumed such proportions as to justify Conventions of representatives from all parts of the world to meet year by year to put in practical shape the proposals for the reorganization of the Jewish state in Palestine. These buds will thrive, but will bear no perfect fruit before Oct. 1914, the full end of the ‘Gentile Times’.” (D604)

Accordingly, this too, is another sign, by which the espoused virgin may recognize the nearness of the establishment of Christ’s Millennial Kingdom.

But He continues, so to speak, saying, “the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.” Perhaps it is Israel too, that is represented by this vine (Isa. 5:1-7; Psalms 80:8; Hosea 10:1) which after having been so long fruitless, is now, in its response to the overruling providences of God, by way of which they are being reestablished as a people (nation), bearing “blossoms” sending forth a good smell

(fragrance)! Did not Jehovah declare, “I will bring them again to this land; and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them (again), and not pluck them up (again). And I will give them a heart to know me that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me, with their whole heart.” (Jer. 24:6-7)

In outlining these events to His dearly beloved espoused virgin, He had said, “when ye shall see these things (come to pass) know that it (He – *Diaglott, R.S.V.*) is near, even at the door.” (Matt. 24:33) And, so, He seems to be speaking to her from behind the “wall,” “Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.” Note, He doesn’t intend to deliberately take her; she must want to come; she must make the necessary endeavors; *she must arise*, that is, she must hasten to make her “calling and election sure” – to be one found worthy to rule and reign with Him!

2:14 – Still, as it were, speaking to her from behind the “wall,” He assures her of His love, calling her, “my dove.” He tells her that she is in the “clefts of the rock” – “the secret place of the Most High,” in “the shadow of the Almighty.” (Psalms 91:1) It is the secret place of the “stairs.” This “cleft of the rock” suggests the place where Jehovah God hides His beloved saints; thus keeping them out of the way of harm. When Moses of old, would have been destroyed by the resplendent vision of the glory of Jehovah God, he was hidden in the cleft of the rock until the danger was past. (Exod. 33:21, 22)

“The cleft of the rock is not only a place of security, it is a place of obscurity. We are hidden from the eye of the enemy there.... The world does not know us or see us there...” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 92)

The stairs bespeak the exaltation to which God has drawn the espoused virgin, the place of separation from the “Camp” and unto Himself! That she is in this secret place of the stairs is evidenced by the heavenly visions she has thus far been privileged to enjoy (Cant. 2:8-13), though yet separated from her beloved Lord.

There are times, however, when the espoused virgin is unduly “cumbered about much serving” (Luke 10:40); and at such times her face is, of course, turned away from Him. She frets and repines about her lot! But He doesn’t like to see her in this frame of mind, so He most graciously says to her, “Let me see thy countenance,” and, instead of murmuring, sing for me; you do have a beautiful voice – it is so very sweet; and when you are singing praises, your countenance is exquisitely “comely.”

2:15 – This startles her, and as if she were now recognizing the smallness and insignificance of the things besetting her – the “light afflictions” (2 Cor. 4:17), she asks to be ridden of the “little foxes” that would destroy the vine, and rob it of its fruitage (the fruits and graces of the spirit).

“...The little foxes are most cunning and destructive. They can hide themselves easily and yet do their deadly work. They have to be taken when they are young, for they grow and multiply. It is the little foxes that spoil the vines, the large ones eat the fruit. It is the little things which we allow that do so much harm to our lives – the secret faults, the weight, the roots of bitterness which we allow to spring up and defile many. We must be on the watch for them and kill them, or they will kill us, though we may think they are too small to do any harm.” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon* – pages 93, 94)

“It is not the great things in our lives that cause us to fail God the most. When we are faced with something formidable, we know that it must be overcome; and we draw upon the grace and the power, which are in the Lord, to do this. It is the little things that we do not think amount to anything which are going to stop us going through with Jesus. It may be along the lines of habit, words, or our old natural ways, which have been with us for years; and which are so a part of ourselves that we are hardly conscious they are there.

“It is these neglected things that have eaten into, and around our lives until the spiritual life has ebbed away; and we are left weak, dry, barren. It is the little things that will keep us from going up when Jesus comes; the things that are not noticed, and which hide away in the rubbish that has been left under the vines. All that has fallen and withered away, all the flesh and the unfruitful, must not only be cut off, but must be carried outside the vineyard...

“God warns us to catch every fox. We must not leave the old ones alive to eat the fruit, which the holy Spirit is working in our lives; and above all, we must catch the smallest foxes lest they destroy the vines themselves. We are to lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us. The characteristics of the ‘fox’ reveal that it is not so easy to be faithful in this, as might appear. No animal is more deceitful and cute, more treacherous and sly, than the fox. And nothing in our lives is more deceiving and treacherous than those little habits, words, weaknesses, which appear as nothing in themselves; but it is they that are literally sapping away our spiritual life and strength. We cannot pity one of these little foxes, no matter how harmless or even attractive it may appear. It always happens, that as soon as we get any little fox out of our vineyard, God lets us see the havoc it has wrought; and it no longer appears small and unimportant to us.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 161, 162)

2:16 – Having once again turned her face toward her dearly beloved Bridegroom-to-be, she feels herself reassured, and very happy, yet still too possessive; for she says, as

it were, to herself, “*My Beloved is mine.*” But she is destined to grow both in grace and in the knowledge of her Lord (2 Pet. 3:18), until she is able to say “*I am my beloved’s; and my beloved is mine.*” (Cant. 6:3) In the meantime she will have to strive earnestly to make herself really worthy of becoming one day, the Lamb’s wife! True, she has been “called”; yea, she has even been “chosen” so to speak; but to be with Him as His Beloved, throughout all the ages of eternity, will depend upon her being “faithful.” (Rev. 17:14) This is a faithfulness in her love of, and for, Him; to have doves’ eyes, to see none other, ever, but ever and always Jesus only!

She now beholds Him “feeding among the lilies.” In her soliloquy she mentions this, noting that He is almost invariably found “feeding among the lilies.” Regardless of what the flower here referred to may have been, it was undoubtedly intended to represent the “pure in heart” who shall one day, see God (Matt. 5:8) – those, who like the wild flowers of the field neither toil nor spin, but who in accepting whatever divine providence may permit to come unto them, are arrayed even now, in garments whose glory and beauty transcend that of Solomon’s. (Matt. 6:28-29) The espoused virgin seems now to sense the fact that like unto Jehovah of old, who was fed by way of the willing sacrifices of His people upon His altar (See Lev. 21:17-21; Psa. 50:14; Heb. 13:15), so too, her beloved was “feeding” upon the loving consecrations and dedications of the pure in heart. The “sweet fragrance” of these “lilies” is to her beloved, as was the “sweet savor” of the burnt-offerings and peace-offerings to Jehovah of old!

“He gathers the lilies in chapter 6. He delights to gather the saints (who are called lilies) together, and then He comes down to feed among them. He comes into the companies of His saints, when they are thus gathered, *to get something for Himself.*” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 95)

2:17 – And now, completely roused out of her reverie, she speaks loud enough to be heard by the daughters of Jerusalem, as if speaking to Him, says, I’ll wait, dear Lord, “until the day break” – until the Millennial, the Messianic morning has fully dawned, “and the shadows” of the reign of sin and death “flee away” – depart forever; “turn, my Beloved” come back quickly (Rev. 22:20), to take me unto thyself (John 14:3); “be thou like the roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether” – swift in the accomplishment of thy purposes. “Bether” means separation. Perhaps reference here is, to the mountains of separation which arise between us and our beloved Lord; which mountains we would see eliminated. Such

“...Mountains of Separation (are) made by our own thoughts and opinions, by the voice of man. Why do we not get guidance more easily and perfectly? Mountains of Separation built up from the desire to have our own will and go on our way. Why have we not entered into deeper communion and fellowship with Him? Mountains of Separation

tion built out of our love for flesh and the natural, rather than love for Christ and the spiritual.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 168)

3:1, 2 – The daughters of Jerusalem (Nominal Christians), who look upon this affair between the King and this “commoner” (the espoused virgin) as a mere one-sided infatuation, are nevertheless, always very anxious to hear her talk about “her romance.” And, ever ready to talk about her Love, she tells them of the “night” (time of this Gospel age) when upon her creedal bed, (which had by now grown far too small for her), when, after having sought Him, and not having found Him, she resolved to “arise” and “go about the city in the streets and in the broadways” to seek for the One whom her soul so loved. The “city” represents Christendom, at large; the “streets” and the “broadways” might well represent, in a sense, the fundamentalist and liberal churches and their many factions – some too narrow, and others too broad in their teachings and their creeds; but in none of which she could anymore find Him – “but I found Him not.”

Yet, is it any wonder? Christendom, as the mystic Babylon, had become “the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.” (Rev. 18:2) No, the Bridegroom could no longer be found in her; nor yet the Bride! In some respects, Judah of old is a most forceful type or picture of Christendom, as we see it today. God’s prophet declared for Jehovah, “...the children of Judah have done evil in my sight...they have set their abominations in the house which is called by my name to pollute it.” (Jer. 7:30) Is it any wonder then, that the antitypical Judah, Christendom, had also been rejected by Jehovah, who has declared, “*Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness (the joy of the redeemed), the voice of the Bridegroom and the voice of the Bride: for the land (Christendom – Churchianity) shall be desolate.*” (Jer. 7:34)

3:3 – She tells them (the daughters of Jerusalem) how that the “watchers” that go about the “city” (the ministers, priests, Sunday School superintendents, teachers, elders and deacons) found *her* (the espoused virgin) and endeavored to bring her under their influence. She had asked them if they had seen her Beloved, whom she described so very well for them. Perhaps it is needless to say, but they did not, and could not help her! She told the daughters of Jerusalem, that after leaving these “watchmen,” and through the ministry of a publisher of peace (Isa. 52:7), she found Him whom her soul loved.

“...Many watchmen today know about order in God’s house, but cannot help those who are seeking the Lord...Nothing could satisfy her heart but her Beloved, and she does not give up the search until she finds Him. He was not far away, and once found she would not let Him go...” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 99)

3:4 – She tells the daughters of Jerusalem, now that she has found Him, she would not let Him go; but brought Him into her “mother’s house” – the chamber of her that conceived her – so that all of the “household” might learn to love the bridegroom-to-be too. Her mother’s house represents “The household of faith” – the Church of the Gospel dispensation. (See *Appendix “G”*)

3:5 – Then, once again, the espoused virgin reminds them, yea, she adjures them, “by the roes and the hinds of the field,” not to *now* unduly arouse or stir up her love and sympathies for the poor groaning creation (Rom. 8:22); not that she would be hard, cold or even indifferent to the needs of any in suffering and pain. Quite to the contrary, she would do good unto all men as she has opportunity. (Gal. 6:10) Yet she knows that her best efforts, despite the fact that these might severely tax her meagre resources, would fall miserably short of accomplishing any lasting good. And knowing that Jehovah God’s promises, by way of the “seed” some day soon, will bless them all, immeasurably beyond what anyone could ask or think, and that lastingly, forever, she (the espoused virgin) will continue to strive *to be of that “seed” of blessing!*

3:6 – And now, as if to start at the very beginning (of the Gospel age) she says to the daughters of Jerusalem, “Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke...?” To which, of course, the answer is, “My Beloved.”

After Jesus’ baptism and anointing in the Jordan (Matt. 3:13-17), the eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14) drove Him into the wilderness (Matt. 4:1; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1) to be tempted of the Adversary. (Matt. 4:3-11) During this period of temptation and trial, Jesus’ prayers were set before Jehovah God, the Father, as “sweet incense.” (Psa. 141:2) Faithfully, having maintained his righteousness, he came “out of the wilderness,” the Victor! His appearance, as she describes Him, was as “pillars of smoke” ascending heavenward. These are the “evidences” which the disciples were privileged to behold, of the acceptableness of Jesus’ freewill offering unto God. These “evidences” caused the espoused virgin class to follow after Him. (Matt. 4:20, 22; John 1:37, 40-49) Then, in continuing the account of her romance to the daughters of Jerusalem, she tells them that this One emerging from the wilderness, was also “perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, and with all powders of the merchant.” The “fragrance” of Jesus’ character, as here represented in the “myrrh” (bitter to the taste, yet, yielding itself, a sweet and pleasant aroma) is evidenced in the fact that though the trials were hard on the flesh, He, nevertheless, yielded loving obedience, as a “sweet savor” unto the Father. The further enhancement of this “fragrance” is represented in the “frankincense” (the symbol of praise), of which the espoused speaks; for Jesus never ceased to praise and glorify His heavenly Father. But there is more that contributes to this “fragrance”; and, this is reflected in the espoused’s remarks

to the effect it was “with all the powders of the merchant.” Could it be that reference here is to the spicy ingredients of the holy anointing oil? (Exod. 30:23-25; 37:29) If so, we do know that the ancient anointing, which made both Aaron and his garments fragrant (Psa. 133:2), was typical of the anointing which came upon Jesus, and which bound, as it were, unto him, the graces of submission (to the will of God); constancy (steadfastness, loyalty); long-suffering kindness; and self-denial. Could there be a greater sweetness or fragrance than these? (See *Appendix “H”*)

3:7, 8 – Of course, Christ in glory (in heaven itself) sits upon His throne; and therefore, needs no defence, nor protection of any kind. But, all through the nighttime of this Gospel age, there is also the Christ, still in the flesh, who, though resting, as it were, upon His bed (enjoying the rest of faith) (see *Appendix “I”*), is nevertheless, always in danger of the onslaughts of His enemies. It is this Solomon-to-be, that needs defence and protection. And, though there be the many guardian angels, always on the alert, there are also the “three score valiant men” – the “valiant of Israel” strong in the power of His might, who are ever ready to wield the “sword of the Spirit” in His defense. The “threescore” ($6 \times 10 = 60$), suggests that all (see *Appendix “J”*) – the complete number of the truly consecrated, who are still in the flesh at any time during the Gospel dispensation, will be standing together, ready and willing to defend the Name of Christ.

3:9, 10 – The espoused virgin, thoroughly thrilled, her eye sparkling to reflect her inward joy and peace, continues to relate to the daughters of Jerusalem, her tale of romance with Solomon. She tells them now of the palanquin which He himself made – a conveyance for her – to bring her unto Himself as His beloved bride. The *Authorized Version* unhappily calls it a chariot, though there is nothing said to the effect that it had wheels. In fact, it seems quite evident that it was to be carried, so that no part of it contacted the earth directly! And what a thought this! Once she entered it, she was no longer to be identified with the earth – this world – and though not yet too far above it, she was nevertheless, not of it. (John 17:14)

As suggested, this palanquin, represents the conveyance which our blessed Lord Jesus, by way of His redeeming death, brought into existence for His church, the “new and living way” (Heb. 10:20), that will eventually bring her (the espoused virgin) into His presence as His bride – the Lamb’s wife (Rev. 19:7) – a queen, and partaker of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) of which He is already a partaker. The wood of Lebanon – evergreen, represents everlasting life, and by extension, *justification*. The silver, for its pillars, represents the Truth, and, by extension, *sanctification*. The gold, for the bottom, represents the divine nature, and by extension, the *hope of glorification*. The purple (cloth) covering, is the symbol of faithfulness unto death, and by extension, the

royalty of the kingdom, as the reward for faithfulness unto death – *the ever present inspiration* to the espoused virgin – the Church! It will be recalled that the cloth which covered the altar of burnt-offering, when the camp traveled, was also of purple, to show forth, as it were, that by faithfulness (blue) unto death (scarlet), Jesus had attained unto the royalty of the Kingdom! (Num. 4:13)

The espoused virgin now changes to a metaphor, for she declares that it was “paved” with love. The *Authorized Version* would have us understand that it was “love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.” First, however, let us note that the word “paved” does not very accurately reflect the espoused virgin’s thought. It might more correctly have been rendered “inlaid” as in the *Jewish Publication Society’s* translation. Nor can we limit the love of God, nor of His Christ, to any particular group, as here, to the daughters of Jerusalem (Nominal Christendom): for God (so) loved the (whole) world... Yet, here *it is* intended to center in the bride for whom this particular device is specifically intended. (See *Appendix “K”*)

3:11 – The espoused virgin next suggests to the daughters of Jerusalem that they go forth, and gaze upon this Solomon, and particularly upon the crown, which His mother set apart for Him in the day of His espousals, the day of gladness for Him. (See *Appendix “L”*) The “mother” here referred to, is undoubtedly the Sarah Covenant – which at the time of His consecration (his espousals, as it were) made available to Him, the crown of Life (glory, honor and immortality); and which crown, actually became His, when after faithfulness unto death, He became its heir in the fullest sense of that word. But the day of His espousals, was a very happy day for Him – a day of great delight! It was the day when He declared unto the heavenly Father, that He had come to do His will (Heb. 10:7, 9); and that He delighted in the doing of that will (Psa. 1:2; 40:7, 8; 119:16, 35); it was the day when he began striving for *her* (the Church) whom having not yet seen, He nevertheless loved! and for whom He would be laying down life itself. (Eph. 5:25; Acts 20:28)

4:1 – At this point, she is suddenly interrupted as her beloved Solomon puts in His appearance. The telling of her romance to the daughters of Jerusalem therefore comes to an abrupt ending.

Drawing her apart unto Himself, He whispers sweet words of love into her ears. He tells her once again (Cant. 1:15, 16), that she is beautiful and fair. But she has been so very busy *being beautiful in character*, that she is entirely unaware of how beautiful and fair she has really become. It ought not to surprise us then, if she blushes mildly, as He says to her, “Behold, thou art fair, my love.” Her meditations upon Him have had a transforming effect upon her; and the crowning glory of this lies in the fact, that she herself, is unconscious of this! As it was said of Moses of old, he “wist not...that...his face

shone” (Exod. 34:29); so too, is it with this espoused virgin – “she wist it not.”

He tells her again (see Cant. 1:15) about her beauty – the beauty of her eyes – doves’ eyes, so kind and tender; yet single, too! (Matt. 6:22) The dove mates but once, and then, forever! Just so is it to be with the espoused virgin; she has eyes for but One – her only Love; and she wishes to be His forever. But He very significantly adds that they are hidden within her locks. Those beautiful and fragrant tresses of her hair – her crowning glory (1 Cor. 11:15) – falling lightly over her forehead, momentarily obscured the beauty of those eyes; yet, only until her Beloved very tenderly, pushed those locks aside, so as to peer into their wonderful depths. And, it thrilled Him to find His own reflection within them.

“...He loves to make her conscious that she has beauty in His eyes. As under grace and its teachings certain features are developed in the saints which are most attractive to Christ. The grace of God brings beautiful features into evidence. We appreciate them when we see them, but the Lord appreciates them more than we do; they are most attractive to Him. Nothing that is of nature comes into this; the most amiable traits of natural character have no place or part in the beauty of the bride. Her beauty is divinely conferred, and it has only been acquired through the setting aside by the power of grace of what attached to us by nature. It is clear that in speaking thus to His loved one the Lord has not in mind what we were according to the flesh, but what we are by the grace of God. The beauty which He describes is real and subsisting...His eye rests with complacent delight on every feature which is the product of grace. Grace, when truly received is never unproductive; it effects moral transformation; it brings about features in its subjects which are beautiful under the eye of Christ...” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 60)

“...Steadfastly does the dove watch for the first rays of dawn; faithfully does she return to her appointed times for she ‘knows her seasons.’ Thus the bride can see the approach of dawn, when to others all is dark; and she is looking and longing for the return of her heavenly Bridegroom. She has a single eye, and there are no double motives nor selfish designs with her, but she has her eyes fixed steadfastly upon her Beloved...” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 209)

“Solomon repeatedly mentions the eyes of the dove: ‘Behold thou art fair, my love; thou hast doves’ eyes.’ And again: ‘Thou hast doves’ eyes within thy locks, which’ (singularly enough) ‘are as a flock of goats that appear from Mount Gilead.’ That is, her locks (not the doves’ eyes) were jet, glossy black like the Syrian goats.... Nor

is the comparison wholly extravagant. Doves delight in clear water brooks, and often bathe in them; and then their liquid, loving eyes, ‘fitly set’ within a border of softest sky blue, do look as though just washed in transparent milk.” (Thomson – *The Land and the Book*, page 250)

Solomon’s “Dove” (the espoused virgin) also delights in the clear waters of Truth, and often bathes therein too; therefore, do her eyes also reflect the heavenly glory!

As for the beautiful tresses of her hair, the locks of which sometimes hide from view, those wonderful eyes of the espoused virgin, they were the symbol, if you please, of consecration, i.e., *separation* from all that was inimical to her Beloved; yea, even more than this, the *separation* unto Him, and His God, and Father. It will be recalled that “either man or woman” might separate themselves thus unto the Lord (Num. 6:2), and, that one feature of the Nazarite vow was the letting of the locks of one’s head grow. (Num. 6:5) However, as already suggested, for the espoused virgin, it meant very much more than this. As her crowning glory, it symbolized her subserviency to the headship of the One whom she professed to love above all others. Let it be noted, how that the two Marys who anointed Jesus’ feet, and dried them with their hair, could not have done so had their locks been short! (See Luke 7:44; and John 11:2; 12:3) So it is that only the Lord’s truly consecrated are in the position where they are able to perform this ministry unto Him!

“Thus flows down over the bride’s shoulders the beautiful, unshorn hair, which is the sign of her separation and subjection to her Lord and Master. She is pictured here with her hair of separation hanging down and covering her every gaze that would contaminate her. The separation begins in the heart, first working mightily within.

“It is not in the outward separation, that the power lies; many, down through the ages, have separated themselves from man, hiding in caves and cells; but it profited nothing if God were not in it. The power is in the inward separation, which does not require isolation, but is oftentimes perfected in great stress of circumstances and in a full, busy life...

“We must cut off every object of love and affection that usurps Christ’s place; we must pour out our love to Him more fervently and exclusively as the days go by. As we do this, we shall be cut off from those who are not filled with the same devotion toward Him, and our separation unto Him will be perfected.

“...Those who are not following on with the Lord have no locks of separation, and they will never admire the bride’s long hair, which makes her appear peculiar and unlike themselves. The world and the worldly Christian (?) do not know the meaning of this separation.

"The longer and thicker the bride's hair grows, the more the world and those who are not going on with the Lord, criticize her appearance. They see no beauty in this crown of separation; to them, it is only a sign of peculiarity, and evidence that she feels herself better than they are..." (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 210-212)

"Her long hair would speak of separation, and of devotion to Him. In the long uncut hair of the Nazarite, separation is shown; while the long hair of Mary indicates devotion. In the hair of the bride, you have her separation from the world and all its ways, and her entire devotion to her Beloved..." (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 111)

4:2 – He now speaks to her of the beauty of her smile (so we think!), referring more particularly to her teeth, which have much to do with the fullness and integrity of her smile. While one can smile without parting the lips – i.e., without showing the teeth, all, we are sure, will agree, that the smile is enhanced when these occur simultaneously. It is this, we believe, and not their use as masticators of food, that Solomon refers to here, when he says, "thy teeth are like a flock of ewes" (*J.P.S.; An American translation; Moffatt; R.S.V.* – see Appendix "M") "shorn, which came up from the washing; whereof every one bears twins, and none is barren." Normally, the teeth are covered by the lips; but when the espoused virgin smiles, her lips are parted; thus do these "ewes" stand there "shorn." The counterpart of the "washing" is what takes place in the mouth when the saliva washes and cleanses the teeth. The bearing of twins, and not being barren, (could not refer to sheep in general; for only ewes bear, and only ewes can be barren) has reference to the complement, perfection and evenness of the teeth; each one of which has another like unto itself beside it – thus none is missing; there is no "barrenness."

"...the bride's teeth are perfect and even, with none missing. They are not only like a flock symmetrical, newly shorn sheep, but like ewes that come up from the water after they have been washed. They are white, pure, beautiful; no blemishes, no uncleanness, and none lacking." (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 216)

The smile is indicative of the inner joy and peace which the Beloved of Solomon enjoys in the contemplation of the grace and favor which are hers; and thus, by way of her smile (gracious living) she passes along to others that which should serve to inspire them too! But her teeth have still another function. Should there ever be an evil or unkind thought, some root of bitterness arising in her heart, which by the way of her tongue might be expressed and thereby many others be defiled, (Heb 12:15) those teeth might then well act like a bulwark of restraint – a guard, if you please, not permitting the tongue its perfect

liberty to speak. This would be accomplished by the teeth remaining tightly closed. Let it be remembered that, it is not what enters the mouth that "defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." (Matt. 15:11) In the performance of this function too, the "teeth" (her spiritual guard – the watchmen, pickets) may help her maintain that loveliness of character, which none can gainsay; and which rejoices the heart of her Beloved so very much. (Cant. 4:9) This is accomplished by their not letting any corrupt communication proceed out of her mouth, but only that which is good to the use of edifying, administering grace to the hearers thus not quenching the spirit. (Eph. 4:29, 30)

Yes, and "...so shall the king (Jehovah's Anointed) greatly desire thy beauty (beauty of character, of heart loyalty); for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him." (Psa. 45:11)

4:3 – As He continues to pour out of His heart, she, the espoused virgin, drinks into her own heart, those sweet and precious words of love and endearment, He says to her, "Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely."

Like the teeth, the lips too have much to do with the fullness and integrity of her smile; and like them (the teeth), they (the lips), constitute a bulwark – a guard, if you please, unto the tongue.

"...Someone has said we should take heed to our words, in that God has graciously provided a white fence (the teeth) to hold the tongue, and doors (the lips) to keep closed and locked. 'Set a watch, O God, before my mouth and keep the door of my lips.' (Psa. 141:3)" (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 220)

The bride-to-be's lips being scarlet would indicate among other things that she is in sound health.

"The bride's lips are like a delicate thread of scarlet showing forth perfect health. It is instructive and interesting to notice the perfect symbolism of the figures that the holy Spirit uses throughout the Scriptures. Leprosy is always the symbol of sin; with the leper, there is no feature that is so disfigured as the lips, which become thick, white, and scurfy..."

"Not only are the lips of sinners unclean, not only do their lips bear the signs of sin and uncleanness, but the lips of those who are called by the Name of Christ, often lack the pure, holy setting aside for the service of the Lord, which should ever be upon them..." (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 220)

But there is more to be said about her lips – their transcendent beauty lies in the fact that they were like a thread of scarlet! The thread of scarlet, we believe, is a most apt symbolism for the love of God, which was manifested in the redemption accomplished by way of

the sacrifice of Calvary's cross (John 3:16); and which thread we find winding its way through the Word of God from Genesis to Revelation. It first makes its appearance in the Garden, where an animal (a lamb ?) was slain – its blood shed, in order to provide, as it were, a covering for sin (the sinners) (Gen. 3:21; Heb. 9:22); and it terminates in the exaltation of Him, who came to reveal that love – the Lamb of God (slain from the foundation of the world – Rev 13:8), then to receive (1) power, and (2) riches, and (3) wisdom, and (4) strength, and (5) honor, and (6) glory, and (7) blessing. (Rev. 5:12)

Then what is it that makes the lips of the espoused virgin so beautiful in the sight of her Beloved Solomon? It is the fact that they are identified with this message of the Father's love, as revealed in and by His blessed Son, our heavenly Bridegroom-to-be! Yea, the message is ever upon her lips as a song of praise and thanksgiving (Eph. 1:3-7) – full of grace, and seasoned with salt. (Col. 4:6) Thus is her speech “comely” – beautiful too!

“Her speech being ‘comely’ shows that the bride has ‘set a watch before her mouth, and kept the door of her lips.’ (Psa. 141:30) She has been meditating on Him, so, ‘out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.’ No corrupt communication proceeds out of her mouth, but rather ‘sound speech, which cannot be condemned.’ We must ‘let our speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.’” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 115)

“Thy temples are like a piece of pomegranate within thy locks,” says He. The Hebrew word *raqqah* rendered “temples” in the *Authorized Version*, is rendered “cheek” by *Moffatt*; *R.S.V.*; and the *Confraternity* editions; but has happily been rendered “upper part of the cheek” by Rabbi *Leeser*. In any event, the meaning seems to be that her guileless blush, was visible, even though partially hid by the tresses of her hair. He lovingly likens that blush to a piece of pomegranate.

“The pure, blushing face of the bride is rendered more beautiful by being shaded and protected by the locks of her separation unto God....She does not flaunt her beauty abroad to be admired by His enemies; she does not try to please the world, neither is she gratified with the admiration and praises of those who hate her Beloved. The colors have their source within, and are not the artificial counterfeit that is put on without, which may deceive man, but can never deceive God.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 223-224)

“Her temples were likened to ‘a piece of pomegranate within her locks.’ There is no boldness or forwardness here. She is marked by meekness and gentleness. Her beauty is not shown in the world, but hidden behind her locks. God complained that his people were bold and refused to blush. (Isa.

48:4; Jer. 6:15; 8:12) Pomegranates ...speak of fruitfulness and testimony. The beauties of the pomegranate are hidden, inward beauties; and those of the bride cannot be seen by the natural eye; her adorning is not outward, but inward. Her Lord is sanctified in her heart; He dwells in the heart by faith. Scripture speaks of the ‘hidden man of the heart!’” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, pages 115-116)

Concerning the pomegranate, to which He likens her blush, let it be noted that the calyx-crowned fruit, when cut through “is found to contain numerous wine-colored, or red globules, each of which encloses a seed surrounded by a delicate and refreshing juice...” These seeds might well represent “another generation” – the world of mankind that will come into being during the Millennium, as a result of the redemptive work of our High Priest! The wine-colored, or red juice, in which the seeds are bathed, might well, therefore, represent the blood of His sacrifice – the life which He laid down, so that they might live. May it not be, that the thought of one day, as the Lamb's wife, becoming the mother of His (then their) children, causes her now to blush a little!

4:4 – Now, as if to relieve her, He advertently proceeds to describe other facets of her feminine beauty. “Thy neck,” He says, “is like the tower of David builded for an armory whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all *shields* of mighty men.” The tower of David was an armory, where the *shields* of Israel's mighty warriors were on display, to inspire those who might behold them with the glory that belonged to those who were the Israel of God. Of course, Solomon, in beholding the neck of his dearly Beloved not only noted its natural beauty, but also how this was enhanced by the necklaces she wore, to which were attached as pendants, numerous beautiful trinkets and gems. The espoused virgin of the Lord wears just such a beautiful “necklace” to which are attached “pendants” as it were, of the fruits and graces of the spirit (Gal. 5:22), though perhaps more conspicuously, and particularly “the shield (buckler) of faith.” (Eph. 6:16)

Such “shields” were used by the ancient warriors (Heb. 11:32) as well as by those of the Gospel dispensation, to ward off the fiery darts of the wicked. Solomon himself, had suggested that mercy and truth be just so worn about the neck. (Prov. 3:3) All those who behold these “pendants” about the neck of the espoused virgin, should be inspired to glory in the fact that they belong to the true Israel of God, they themselves being privileged to wear the armor of God, and to wield the same sword of the spirit, as did those before them.

“Her neck is like those defensive towers that are hung with armor. It is not proud nor wanton, neither is it stiff-necked and rebellious, but it is upright, white, stately and beautiful.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 226)

4:5 – More feminine perhaps, than any of the other six parts of her body He has thus far mentioned, is the seventh – her breasts – symbols, if you please, of the love and affections, which as a “milk of human kindness” flows from her heart – the heart of the espoused virgin – into the lives of others, feeding, nourishing, and comforting them. He now likens these to “two young roes that are twins, which feed among the lilies.”

The two breasts do not imply that the “milk” from one differs from that of the other. No. It is identical. That there should be two breasts was ordained by her Creator, and this, for her convenience! Nevertheless, the “milk” (love), which is “warm, clean, and sterile” is quite complex in itself, for it has nine elemental ingredients: patience, kindness, generosity, humility, courtesy, unselfishness, good temper, guilelessness, and honesty (sincerity), all of which fall into general categories – self-denying, and self-giving, love! – which are as alike, in a sense, as “two roes that are twins,” which not only look alike, but seemingly, act alike too.

“To those of the Lord’s people who have never studied out what love is – what are its elements, its constituent parts, the Apostle’s suggestions here will seem like a revelation. He enumerates nine ingredients:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| (1) patience | ‘Love suffereth long’ |
| (2) kindness | ‘and is kind;’ |
| (3) generosity | ‘love envieth not;’ |
| (4) humility | ‘love vaunteth not itself;
is not puffed up;’ |
| (5) courtesy | ‘does not behave itself unseemly;’ |
| (6) unselfishness | ‘seeketh not her own;’ |
| (7) good temper | ‘is not...provoked;’ |
| (8) guilelessness | ‘thinketh no evil;’ |
| (9) honesty (sincerity) | ‘rejoiceth not in iniquity,
but rejoiceth in the truth.’ |

“Only because of serious misconceptions of love is it necessary or even proper for us to remind our readers, in the Apostle’s word, that this love quality is not merely a form of loving works, not merely kind words and smiles, but that it goes deeply into our nature and includes our deeds and our heart sentiments. (1 John 3:18)” (*R4443:3; 4444:5*)

The suggestion that the roes “feed among the lilies” is a most beautiful one. The roes are enriched in life and health by what they feed upon; and this shows in their beauty and grace, as well as in the fleetness of foot. Just so too, is it with the Beloved of Solomon; what flows of goodness and cheer into the lives of others, is but the outgrowth – the result of what she has been feeding upon “among the lilies” – i.e., among the consecrated saints of God, in their gatherings, when, and wherever these fellowship in the Lord. And, of course, this is what shows, for not only are her “breasts” beautiful and graceful to behold, but are also full of wholesome “nourishment” for others. We cannot help but here think

of an expression used by the Apostle Paul when writing to the beloved at Thessalonika: “I was like a mother that lovingly nurses her children.” (1 Thes. 2:7 – *Way’s Trans.*)

“‘Thy two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle, which feed among the lilies.’ The ‘two breasts’ speak of affections that are balanced. Grace governing the heart, would secure this; the one who loves God would love his brother also; and there would be no partialities as to the truth, no attaching ourselves to one aspect of the truth in such a way as to lose interest in the whole circle of truth....Unbalanced affections are really a deformity because they are not the ‘counterpart’ of the affections of Christ, and we should covet correspondence with Him in all things, and particularly in our affections. We may be sure that His heart would delight in this.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 98)

The fleetness of foot, and the sensitivity to anything unwholesome or harmful, we believe is intended to reflect the disposition which must of needs find itself in the character of the espoused virgin. In order to love, and to do good unto others, regardless as to who or what they may be, (Gal. 6:10) she must not allow herself to remain for any length of time in an atmosphere that might cause the flow of her loving kindness toward any to be stopped, or even retarded. To this end, all professing to be the saints of God should guard themselves against “bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking” so as to remain “kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another.” (Eph. 4:31, 32) The prayer that should ever remain on the lips of the espoused virgin should be:

“I want a principle within
Of jealous godly fear;
A sensibility of sin,
A pain to feel it near.

“Quick as the apple of an eye,
O God, my conscience make:
Awake my soul, when sin is nigh,
And keep my soul awake.”

“The ‘two fawns, twins of a gazelle’ set forth symbolically the tenderness and sensitiveness of spiritual affections. These are timid creatures, sensitive to any molestation, and ready to flee from it on swift foot. The Lord will have us cultivate and exhibit affections that are delicately sensitive, that are quickly alarmed by the approach of anything that is of the world or the flesh or the devil. This holy sensitiveness can only be preserved as it is nourished upon appropriate food. The garbage of the world is fatal to it. The fawns ‘feed among the lilies.’ This, as we have seen, is where He feeds His flock. (Cant. 2:16; 6:3) If the spouse is herself a ‘lily among the thorns’ her affections must feed in conditions that correspond with her true character. How refined the purity

of such a feeding-place! A place where one is surrounded by a beauty and glory that has been directly conferred by God. Where all is in contrast to the thorns around, and it marked by harmlessness, simplicity, and irreproachableness. (See Phil. 2:12-15) In such conditions spiritual affections can be suitably nourished. They are conditions which do not pertain to the world nor to nature; they belong to a sphere where all is the product of grace.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 98)

Still blushing profusely under the barrage of the sweet things He has been saying to her, she fain would change the subject. She, therefore, interrupts Him, to tell Him that it will not be too long to wait ere she shall be His forever – to have and to hold! “Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.”

“...It is still night, and the time of His rejection, but we are not children of the night. As children of the day we ardently long for it to come, but there can be no day until He appears who alone can usher it in. Then we shall have done with the night and shadows. Until then, the bride will seek those things which are above, and set her affections on things above, not on things on earth. She wants to be above this world...” (Watts – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 118)

4:6 – She intends to demonstrate her faithfulness to Him, “until the day break, and the shadows flee away,” by getting herself “to the mountain of myrrh, and the hill of frankincense.” Myrrh, it will be recalled, is the symbol for submission to the will of God – the “mind that was also in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 2:5) This, of course, is “bitter to the taste” – i.e., it is hard on her flesh; but on this very account it is a very “sweet savor” unto the Lord. Frankincense is the symbol for praise. Let it be carefully noted that the espoused virgin makes a marked distinction between the “mountain of myrrh” and the “hill of frankincense.” In her endeavor to make her “calling and election” as the bride of Christ sure, the church of the gospel dispensation finds it much easier to render praise than to remain submissive at all times to the will of her God. She must of needs be faithful in both!

4:7 – But He will not be interrupted – at least not for long; so He once again tells her, “Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.” There are spots, of course, but He refuses to see them, because He loves her; and “love covers a multitude of sins.” (Prov. 10:12; 1 Pet. 4:8) In this, He is like His heavenly Father, who – when Balak and Balaam would have cursed the ancient Israel – declared that he had not beheld iniquity in Jacob, nor seen perverseness in Israel! (Num. 23:21) How important is this then, that we heed the Apostle’s counsel, *to keep ourselves in the love of God*. (Jude 21) If the espoused virgin is without spot in His eyes, it is only because she, like the Apostles of old, has been fellowshipping “with

the Lord, and under the influence of his spirit of love, meekness, gentleness, patience, humility...” and has “been greatly blessed ‘by the washing of the water through the words spoken...’ John 15:3; Eph. 5:26.” (R2449:6)

“...He now unfolds his love to her. So Christ loves His Church, and has made known His love to her, in going into death. She is now ‘holy, and without blame before Him in love;’ and soon he shall ‘present her to Himself a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.’” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 119)

“His first words are a tribute to her loveliness, ending with the unqualified words of praise, ‘Thou art all fair, my love. There is no fault in thee.’ This is high praise to give, but it is the praise He longs to give to every one of his sanctified ones... ‘Now ye are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you’.” (Simpson – *The Love-Life of the Lord*, page 65)

4:8 – And now, as if he would not give her much time to think, he says, “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.” Lebanon seems, at least at this time, to have been the abode of Solomon’s Beloved. It was elevated ground; and from its mountains came some of the materials used in the building of the Temple of God at Shiloh. (2 Chron. 2:8) These two facts, we believe, are significant.

We do know that the Bride of Christ, even before she becomes the Lamb’s wife, occupies an exalted position, if only because of her consecration – her climbing of “Mount Moriah” to sacrifice her “Isaac.” (See Gen. 22:16)

As for the cedars of Lebanon, they had first to be cut-down, ere being fashioned and transported to Shiloh, for use in the Temple of God. So too, must it be with the antitypical “cedars of Lebanon.” Cedar wood is the symbol of everlasting life (*T109*), such as is accounted unto the saints of the Gospel age, by virtue of their justification. Yet, the life-rights thus represented, must first be laid down in consecration ere, through the overruling providences of God and the vicissitudes of life, they are fashioned eventually to be transported to the antitypical Temple site!

Undoubtedly, Solomon was at this time at Lebanon *with* his Beloved; for how else could he ask her to *come with me* to look from the top of Amana, Shenir and Hermon, etc.? We suggest, therefore, that a chronological period is indicated, viz., the Second Advent of Christ Jesus, which began in October 1874. If we are correct in this, then “Solomon’s” invitation to the espoused virgin, is to accompany Him to “Amana” – 1878, the time of the resurrection of the sleeping saints; to “Shenir” – 1881,

the time of the close of the general call; and to “Hermon” – 1914-15, the time of the ending of the Gentile times! The purpose? To look, to make an observation, and it is this: despite the fact of the Lord’s presence, the kingdoms of this earth seem still to be holding sway – roaring like lions in their dens; and Papacy – the “mountain of the leopards,” still exercising much of its erstwhile control! She, the espoused virgin, was not to be alarmed at this, even if it appeared that He was not accomplishing His work as quickly as she had thought He would. She was to be comforted in the thought that He was not alarmed; in fact, He was taking precious time to once again tell her how that she was delighting His heart. “Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse;” He says to her; then continues, “thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.” To Him the winning of her, the making of her to be His bride (the Lamb’s wife) is more important than the subjugation of the kingdoms of this world, which He would accomplish a little later. She will be glorified before the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord!

4:9 – The heavenly bridegroom-to-be, tells His Beloved, that she has ravished His heart – taken it, as it were, by her loyalty and loveliness of character. And, while this has been His attitude toward her throughout the whole Gospel age, we believe that it is particularly true concerning the little remnant still sojourning in the flesh in the end thereof. His love and affection, and words of appreciation to these is perhaps more especially expressed in what we are wont to call, “the Harvest message” as given by Him through His wise and faithful servant – His Steward in the end of the age – Bro. C. T. Russell. (Matt. 24:45-47; Luke 12:42-44)

“‘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.’ This is the language of fervent love, but it is not exaggerated; it does but express the true affections of Christ that are called forth as He sees the work of God taking form in His saints. It conveys to us a great thought of His pleasure in that which is the product of divine grace and working. Any one feature of His spouse suffices to charm Him – to ravish His heart.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 108)

“...He uses the most endearing terms to tell how much he values her love. She has been so completely overcome by his love that she said, ‘I am sick of love.’ He is now completely overcome by her love for him. He has also brought her into the closest of relationships to himself, that he can speak of her as his sister and his spouse. The blessed Lord has brought us so near to himself, that he is not ashamed to call us His brethren and His friends.” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 122)

Solomon, of course, because he could think of no sweeter, nor closer relationship, calls her Beloved, “my sister,” implying that he felt she could not be closer to him if she has had the same mother and father as he. Sweet and precious is this thought, because it is exactly the relationship which the espoused of the Gospel age, bears to her Beloved “Solomon.” In a spiritual sense, He and she are both children of the same mother and father; the mother, the Sarah Covenant, the “Mother of us all” (Gal. 4:26); the father, Jehovah God, himself. Then too, it might be well to recall Jesus’ own words in this connection: “...whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is...my sister...” (Matt. 12:50)

“...There were those whom the Lord could recognize as His kindred when He was here. (Matt. 12:50; Mark 3:33-35) This has been true of all saints: they have all, in their measure, loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; they have all been dependent upon God, and have given expression to it by calling upon His name....These are features of moral kinship with Christ, and they are very attractive in His eyes.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 108)

In speaking of her ravishing his heart, he declares that it is with but one eye that she does this. Perhaps he is merely repeating what he has said before, that the beautiful locks of her hair were hiding one of her eyes. He did know, however, that if both eyes had been visible, the testimony would have been the same, with the same results. They were beautiful; they were tender; doves’ eyes, and bespoke a singleness of purpose, which, of course, delighted Solomon, since this purpose centered in him. Nor is it different with the espoused virgin of the antitypical Solomon. Her eyes too, are beautiful and tender – doves’ eyes, bespeaking also the singleness of purpose (Matt. 6:22), and since this purpose centers in Him, His very heart is ravished. Her affections are not divided; she has but one Love, to whom she would be true.

“He values one look of her eye, for he knows that that eye is single for him, and can see love for him there. How he delights to see evidences of her love towards him, and he values them all!” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 122)

He adds, “with one chain of thy neck,” suggesting that even her adornments fascinated him. There can be no doubt but that the chain about the espoused virgin’s neck from which hang the beautiful pendants of mercy and truth; and a father’s commandment – Jehovah’s will (1 Thes. 4:3), and a mother’s law – the Sarah Covenant’s requirement – conformation to the likeness of the first-born (Rom. 7:20; 12:2; Phil. 2:5; Prov. 3:3; 6:21), which we know, delight the heart of our Solomon!

“For one to keep the principles of truth and righteousness before his own mind, is to be a thor-

oughly upright man or woman, one in whom truth, purity, goodness, will be in control. But a person who has merely these principles in control should cultivate more and more the quality of mercy. We should bind them about our neck. The thought is that of a necklace, or ornamental band....Give them a prominent place; for they will help to make you better, help to make you more acceptable to the Lord.” (R5309:2)

4:10 – Ravished by her love and beauty, he repeats, “How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse,” but this time he adds words which she herself had once used when speaking about him and his love (Cant. 1:2, 3), “how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than spices.” So too, is it with the “greater than Solomon,” and His Beloved – the espoused virgin of the Gospel age – the Church. He is ravished by her love. Wine is a symbol of doctrine; and like wine, doctrines when rightly understood, can make the heart of man glad. (Psa. 104:15) But the knowledge of the doctrines – important though they may be, can never transcend, in the heart of the beloved bridegroom-to-be, the joy and happiness afforded Him, by the life of love and dedication of His espoused virgin – the Church! (1 Cor. 13:12, 13) This love and dedication are in themselves, but the manifestations of praise and thanksgiving welling up in her heart to the great Jehovah, for having caused His and her pathways to meet and blend!

“...The praise and gratitude from the truly consecrated heart, the loss of friends and reputation that comes for His Name’s sake and because of devoted love and loyalty, are better than all good to Him who has suffered such pain for us.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 256)

“The spouse had said in chapter 1:2 that His love was better than wine, but He says of her love that it is much better...than wine. In the light of this we are led to see that Christ appreciates the love of His saints more than they appreciate His love. It is a wonderful thought....The Beloved will be preeminent in love as in all else; He will ever exceed in love to His saints, to His assembly (the Church), any love, however true, which they have for Him. This enables us to perceive how exceedingly precious to Christ are those affections which have been divinely produced in His saints, and which have Him as their object.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 111)

“...here, it is her love which is better to him than anything on earth....Her love far surpasses anything of this world; the love which she can give him is sweet to him. It intimates that the pouring out before the Lord of our love exceeds everything to Him...” (Watts – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 123)

The typical Solomon was transported by the fragrance of His Beloved’s ointments, which fragrance exceeded that of all spices. Nor is the heavenly Solomon forgetful of the “fragrance” emanating – radiating, if you please – from the life of His espoused. He speaks of her “ointments” as transcending in fragrance that of all spices. Undoubtedly, His reference is to the holy anointing of which she has been made a partaker. That “anointing oil” – the holy Spirit, has bound to her the fragrance of submissiveness; constancy (steadfast loyalty); long-suffering kindnesses; and self-denial. And there is nothing sweeter in fragrance!

“Then the spouse has ‘ointments’ which to Him are more fragrant than all spices. This brings to mind the ‘oil of holy ointment...the holy anointing oil’ of Exod. 30:22-25....The different precious spices blended in the olive oil indicate how rich and varied are the features of grace which become fragrant in those who have the Spirit of Christ.

“...Everything that is of the Spirit of Christ is fragrant to Him; it surpasses all that is the product of nature; however refined and amiable. No other spices can compare with the ointments of the bride; they are like the spices which the queen of Sheba brought to Solomon.

“...there is a fragrance in the ‘ointments’ of a suffering people which is peculiarly like His own, and therefore in a special way delightful to Him.

“Fragrance is not exactly what we say or do; it does not appeal to sight or hearing but to the sense of smelling. It is a subtle gratification to the one who perceives it, but one which it is difficult to describe, nor could any impression of it be conveyed to one who had not the faculty of smelling. I suppose we have all been conscious at times that there is something about a truly spiritual person which it is difficult to describe! Something that gives a very agreeable impression to one that can appreciate it, and yet it is neither word nor act! That is fragrance. How fully and perfectly must it have been known in the Lord Himself! And He sets great value on it as manifested in His loved ones.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 111-113)

“She has ointments here, but they are for him. We have the Spirit as the anointing, but here it is the smell of our ointments, what we bring to him. We are reminded of Mary (John 12), when she came to the feet of the Lord just as He was about to leave the world and return to the Father. She came with a pound of ointment, very costly, and put it on His feet, and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. The smell of the ointment was sweet to Him.” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 123)

“...Not only is her love better to Him than all earthly good, not only did He count her love worth the death He suffered and the shedding of His blood, but the fragrance of her oils is better than all manner of spices. In the third verse of the first chapter, the bride rejoices in the goodly fragrance of His oils; and here the Bridegroom rejoices in the fragrance of her oils, which, to Him, is much better than all manner of spices. The fruits of the Spirit, and the fragrance of the Christ-life, are beginning to appear and are being perfected.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 257)

“She could not put him on the throne of earth, but she would show that she was his devoted servant forever; she could not glorify him before all the people of Israel, but she could glorify and honor him in her own home; she could not tell his praises and sing his worth, but she could sing and make melody in her own heart, and poured upon him a perfume which not only filled her home with its sweet savor, but which has yielded a tender fragrance to the honor of womankind in general from her day to this present time.... Considered in the light of the odor and blessing and refreshment which it has shed upon all of the Lord’s people throughout this Gospel age, Mary’s alabaster jar of precious perfume, very costly, has proven to be extremely cheap.” (R3535:2)

4:11 – But Solomon is not yet through singing the praises of his Beloved. Again (as in Cant. 4:3), he speaks of her beautiful lips, saying, “Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under thy tongue.” O, is he in love!

Yet, no more than is the Church’s great Lover, Christ Jesus, who seems never to cease in speaking lovingly, beautifully and tenderly of His espoused virgin’s features – her hair; her eyes; her teeth; her lips; her cheeks; her neck; her bosom! However, this time, in referring to her lips it is not with regard to the witness with them, to the great love of God (the “scarlet thread”), but the kindly, benevolent use she makes of them in a ministry to others. He likens her speech, in this regard, because of its sweetness, to honey; and because of its refreshing and nutritive qualities, to milk; both of which flow from those lips like the drippings from the honeycomb!

“...honey is sweet, nourishing and soothing;... milk represents nourishment and edification.... Under the bride’s tongue are words of comfort and sweetness, words of grace seasoned with salt, words that are good for edifying as the need may be, words that give grace to them that hear.

“‘Pleasant words are as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.’ (Prov. 16:24)

“When our hearts are filled with God’s thoughts, and human ideas have been put away, our words

will shine forth in the likeness of Jesus Christ. They will partake of the divine and will be full of nourishment for weary souls about us. They will give meat and edification to all that hear...” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 262, 263)

“...The honeycomb would suggest the result of a patient gathering up by collective labor of what has spiritual sweetness. Thoughts of Christ and of the Father stored in the heart, and now dropping from the lips in sweet and nourishing power!... Disparaging things of others uttered by His saints are not ‘honey and milk.’ They do not attract His love.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 114)

As already suggested, Lebanon was elevated ground; whence also grow the fragrant and renowned cedars. (See Appendix “N”) Lang’s *Commentary* says, “...Modern travelers testify that the cedar groves of Lebanon diffuse a strong balsamaic odor.” It is undoubtedly to this fragrance, permeating her clothes, that Solomon referred when he remarked to his Beloved, “the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.” And while this odor delighted him, it also served as a deterrent to certain forms of insect life, which are prone to destroy clothing.

“...The garments represent what is outward; our habits, ways, associations, and characteristics as they can be noticed publicly. The garments of the spouse are fragrant, even as those of the King are according to Psa. 45:8; they carry the smell of higher regions. ‘The smell of Lebanon’ rightly attaches to saints as known publicly here. In the office, behind the counter, at the works, they are not like other people. There is something about them to indicate that they have come from a region that is elevated far above the level of this world. Such features are most attractive to Christ. He speaks of them to us that we may come more and more into correspondence with the thoughts of His love concerning us.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 114)

“When Aaron was being installed into the priestly office, he was anointed with the holy oil and the continual incense which he burned before God, permeated his priestly robes. This perfume of the oil and the incense was ever upon him and upon his sons.

“We are commanded to put on Jesus Christ; and as He becomes our garment, as He clothes us more and more, His perfumes will be more and more perceptible to those about us. The oriental women perfume their garments with costly oils and spices, so that the air about them is laden with delicate fragrance like the odors of a thousand flowers. Even the least movement of a maiden whose clothing is thus perfumed, sends out sweet odors; and she walks in a cloud of perfumed air. So should it be with us. Our walk and carriage, our appearance and manner of speech, the least move-

ment in our lives, should be surrounded and permeated with precious spiritual perfume, like unto that of the cedars, and the sweet scented trees and flowers of Mount Lebanon.

“Oh, how our hearts long that, even in our most common movements and actions, the Christ-life shall be seen and discerned. As we put Him on, and are clothed in Him, as we are hidden away in this Divine Garment, the smell of our garments begins to partake of the smell of Lebanon. Though we may have some honey and milk in store under our tongues, if this outward perfume is lacking, we rob Christ of His glory. Every aspect and attribute of the bride must be perfected and be like Him.

“In the Song of Solomon, it is from every avenue, that the holy Spirit approaches the beauty and fragrance of both Christ and His bride, as well as the relation that is between them. He pictures them from every viewpoint in order that our hearts may be open to a clearer revelation of our Lord; and our lives be open to the benign influence and in working, which He is waiting to perfect within us.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 264, 265)

4:12 – Still continuing to laud her personal beauties, Solomon now resorts to metaphors; “A garden enclosed, is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.” “A garden enclosed,” bespeaks private property – not belonging, nor open, to the general public. Solomon would thus declare that his espoused was his very own; she did not, and could not, belong to any other. Whatever she had to give of beauty, love, affection, sweetness, etc., was to be his, and his alone – like a spring shut up, or a fountain sealed – privately owned.

Nor is it any different with the antitypical Solomon, for He too, regards His beloved Virgin, as His very own – a garden of beautiful and sweet scented flowers, and fragrant, and blossoming fruit-bearing trees, (Psa. 1:3; Jer. 17:8); all enclosed, i.e., fenced-in against all trespassers, who seeing their beauty, and breathing in their fragrance might be tempted to pluck them up and carry them away.

“...She is looked at now as a garden which he has set apart for himself. It is not a field – that would speak of the world – it is a place under cultivation, and the bridegroom owns it...The saints are his garden today, for we are spoken of as ‘God’s husbandry.’ (1 Cor. 3:9)

“This garden is enclosed and protected; there is a wall there to keep out the wild beasts which would destroy it. It is bolted and barred, so that nothing may damage the plants which the Father has planted. The saints are taken out of the world given to the Lord Jesus for His own joy and satisfaction.

“The spring is shut up; it is not a public drinking-place. The water here is used for His own garden, for

those wonderful plants which He has. He is the only one who can draw this water. The Lord delights to water His own, so that they may grow in grace and in knowledge of His will. It was also sealed with His own seal, which marked it as His. Are we not marked as his own, and ‘sealed by the holy Spirit until the day of redemption?’...” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, pages 125, 126)

“A new figure of the spouse is introduced at this point: she is seen as the garden of the Beloved. The thought of a garden has a special place in the mind of God...saints are spoken of as God’s husbandry, and, as being plants of the heavenly Father’s planting. (1 Cor. 3:6-9; Matt. 15:13)

“The spouse is ‘a garden enclosed...a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.’ She is exclusively for Him; she is *His* garden. That is a great feature of her attractiveness to Him, and it is as holding ourselves reserved for Him that we answer to the pleasure of His love....His garden is not a common where all may come and go; it is ‘enclosed’ to be for Him alone. What must it be to Him to see even one heart that holds itself for His pleasure alone!

“We cannot be presented ‘a chaste virgin to Christ’ without being carefully reserved from the influences of the world. When a man died in a tent (Num. 19:14,15) every ‘open vessel which hath no covering bound upon it shall be unclean.’ How true it is that we are in a place where moral death and corruption sheds its influence on everything. To be clean we must be covered vessels. A man with wireless apparatus (radio, T.V., etc.) in his house is uncovered; he has definitely left himself open to the influences that are broadcast in this present evil world. We need to be ‘enclosed,’ ‘shut up,’ ‘sealed.’ We expect to be accounted narrow, but how great is the honor and joy of being reserved for Christ! I know that I fail in not being more exclusive than I am, but I do not care to open my mind to all sorts of things that give no pleasure to Christ. He would have us ‘wholly clean.’ We cannot help touching the dust of the world as we pass along as bathed persons, but He washes our feet, and bids us wash one another’s feet, that we may be ‘wholly clean.’ No Christian was ever known to regret on his deathbed that he had been too exclusively for Christ....The penitent Psalmist said, ‘Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.’ (Psa. 51:7) Have we got such a standard of moral purity as that? How stainless is the newly-fallen snow! But our standard goes beyond that, for we are told that every one who has the hope of being like Christ ‘purifies himself, even as he is pure.’ (1 John 3:3) How effectually would that keep out all the influences of the world!

“With those that have the affections of the spouse it is not merely a question of what is right or wrong

– though surely there would be no carelessness as to that – but of what is pleasurable to Christ. We want His garden to be such as to yield Him the fullest possible satisfaction and delight, so that we may be able to invite Him to come in with assurance that He will find pleasure in doing so.

“‘A spring shut up.’ I suppose we have all at some time seen a well with a lock on it, so that none but the owner might draw from it. That is the thought. There is something which is for our Lord alone – a flow of affections and appreciations which He alone can estimate, and which is as precious to Him as the water of the well of Bethlehem, which was in the gate, was to David. (2 Sam. 23:13-17)” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, pages 115, 118)

4:13, 14 – Solomon of old, continued: “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.” Having likened his Beloved to a beautiful, enclosed garden, Solomon now proceeds to tell her as to why it so much appeals to him; her graciousness, her benevolence, and all the sweetness of her manner of living. He now likens these to the fruitage of pomegranates; and the fragrance of henna-flowers, spikenard, saffron, calamus, cinnamon, frankincense, and many other spices. These delighted and ravished his heart; especially finding these in his own fenced-in garden!

This, however, only feebly reflects what our blessed Lord “sees” in his own “enclosed” garden of saints; a richness – a lusciousness of fruitage like that of pomegranates; and a fragrance comparable, yea, surpassing that of the ancient spices, thus –

The **pomegranate** being a very choice calyz-crowned fruit, well might reflect the beautiful spiritual development of those who by way of sharing His “cup” (calyx), aspire someday to share His “crown” also. (2 Tim. 2:11, 12)

The **henna-flowers** (camphire) bespeak the “fragrance” – the outward manifestation of the indwelling Christ, in the lives of His saints, a fragrance perceptible also by the world!

The **spikenard** tells of the deep heart devotion of those who love Him sincerely, and who place their “crowning glory” (whatever this may be), at the feet of their beloved Jesus. (John 12:3, 7)

The **saffron** – which according to Rev. Henry S. Osborn, in his book, “Plants of the Holy Land,” was used by the ancients “both as a medicine and with their food” – suggests that ministry committed by the LORD to His Christ, of binding “up the broken-hearted...to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness...” (Isa. 61:1, 3) – a healing ministry!

The **calamus** – one of the ingredients of the holy anointing oil (Exod. 30:23) – very aptly depicts that long-suffering kindness, which when exercised by the bride-to-be, ravishes the heart of her beloved, heavenly bridegroom-to-be.

The **cinnamon** – also an ingredient of the holy anointing oil (Exod. 30:23) – suggests that loyalty, constancy, steadfastness of the love of those who are the children, the sons of God. (1 John 4:7, 15, 16)

The **frankincense** – an ingredient of the “sweet incense” (Exod. 30:34) used by the ancient Israelites in the services of their Tabernacle and Temple – betokens that praise, which even under trial, glorifies God; and is always and ever found in the heart of His spiritual Israel, but was so lacking in the hearts of God’s ancient people. (Psa. 50:14; 107:8, 15, 21, 31)

The **myrrh** – also an ingredient of the holy anointing oil (Exod. 30:23) – reflects the submission of all of God’s true saints, to His will; and who declare, as Jesus did, “I delight to do Thy will,” “It is my meditation day and night.” (Psa. 40:8; 119:97)

The **aloes** – though used by the ancients as a medicine and a tonic, it was also used like cassia for embalming the dead (see John 19:39), and might well here, set forth that disposition on the part of those who are “dead” with Christ (2 Tim. 2:11, 12), to cover up, as it were, the “foul odors” emitted from “dead bodies.” (Rom. 7:24; 2 Cor. 5:16)

All the “other chief spices” might well represent such fruits and graces of the Spirit, as augment this “fragrance” which arises from the Lord’s enclosed garden of saints: love; joy; peace; longsuffering; gentleness; goodness; faith; meekness; and temperance; (Gal. 5:22, 23) all of which may be comprehended under a single caption –

LOVE

Joy	Love exultant
Peace	Love in repose
Longsuffering	Love enduring
Gentleness	Love in society
Goodness	Love in action
Faith	Love on the battlefield of life
Meekness	Love in resignation
Temperance	Love in training

(See F186)

4:15 – Solomon’s admiration of the graciousness and benevolence of his Beloved toward others, caused him to liken her to a fruitful and sweet-scented garden; it now moves him to change the metaphor, so that he tells her that she is also a fountain of refreshing, living waters, whose source is in the heights of Lebanon.

Our Lord Jesus, is of course, the channel through which the streams of heavenly truth, life and refreshment flow (John 14:6); and, we, the espoused virgin class – like the woman at the Samaritan well – have been privileged to drink of this water, and it became in us, a

well of water springing up into everlasting life (John 4:13; 7:38) – a garden’s fountain, “a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.” (*R.S.V.*)

“The mountain of Lebanon derived its name from the white crown of snow, which it wore all the time. Streams of pure, cold water flowed down its sides or found their way through underground channels to the thirsty valleys below. These mountain streams never failed, never became stale and tasteless, warm and unrefreshing. From a higher source than any earthly mountain, comes the living water with which we are refreshed; though the Channel through which it flowed, appeared so lowly when upon earth.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 273)

“‘A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.’ This is a garden well supplied with water. ... The Lord told the woman of Sychar’s well, that the water He would give her would be in her a well of living water. In chapter seven of John we have the streams flowing out in blessing. The Lord said, ‘He that believeth in me, *out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*’ ...” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 127)

4:16 – Overjoyed at his similes, and recognizing her stewardship of his garden, Solomon’s Beloved, would please and delight him even more; thus does she call upon the elements to help her: “Awake, O north wind; and come thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.”

Just so, is it with the “espoused virgin” of the anti-typical Solomon. She too, is so very happy and overjoyed at all his sweet and blessed thoughts concerning her. Recognizing that the fruitage and fragrance of “his (her) garden” – whose stewardship she exercises (1 Cor. 4:2) – delightfully please him, she is now resolved to increase its yield, thus to delight and please him, yet more! Accordingly, she welcomes (yea, she prays) for whatever of disciplining may be necessary, to bring this about. (Phil. 4:11, 12; Heb. 12:11) She invites the “north wind” of adversity, and the “south wind” of prosperity, to blow over the garden, so that its fragrance of spices of the fruits and graces of the spirit, may “flow” (blow) “out” unto others. (Gal. 6:10)

“The north is where the cold winds come from. ... It is from thence that the storms and whirlwinds come...”

“The south is the land of sunshine. ... These different winds are needed, to blow upon the garden, that the odors of the spices might flow out. They are there, but the wind is needed that they may be enjoyed. The cold, sharp wind of the north is needed, as well as that gentle warm wind from the south.” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, pages 128, 129)

“... Very often, we are more inclined to ask God to bless us and flood our souls with glory, than we are to pray that He will deal and uncover all that is hindering Him from perfecting that which concerneth us. Blessings always come to the faithful, obedient soul, though the north wind may blow first, and is often needed before we can enter into God’s best, and can receive the blessings that always accompany God’s will.

“How little we recognize our own plans and desires, which are suckers in our spiritual lives. How little we apprehend the place we give the flesh and our own interests, our likes and dislikes, our experiences and self-absorption, which eat the strength and life out of our relation and attitude toward God.

“... He separates us from every one and everything that is harming our vineyards; He blows upon the human affections, both in us and in those who have a place in our lives; and before His north wind, human love withers up. We see only the circumstances, we see only the instruments that He uses; but if our eyes were anointed, back of all of these, we would see the spirit of God, as the north wind, blowing upon our gardens.

“Not one blossom, not one dealing that we have received and yielded to, can be harmed by the north wind of God’s dealing, which only blasts and withers the superficial and unfruitful; and the sooner these fall off the better. The sooner we see ourselves stripped of our self-confidence and blindness, of our false hopes and the delusion that we are far beyond the place to which we have really attained before God, the better.

“It is the strong blasts of the north wind that drive our roots down deeper and deeper, until that which has gone down and is out of sight, is greater and stronger than that which appears above the surface. We are astonished and disheartened as we behold some of the most beautiful blossoms in our lives drop off; those in which we had placed much confidence. But the very blasts of sharp conviction and dealing that destroy the fruitless blossoms, also cause the roots of the spiritual life to go down deeper into Christ; and they become firmly rooted and grounded in Him and in the truth of the gospel.

“The more testings God sends into our lives to purge and purify us, the stronger the searching north wind blows upon our garden, the more spices and fruit are perfected, and the more fragrance and preciousness come forth to the glory of God...”

“The love that suffers all things and is kind, must be tried in the furnace before it comes forth as gold. Many times our love toward God and toward man is tried to the uttermost through suffering, but

the divine love that comes from the heart of God and is shed abroad in our hearts through the holy Spirit, will remain and increase. And under this testing, it will send forth much fragrance as it never had before.

“The longsuffering, which is so precious before God, must have something to try it; for the very word brings out the meaning. To be longsuffering, is to suffer long; and to suffer long is hard on the flesh. The tests always appear to be undeserved and unjust, and it needs the real grace of God for this spice to be perfected so that it may send forth its perfume...” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 278-283)

Then, Solomon’s “fairest among women” added, “Let my beloved come into his (my) garden and eat his pleasant fruit.” To this invitation eventually he responds, saying, “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.”

5:1 – All throughout this Gospel age, the prayer of the “espoused virgin” has been, “...come (quickly) Lord Jesus” (Rev. 22:20); but He did not come to His “garden” until the Fall of 1874. Shortly thereafter, He delighted Himself in its “fruitage” and “spices.” The “myrrh” which he gathered at this time, we suggest, refers to those saints who had fallen asleep during the age, and whom he awakened in 1878. The “myrrh” – a symbol of submission to the divine will – would depress the bitterness of the trials, etc., which they endured so faithfully; and the “spice” would represent the “fragrance” of this submissiveness as a “sweet savor” to the Lord! From the lips of these saints there had arisen the testimony of thanksgiving and praise, which unto Him, was yet sweeter than honey or the honeycomb – and He did relish it! As for the “wine” and “milk,” these too afforded Him much pleasure, inasmuch as the doctrines (“wine”) and spiritual nourishment (“milk”) that He had blessed them with, had come back to Him through the love, thanksgiving and praise evidenced in their consecrated lives; much after the manner in which Jehovah might have delighted over the sacrifices of ancient Israel. Those sacrifices were of the things that God had given them; yet, He would have overlooked this fact, had they been offered to Him as tokens of their heartfelt thanksgiving and praise. (See Psa. 50:5-15)

Solomon greeting his guests, bids them to be seated to enjoy a repast he himself had prepared for them. He says, “Eat, dear friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.”

Our Lord Jesus, in speaking of this particular time, the end of the Gospel age, the Harvest (Matt. 13:39), admonished that those then living have their loins girded, and their lights burning, that they might be in readiness

to receive Him. He illuminated His remarks with a parable; and told how those servants would then be rewarded, for He would then gird Himself and serve them bountifully. (See Luke 12:35-37)

“Our Lord gave a parable, as was his custom in teaching, to illustrate this lesson of the necessity for watchfulness.

“A wealthy householder is represented as absent for a considerable portion of the night at a wedding feast, and expecting on his return that the servants of the household would be awake and alert to receive him and any company he might bring with him. It was expected of such servants that they would not only not retire to bed, but that they would not even get drowsy. To give their master a proper reception they should be thoroughly awake, quick to hear and to respond to his knock, and to ‘open unto him immediately.’ Hence, in the parable, such servants are represented as having their loins girt about and their lamps burning brightly. The custom of Orientals at that time was to wear long, loose, flowing robes. These, when they were resting, were loosened at the girdle, but when attending to business they were drawn tightly at the waist with a girdle or belt, preventing them from interfering with proper service. Lamps, which were the mode of illumination, were also necessary in the night, and should not be permitted to grow dim, but be trimmed as necessity required.

“Our Lord points out that such faithful servants would be appreciated by their master, and that he would give them a reward – he would honor them by treating them as his friends, and bring forth to them of the good things from his pantry. He would indeed gird himself as a servant and serve these faithful ones; and for the master of the house to do this would imply the bringing forth of the very best that he possessed. But in order to fulfil the conditions and be thus acceptable to the master they must be ready in whatever hour of the night he might come.

“The parable, without question, refers to the second coming of our Lord Jesus, and points out to all of his faithful servants the proper attitude of watchfulness and preparation to receive him at whatever time his second advent should occur...” (R2692:3-5)

Surely it is interesting to note that Solomon of old called his guests “dear friends,” and then also, “Beloved.” It is, however, in this same sense that Jesus, the greater than Solomon, called his disciples – the nucleus of the Gospel age church – “friends” (John 15:15) – the very same class that is called to be his heavenly bride, his “Beloved.” (1 Thes. 1:4; Col. 3:12) Then too, the saints who have been privileged to live in this harvest

period of the Gospel age, his guests, his “beloved” have been wonderfully regaled with a royal diet of “fat things,” with “meat” (yea, “strong meat”) – the deeper things of God’s Word; and with “drink” – an understanding of the doctrinal features of the Plan, such as none living before could have had! The “meat” has made us strong; and the “drink” has made even our hearts glad, and our faces to shine. (Psa. 104:15)

5:2 – The festivities are not quite over; but having grown a bit over-confident of herself; too sure of his love for her (“My beloved *is mine*” – Cant. 2:16), Solomon’s Beloved withdraws to take a little rest, perhaps just a little nap. On missing her, he goes over to her dwelling; it is still dark. On reaching there, he finds that she is abed; and attempts to arouse her. She, however, has been very restless, thus she could not really sleep. Suddenly she hears his voice, and his knock upon the door. He calls to her from without, “Open to me, my sister, my love, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.” But she is not dressed so as to let him in, and hesitates to step out of bed to put on her coat; then too, she had washed her feet, and she did not feel like soiling them again now.

While it is true that all throughout the Gospel age, there has been a tendency on the part of the “espoused virgin” to be too sure of herself, and of his love for her; it is particularly true in this harvest of the age. Christ’s admonition to the early church through the Apostle Paul is most timely also now, “Awake thou that sleepest, arise...” (Eph. 5:14) and “...knowing the time, that now, it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent; the day is at hand...” (Rom. 13:11, 12)

“...the Apostle was addressing Christians...His language implies what we know is frequently the case, namely, that after the early Christian experience of turning from sin to righteousness, from ignorance and superstition to faith and knowledge, and from the feelings of the stranger to a realization of adoption and membership in the family of God, there comes later to some a measure of carelessness, *drowsiness*. A spirit of the world comes in and threatens to overwhelm the new creature. The beautiful truths lose some of their freshness, crispness, beauty and flavor. Something new is looked for, and is provided by the adversary, along the lines of more or less self-gratification in earthly things.

“...‘knowing the time that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand’...the thought here evidently is a double one:

(1) We who have accepted Christ *should be awake*. Each day and week and month and year should find us *more awake* and more zealous and

more appreciative of our wonderful privileges. Our salvation, our resurrection ‘change,’ is surely nearing day by day.

(2) From whatever standpoint we view the matter it must be that the night-time of sin is far spent. It must be that the morning of the new dispensation is near. The Apostle wrote after four thousand years had passed and when the fifth was under way. We live when the entire six thousand-year days are in the past and the seventh, the Millennium of promise, is chronologically already begun.” (R4401:6)

“It is possible that some, even of the very dear and fully consecrated children of God, surrounded by the cares of this life, or weary in the struggle against sin and evil, or somewhat beguiled by the present things of time and sense, may have become *more or less drowsy*, and so stand in special need of the stirring exhortation, ‘it is now high time to awake out of sleep.’ It is a time for earnest, searching self-examination, for a more diligent feeling after God, for a closer walk and more intimate fellowship with him, for more thorough self-abnegation, more diligent and persevering crossbearing, and more faithful conformity in every respect to the *whole will of God* concerning us.” (R3830:6)

“...it shows that even when grace has been known in a very full way, and its spiritual fruits have been produced, a state of self-complacency may come about in the saints which does not yield to the Lord what His heart looks for...” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 124)

“The bride’s sleep is an uneasy sleep, for the heart that knows Christ can never rest if it turns away from Him. It is vain to turn to the world for rest of soul. Apparently the bride is neither sleeping nor waking, neither cold nor hot – a most dangerous condition to be in. If she sleeps, He does not, for He never slumbers nor sleeps. How often He seeks to arouse us in various ways, all calling in various tones, ‘Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from among the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.’ (Eph. 5:14)

“His love is unchanged, but the bride’s love is cold towards him. He would tell her how precious she is to him – ‘my sister,’ that speaks of the relationship which exists between them; ‘my love,’ she is the object of his heart; ‘my dove’ is a term of endearment (she is gentle, devoted, and beautiful); ‘my undefiled’ speaks of her purity. He appeals to her heart by telling her of his love, for her coldness has not changed his love towards her. In appealing to her affections, he tells her of the night, the dew and the drops of the night upon him. It is still the night of our Lord’s rejection.... We know that it is the time of His rejection by the world, but how strange

it seems that the one whom the Savior loved, and for whom he gave himself, should take her ease and be asleep, while he who loved her unto death stands outside her closed doors. This must be very disappointing to him. He would constantly speak to our hearts by bringing his love before us, reminding us of his sufferings, the nights he spent on the Mount of Olives, the time in the garden. What a night that was when he fell on his face, and sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground!

5:3 – “I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?” She is ready with excuses why she does not open unto him. Are we not as ready with excuses for our spiritual condition? ‘My business takes up so much of my time; I have so many things to do; I need to look after myself a little more.’ The real reason is sleep. He is waiting and willing to enter, but she must open the door. She allows trivial things to hinder her. She says, ‘I have put off my coat.’ She is so comfortable inside that she does not want to be disturbed when she has settled down....Now sleep has overcome her, and the bridegroom is shut out.

“She is thinking of her feet. They are washed and she cannot defile them....The bride cared only for her own feet, and had no thought for those other glorious feet which had brought the glad tidings to her.” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, pages 133-136)

“I was asleep, but my heart waked.’ The bride has prepared herself to take it easy. Her soul would have shrunk from being entirely asleep, she would have been afraid if she had been asleep both heart and body, so that she could not hear his voice. She prepared herself to rest, but her heart is still in a condition where she can hear the voice of her Beloved. She is lying at ease, but she keeps the sleeping and waking evenly balanced. The fact that she can hear his voice, helps to reassure her and to hide the danger she is in from taking her ease and slumbering.

“If we are willing to rest and be at ease and are not too zealous even those who are fully asleep will admire us when they see we know the voice of the Lord...

“We know the bride did not go into sin and infidelity for the Lord calls her his love, his dove, his undefiled. He could not call her his dove, his undefiled, if she were guilty of spiritual adultery. His love was upon her, and her love was toward him; she had been waiting for him to come and was still waiting for him, though she had become weary and despondent and had gone to rest. She had kept her robes spotless, and her heart was listening for his voice, but she had fallen asleep.

Not only that, she had deliberately prepared to be at ease. She had washed her feet, she had put off her garment, she had lain down upon her couch with the express purpose of sleep and rest; but she would not let sleep embrace her heart also.

“It is so comforting to be in this place of half-slumber. It does not require any girding up of the loins. We do not need to set our faces like a flint, in order to abide in the place of half-sleep. We are not following hard after him; we are not counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. We are not suffering the loss of all things that we may know Christ, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; that we may attain unto the...resurrection from the dead.

“...We must examine our condition and see if we have been lulled to rest by the false confidence that is begotten of knowing that we hear the voice of the Bridegroom, although we are in a half-sleep.”
(MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 305-309)

5:4, 5, 6 - Solomon’s Beloved, having failed to open the door for him, he, himself, endeavored to open it by putting his arm through the hole in the door to release the latch. But it had been otherwise fastened, so that he could not enter. He therefore, went away. Having seen his arm – the eagerness with which he had sought to be with her, she is deeply moved to get up to open the door. She then arose, put on her garments, etc., and proceeded to open it. On reaching the door, she finds the handle of the lock all wet with sweet-smelling myrrh, which had undoubtedly dripped from his moist hand, when he had endeavored to open it himself. On opening the door, however, she finds that he is no longer there. Her heart fails within her! What had she done to him? had she lost him forever? She sought for him, and called after him, but there was no response.

Nor is it necessarily any different with the antitypical bridegroom-to-be. He comes to us, oftentimes, to enter our hearts for sweet and blessed fellowship: but we are too busy making ourselves comfortable; or perhaps just resting; we just aren’t in the mood for fellowship then, and thus do we also shut the door! O, it isn’t that we don’t love him; for we do; but we fail in our *self*-denial, our *self*-abnegation! Our heavenly bridegroom-to-be, does strive for awhile; but then, there does come a time when he ceases to do! (Gen. 6:3)

It may be that this particular section of the Song of Songs is intended to show, that it is possible for those “called” to membership in the bride class to lose out; for “wise virgins” to become “foolish virgins.” (Matt. 25:1-13) It is important, therefore, that we maintain a sufficiency of oil (the Truth and its spirit of consecration and holiness) in our vessels; that we may maintain the fervency

of our zeal steadfast to the end. (Psa. 69:9; 119:139; John 2:17) (See *Appendix "Z"*)

"The parable forewarns us that, though all the virgin class trim their lamps, all cannot *see*. Only those who have the oil in their vessels (in themselves – the fully consecrated) can get light from their lamps, and appreciate the facts. The others (all the pure, the virgins) will get the oil and light some time, and be greatly blessed by it; but only those filled with the oil, the spirit of the truth, will have the light in season and get the great blessing. Only those go in with the Bridegroom to the marriage. Each for himself must be filled with the spirit; each must get his own supply of this oil (The Truth, and its spirit of consecration and holiness); and the cost is considerable in the way of self-denial and misrepresentation and fiery trials. Experience in the great time of trouble will be the market in which the foolish virgins will purchase their oil. But it will then be too late to go into the marriage, as members of the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. The Scriptures point out, however, that, as vessels unto 'less honor,' these, repentant of their folly, will not be destroyed; but, being thus fitted for the Master's use, they shall yet serve him in his temple." (C93)

"But surely, it might be said, it will not be so when he is truly loved. In such a case he will have but to speak and to knock, and the door will be thrown open immediately! But such is not the picture here. He speaks, he knocks, he addresses his spouse in terms of tender affection. 'Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, mine undefiled.' He appeals to every kindly feeling in her heart when he says, 'For my head is filled with dew, my locks with the drops of night.' But she is not prepared to rise; she is unwilling to disturb herself. 'I have put off my tunic, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how should I pollute them?' It would probably be painful and humbling to most of us if we realized how much we are governed by *self-consideration* rather than by consideration for Christ. *Self-consideration* often takes the form of avoidance of exercise. Every spiritual movement that opens the door for personal intimacy with Christ costs something. It means a certain disturbance of present conditions. And when we have settled into conditions which are comfortable, with nothing evil that we know of to trouble our consciences, we do not care to be disturbed by the thought that we are not giving Christ the place that he longs to have. It makes less demand to go on as we are; we have got things nicely into accord with our own feeling; why should we unsettle all the conditions of our spiritual life out of consideration for the feelings of Christ? If it did not mean quite such a reversal of all that we have been doing for our own ease and comfort it would not meet with the same reluctance to move.

"But when the soul has got into this dormant state of *self-consideration* and *self-complacency*, the Lord will raise the question of his own rights in love. His love is sensitive: he feels it if we can be comfortable without him..."

"What we see here is that neither his voice nor his knock were sufficient to rouse her. Much ministry that goes forth is the Lord's voice and knock, and it is recognized as being so, but the lethargic state is such that it does not lead to definite movement in relation to Christ. But his hand being put in by the hole of the door is evidently a further and more direct action of his love. His voice and his knock were heard before, but he was hidden. But his hand being put in was as really a partial manifestation of himself. It made the spouse so conscious of the reality of his Person and love, and his claim to her, that it produced deep feelings in her. It speaks of a direct and personal action of the Lord which is more effective in producing an impression than his voice or his knock..."

"...I am sure we are all conscious that we have heard much that has not really moved us spiritually. But when he puts in his hand, there is a deep inward movement in the soul, and a rising up to open the door to the Beloved..."

"...Nothing could be more injurious to those who have left their first love than to get the impression that the Lord has not felt this defection deeply...if the Lord has felt things deeply there will be no real concert of heart with him until they are felt deeply by the soul that has been content to be without his company. The Lord will not give himself to a repentance which is light and superficial..." (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, pages 126-129)

The time was when, his (her Beloved's) submission to his heavenly Father's will (myrrh), kept close to her heart (breasts) – Cant. 1:13 – glorified her own love, giving to her the same fragrance: she was then rich in self-denial, and self-giving! Her defection had left her bereft of much of this. Had she not fastened the door against his entrance to her? or, was she merely trying him, to see how much he might bear from her? In any event, her course was a very dangerous one. If she had lost him forever, it would have been her own fault; surely, not His! But he still loved her; and now he would teach her a lesson, not to trifle with his love. He left a token of himself behind, myrrh, the sweet-smelling myrrh, with which the handle of the lock of the door was left wet, and which caused her fingers to drip of, when she finally got to open that door.

5:7 – Solomon's "fairest" had once before searched for him whom her soul loved: and this, in and about the city (Cant. 3:2) and found him not there. Now again she searches for him in the city, and once again falls into the hands of the watchmen, who treat her very poorly. Not

only this, but the keepers of the wall take away her veil from her, thus humbling her very much.

Evidently, for the antitypical “fairest” the city can not here represent nominal Christendom at large, but now, more particularly, that which is nominal amongst the so-called “Truth peoples.” The “watchmen” accordingly, might represent such elders of ecclesias, who are not too much in sympathy with those who crave the greater, the deeper spiritual fellowship with the Lord – the “espoused virgin’s” Beloved! As she approaches them for some word of her Beloved, they tell her that it isn’t that important. They do this by way of their failure to preach Christ and Him crucified; and so, instead, give travelogues, and discourse on controversial subjects involving mere matters of opinion. The “keepers” of the wall, might represent some deacons, and any others who belittle the sincerity of the espoused virgin, thus taking away from her, her dignity among the saints. It is the watchmen, however, who much assume the greater responsibility for what befalls the “espoused virgin.” Perhaps this is why the Apostle James warned and admonished, “be not many of you teachers...knowing that ye shall have a severer judgment.” (Jas. 3:1 *E.D.*)

“In harmony with these words of the Master to St. Peter (‘Feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep’) the chief work of the followers has been to minister to the needs of the spirit-begotten sheep. It is in full harmony with this that St. Paul, addressing the elders of Ephesus, counseled that they ‘feed the flock of God, which he had purchased with the blood of his own Son.’ There is a point there that perhaps is too frequently overlooked. If all the Lord’s followers could realize that the message to St. Peter is the same to all of us, perhaps it would make a change in most of our preaching.” (R5052:5)

“It causes real grief to write that much of the difficulty and danger to the church seems to lie at the door of the elders and deacons – not all, thank God, but apparently a small minority of them, judging from the queries which come to the office from time to time from bewildered sheep, who seek advice as to their proper course. The true, loyal servants in the church should be all the more appreciated by the Lord’s people in proportion as they realize the difference between true elders and deacons and those who are untrue. Nor are we writing with a view to the discouragement of the unfaithful, but rather to open their eyes to the true situation, that perchance they may be recovered out of the snare of the adversary and become helpers of the Lord’s Flock, instead of hinderers.

“So far as we are able to judge, the same conditions prevail today amongst Bible students which the Apostle pointed out to the elders of the church of Ephesus when he charged them: ‘Take, therefore, heed unto yourselves and all the Flock over which

the holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with the blood of his own (Son).’ (Acts 20:28)...” (R5981:2)

“Well did St. James write, ‘Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that a man shall receive the severer trial.’ (Jas. 3:1) While, as we have pointed out, all of the Lord’s people are specially susceptible along the line of spiritual pride, there seems to be a special danger surrounding all who become in any manner identified with the promulgation of his truth.” (R5956:3)

“...How often, when a soul is aroused and seeking the Lord, there are those who smite and wound, but who cannot help the enquirer to find the One whom he is seeking.” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 140)

“Be assured that the Lord is not making any mistake....Even if the watchmen make a mistake He does not, and He is over all that the watchmen do, though they may do what He would never have told them to do. The brethren may be over zealous and unduly severe sometimes, but what they do – perhaps mistakenly – is all under the Lord’s hand. If they treat me hardly I may be sure there is some ground for it in my ways, and that there is also a reason which perhaps they know nothing about. It is well to humbly accept every such exercise as from the Lord.

“The watchmen are faithful to their trust in keeping order in the city – though, in this case, with mistaken severity – but they were unsympathetic with the hidden exercises of her heart. I think we have to learn how to combine faithfulness with sympathy...it would be well if we gave the impression of unflinching faithfulness in regard to all that is due to the Lord, but also of sympathy with every gracious exercise that may be under the surface in one who is really seeking him.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 131)

Solomon’s Beloved having suffered at the hands of the watchmen of the city; and being bereft of her veil by the keepers of the walls, now approaches the daughters of Jerusalem to ask them, should they see her Beloved before she does, that they tell him of how truly love-sick for him she is.

Chastened, as it were, by His absence, rebuffed and persecuted by the religious leaders, and bereft of her veil (dignity), the Beloved of the antitypical Solomon, is now truly humbled and ready for restoration. In contrast to these trying experiences at the hands of those whom she had loved and trusted, there now comes to her mind the thought of his loving kindness, tenderness and mercy, of which she had been, as it were, a sole recipient in other days. But this, all, is serving His purposes, for it is increasing her painful soul hunger, and painful longings and yearnings for Him!

“...Because of this persecution and misunderstanding, because of the veil being torn away from her... she is urged to greater love and fervency in seeking Him whom her soul loveth. Never before has she loved Him as she loves Him now when she is suffering for His dear sake; never has He been so sweet to her. Never before has the vision of her dear Lord been so beautiful and precious as now, when she is looked upon with suspicion and with scorn by the watchmen, and, by those sheep who always follow the shepherds, no matter where they lead.

“...All of us who have been hungry and have diligently sought...have been through this experience...with what determination have we sought to find Him in a deeper way; with what devotion have we cried for a greater revelation of Himself... With what cutting loose did we run after Him; looking in every place where He might be found, searching every spiritual worship and service in which we hoped that He might reveal Himself!

“...Her recent indolence has blighted her *self-confidence* and self-satisfaction...

“...As the sun draws moisture from the bosom of the ocean, so does our Beloved draw the longing of our hearts to Himself. The earth fades away, every desire and interest sinks out of sight, and life itself is worth nothing, as our whole beings stretch out and cry for our own dear Lord.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 339-342)

5:8 – “The bride is now aroused, and must find her Beloved at all costs. She now asks others to help her. ‘I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my Beloved, that ye tell Him that I am sick of love’. In the second chapter (Cant. 2:5) she is sick of love because she has been given so much that she cannot contain any more; now it is because she longs for Him and cannot find Him. She has passed through bitter experiences, and such self-judgment, that she has reached the point when she is ready for restoration. The way back is always open when we have judged ourselves, as she finds. He is ready to reveal Himself; for He is not far away; but has only withdrawn Himself. The Lord is tender in His dealings with us, for He always looks for our return when there has been a departure from Him.” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, pages 140-141)

“The spouse is now brought to the point when she is prepared for restoration. Her *self-satisfaction* and *self-complacency* have gone. She cannot now be at ease without her Beloved. He was becoming more precious, more indispensable, to her heart all the time. Everything was leading her to think more of Him. ‘I am sick of love.’ She has learned to think of Him in a way that corresponds, in a

measure at least, with how He thought of her. This is true restoration. All that she has, and all that she is, utterly fails to satisfy her apart from Him. How she is coming out in her true beauty as the ‘fairest of women.’ (vs. 9) *Self-complacency* is the result of losing that spring of lively affection for Christ which the Spirit would maintain in the bride...

“...She is overcome by the intensity of a longing which, as yet, remains unsatisfied.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, pages 132-133)

The “daughters of Jerusalem,” to whom the “espoused virgin” addresses herself, must now represent the “mixed multitude” which all through the age has attached itself to the Truth movement, and which multitude may be made up largely of Great Company members! Some of this “mixed multitude,” may have consecrated, but were never accepted by Jehovah; others consecrated and were accepted, but having failed to sacrifice in compliance with their covenant, are now a Great Company, whose number no one knows. (Rev. 7:9) Undoubtedly, many of these are still identified with nominal churchianity!

5:9 – At any rate, craving a deeper fellowship with her Beloved, the “espoused virgin” addresses these “daughters of Jerusalem” in the hope that they may be able to help her find Him. Because of her recent indolence, she now feels that she has lost Him, and asks these to tell Him, should they find Him before she does, of her love-sickness for Him. But this is really language which one could not expect them to understand. However, recognizing, after a fashion, the depth of her consecration, they ask her “What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved, O thou fairest among women? What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved, that thou so chargest us?”

Let it be carefully noted, that *not many* in the nominal systems would recognize the “espoused virgin” as the “fairest among women” but surely, the Great Company should!

But the “daughters of Jerusalem” never having loved so truly, and so deeply, are surprised at her charge to them, and they wonder how, and in what way He could be so very much more important to her. They question her along these lines. She endeavors to explain it to them by describing Him – who He is; what He is; His head; His hair; His eyes; His cheeks; His mouth; His lips; His hands; His body and His legs.

“...These ‘daughters of Jerusalem’ represent those who fear God and who can recognize spiritual features when they see them. So they can address the spouse as being the ‘fairest among women’, ...They do not know the Beloved as the spouse knows Him...” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 133)

5:10 – While Solomon’s “fairest” in describing him (her Beloved) to the daughters of Jerusalem, as “white and ruddy” had reference to the color and the delicate texture

of his skin (which allowed the redness of the blood to show through it); we shall have to recognize that when the antitypical “fairest” describes Him (her Beloved – Christ Jesus), “white” is indicative of the robustness of his spiritual health, as represented in the righteousness and purity of the character of “the Lamb of God” whom the Scriptures declare to have been, “Holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners” (Heb. 7:26; but see also 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22); and “ruddy” reflects that His life was one of sacrifice, culminating in the shedding of His blood on Calvary’s cross (whence His blood flowed over His pure white skin, from His head, hands, feet and riven side) for the remission of sins. (Matt 20:28; Heb. 9:22; 1 Tim. 2:6) The Hebrew word here rendered “ruddy” seems to be quite closely related to the thought of blood. (See *Appendix “O”*) We may not be too sure, yet it is possible that the rams’ skins used to cover the tent of Israel’s ancient Tabernacle and to hide its great mystery of atonement from adventurous and inquisitive eyes, were pure white; but then they were dyed red. (Exod. 26:14) If this conjecture be correct, we have here what was suggested by the “espoused virgin” in her description of her Beloved, “white and ruddy.”

She continues, “My beloved...is the chiefest among ten thousand.” The term “chiefest” in the Hebrew text, has the significance of “standard-bearer,” (see the margin of the *Authorized Version*). The term “ten thousand,” we suggest is a trope, symbolizing the complete number of the saints, namely, the 144,000, of whom Enoch of old, prophesied under the same figure: “Behold, the Lord cometh with *ten thousand* of his saints.” (Jude 14)

“...The record respecting Enoch is very meager, but we do know that he was a prophet, and that through him the message came that Messiah would come eventually with *ten thousand* of his holy ones to execute righteous judgment in the earth – to overthrow sin, and set up divine standards amongst men. ‘Behold, the Lord cometh with *ten thousand* of his saints, to execute judgment upon all.’ Jude 14, 15.” (R4386:4)

The “standard” which He bears over these thousands of saints, is the “banner of love.” (Psa. 60:4; Cant. 2:4; 6:4)

“...The banner for which she praises God the most, is His banner, which he set up in her life when He forever took her captive and made her his love slave. In all this, her heart rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

“Sweeter than all else are the chains of her Beloved, which she wears with holy pride and exultant joy. And when her eyes are anointed, she can ever discern, floating over her, His own peculiar banner, bearing his name, ‘Love.’ Though the way is hard and the night is dark, she can see it gleaming through the darkness; and her heart rejoices that though all hell is arranged against her (Matt. 16:18),

under the protection of His banner she is safe.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 354)

And so the testimony of the “espoused virgin” to the “daughters of Jerusalem” throughout the whole of the Gospel age has been, that He was sinless; that He gave himself a ransom for all; and that God highly exalted Him; and that He is to come again with His saints, to establish God’s everlasting kingdom of peace, in all the earth.

5:11 – Gold is the symbol for that which is divine: a symbol of the Deity, therefore, of Jehovah God, himself; and also, of the divine nature. (R1944:1) Perhaps there is no more precious sense in which the words of the “espoused virgin” concerning her Beloved, are true, that his “head” is “as the most fine gold,” than in this, that the “mind...which was...in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5) was the mind of Jehovah! Was it not the “Spirit of the Lord God” that was upon him? (Isa. 61:1; Luke 4:18) Was it not by way of this that he did always the things that pleased the Father (John 8:29), and was thus able to reveal the Divine mind and character; and to say, “He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father”? (John 14:9; 10:38) (See also Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23)

“...it was the Father’s Spirit that was communicated to our Lord Jesus, as it is written, ‘The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me...’” (E169)

And, while this all was true of him while he was yet in the spirit begotten condition, how much true is it of him whom the Father hath highly exalted by way of the spirit-birth, and given the name that is above every name? (Phil. 2:9) Truly, he is now the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! (Rev. 19:16) (See also Psa. 21:1-7) What a precious symbolism is this – “his head is as the most fine gold.”

His “locks” are bushy and black as a raven, she continues in her description of him whom her soul loveth. The “locks” here are not long; nor are they short, but they are “bushy.” Evidently, the significance now, is not that of a separateness of consecration; but rather that of youthfulness and undeteriorating vigor and energy. Age, and decline would well be represented in gray hair. However, our heavenly bridegroom-to-be, being a partaker of the divine nature, will never grow old – his life is endless, yea, he is immortal. Therefore, this most apt symbolism of black hair. Its bushiness, we think, bespeaks as already suggested, his youthfulness, and undeteriorating vigor and energy – the great power by way of which he will be able to carry out all of God’s purposes. This is, of course, in great contrast to the picture we have of him in Rev. 1:14, where he is depicted as having “hairs...white like wool, as white as snow.” The purpose of this latter, was not the reflection of his everlasting youth, nor his enduring vigor, but rather, it was intended to be symbolic of his “venerableness, of knowledge, experience, wisdom.” (See R2826:5)

“The color of the hair indicates the eternal youth of the Beloved, the Jesus who will never grow old. The Spirit describes Jesus Christ in Psa. 110:3, 4: ‘Thou hast the dew of thy youth, a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek’.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 357)

5:12 – She continues her description of her Beloved to the daughters of Jerusalem: “His eyes are the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters...” On two occasions, her Beloved had described her eyes (Cant. 1:15; 4:1) as “doves’ eyes.” It is now her turn; and she speaks of His as tenderly as He did of hers, save that she adds: “by the rivers of waters...”

Trees, are sometimes, in the Scriptures, used as symbols of the righteous, who are said to be “planted by the *rivers of water*” by Jehovah God himself. (Psa. 1:3; Jer. 17:8; Isa. 61:3) In a sense, the “rivers of waters” represent the Truth, whose streams both satisfy and nourish such trees, making glad “the city of God” (Psa. 46:4) – the church of the firstborns of the Gospel age.

“Water, living water, pure water, is a wonderful symbol...water is that which quenches, which satisfies...demand of nature; and so there is also a soul-thirst and a water of life which alone can satisfy it.

“This satisfying water of life can be obtained from no other source than our Redeemer, and all who have received it well know it and can never be sufficiently thankful for it; for in it they have the peace of God which passeth all understanding ruling in their hearts. Instead of thirst for honor amongst men, they have the thirst for fellowship and honor with the heavenly Father and the Redeemer. Instead of a thirst for earthly wealth, their transformed desires now thirst for heavenly treasures. Instead of thirst for sensual pleasures, their desires are transformed so that their chiefest joys and desires are for spiritual pleasures. And all these thirsts are abundantly and continually satisfied through the refreshment of *the Word of Truth, and the holy Spirit of the truth – the water of life*, which is communicated to us by our Redeemer, and is in each one a perennial living fountain.” (R2574:6; 2575:1)

Eyes can be windows or mirrors of the soul: they often reflect, i.e., give expression to what is in the heart. Evidently, the association, by the “espoused virgin” of her Beloved’s eyes with the rivers of waters, is intended to convey just this thought. One could not for long, look into these wonderful eyes of our Lord, without having created within himself, a thirst – a deep desire for Him, and the things which He has to give – the “waters of life.” (See John 4:10, 13-15)

“Washed with milk...” This is a continuation of the “espoused virgin’s” description of her Beloved’s eyes. Milk, though a perfect food in itself, is more particularly suited for those who are not too strong in themselves –

babes, infants, and also for those who though they be older, are nevertheless ailing and infirmed. Spiritually speaking, we believe, that all of the Lord’s true saints, because of having been born in sin, and “shapen in iniquity” (Psa. 51:5) – with their imperfect bodies and imperfect minds, should fall into this category, where they are in need of the tender, loving care (compassion) of One who would care for them. And, while Jesus was born, “holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners” (Heb. 7:26), he was, nevertheless privileged by the heavenly Father, to experience through the loss of virtue – vitality (Luke 6:19; 8:46), the infirmities of our fallen nature. Thus he is now a most sympathetic, and loving, High Priest, ever touched with the feeling of our infirmities. (Isa. 53:4, 5, 8, 10; Heb. 4:15) It is in this way, then, that his “eyes” (perception) have been “washed with (the) milk” of compassion and kindness toward all of us.

“...from the record of the Scriptures we understand that the healing of the sick, as performed by our Lord, was not by the superhuman power at his command, but that on the contrary, in healing the sick he expended upon them a part of his own vitality: and consequently, the greater the number healed, the greater was our Lord’s loss of vitality, strength. In proof that this was so, call to mind the record of the poor woman who ‘for twelve years had an issue of blood, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather worse,’ etc. Remember how with faith she pressed close to the Lord, and touched the hem of his garment, saying within herself, ‘If I may touch but his clothes I shall be whole.’ The record is that ‘straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing within himself that virtue (vitality) had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? And the disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing, and he said unto her, Daughter thy faith hath made thee whole, go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.’ (Mark 5:25-34)

“Notice also Luke’s account (Luke 6:19) which declares, ‘And the whole multitude sought to touch him; for there went virtue (vitality) out of him, and healed them all.’ This, then, was the sense in which our dear Redeemer took the infirmities of humanity, bearing our sicknesses. And the result of thus day by day giving *his own vitality* for the healing of others, could be no other than debilitating in its effect upon his own strength, his own vitality. And we are to remember that this work of healing, lavishly expending his vitality, was in connection with his preaching and travels, our Lord’s almost

continuous work during the three and a half years of his ministry.” (E124-125)

“...The eyes are the most expressive feature of the countenance; they indicate the attitude and feelings of the heart towards the one on whom they rest more directly and immediately than the voice or the words. The voice may be heard at a distance; but to gather what is expressed by the eye one must be near. And no doubt this applies to the eyes of the Beloved.” (Coates – *An Outline on the Song of Songs*, page 143)

Undoubtedly, when Solomon’s “fairest among women” in speaking to the daughters of Jerusalem, described his eyes as “fitly set,” she had in mind features of the physical beauty of his countenance. (The Hebrew seems to signify, “sitting in fullness, i.e., fitly placed, and set as a precious stone in the foil of a ring.”) However, while this thought can readily be carried over into the spiritual, we shall have to note that the antitypical “fairest among women” in speaking thusly of her Beloved’s eyes, intends something more significant. She thinks more particularly of what those eyes *are set upon*. Upon her!

“His eyes are ‘fitly set’ there is no obliquity in them. The eyes of our Beloved are tender and loving when as the Savior, He looks upon us; they are gentle and compassionate when they look upon those who love and are following Him, even though their steps are faltering, and though they tumble sometimes.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 359)

5:13 – In language, perhaps too rhetorical for the daughters of Jerusalem to fully comprehend, Solomon’s “fairest among women” now describes her Beloved’s cheeks, “as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers...” Perhaps she was here, once again referring to the delicate but perfect texture of his skin, which allowed the blush of his blood to show through it, in delightful shades of scarlet. This would probably have been most in evidence when he smiled at her, which smile, like spices and flowers, would radiate fragrance and beauty.

So too, is it with the “smile” (favor) of our Beloved, Jesus, because of the warmth and richness of the life within himself, is able to impart unto the “espoused virgin” sensations of both “fragrance” (spices) and “beauty” (sweet flowers).

“Jesus! the very thought of Thee
With sweetness fills my breast;
But sweeter far Thy face to see,
And in Thy presence rest.”

“His lips like lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh,” Solomon’s Beloved continues: undoubtedly, having reference to the graciousness with which words flowed out through them.

Nor is it any different with our Beloved bridegroom-to-be. From His lips fell, and still fall, the most gracious words (John 7:46) ever to reach human ears! If the lilies to

which they are likened, were white, they speak of His purity and righteousness; if red, then of His love – His matchless love: and if purple, then of His royalty, and that to which He intends one day to raise her, his Beloved, “fairest among women.” (See *Appendix “P”*) We incline to the thought that they were white: for, we believe, that only because of His own purity and righteousness (white) and His own consecration to the doing of the Father’s will (sweet smelling myrrh), could he say such gracious words as:

“Thy sins are forgiven” Matt. 9:2; Luke 5:20; 7:48
“Be thou healed” John 5:8
“I have prayed for thee” Luke 22:32; John 17:9
“The Father himself, loveth you” John 16:27

“‘Grace is poured into His lips,’ and when he stood up to read in the synagogue, ‘They marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth.’ The officers sent to arrest Him returned, saying, ‘never man spake like this Man.’ No guile was ever found in His mouth. He was given the ‘tongue of the learned, that He might know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.’ Is it any wonder that they pressed on Him to hear His words, since ‘his lips were like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh’?” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 146)

5:14 – Solomon’s Beloved continues her description of him; she remarks that “his hands are as gold rings set with beryl...” (See *Appendix “Q”*) By this she means to imply that his hands, by the golden rings he wears show forth the authority with which he is endued of his father, to do certain works.

Our Lord Jesus’ hands are in themselves, symbols of the work done or to be done, by Him. He also “wears” the “gold rings” of *divine authority* vested in Him by His Father, Jehovah God. (John 9:4; 10:25; 17:4) It will be recalled that when Pharaoh exalted Joseph of old, to the premiership of the kingdom of Egypt, that authority was particularly signified in the ring he gave to him. (See Gen. 41:39-42) In this, Joseph became a beautiful type of our Lord Jesus, who, though once rejected by His own brethren (Gen. 37:13, 14, 18 – John 1:11), and cast into the pit (Gen. 37:24 – Matt. 27:58-60), and was in due time exalted, and given a name that is above every name (Gen. 41:40-45 – Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 1:4), that eventually he might become the blesser of *all* mankind! (Gen. 22:18 – Matt. 28:18; Rev. 5:12, 13; Gal. 3:8, 16)

“His hands gold rings.’ The word ‘rings’ is somewhat uncertain in meaning; it is translated ‘folding’ in 1 Kings 6:34. It suggests, I think, the power of His hands to hold, or to enfold, in a divine way what was put in them. What a comfort it is to know that nothing that has been put into the hands of Christ will ever slip out of them. ‘The Father loves the Son, and has given all things to be in his hand’ (John 3:35). The Father has given Him authority over all

flesh, that as to all that the Father has given to Him He should give them life eternal. (John 17:2). Every one of His sheep is in His hand, and therefore will never perish. (John 10:28) The future blessing of Israel and of the nations, and all the power of the kingdom, is committed to His hand, and therefore it is as certain to be brought about as if it were now accomplished.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 151)

“The gold ring signifies authority, and we know when Joseph was exalted, Pharaoh’s ring was put on his hand, for he was placed over all the land of Egypt....All power has been given to Christ; all judgment has been committed to Him as Son of Man. (John 5:22, 27) He could say to the Father, ‘Thou hast given Him power over all flesh.’ (John 17:2) The right hand of Christ holds the seven churches, and we are...held in that strong hand of His...” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 147)

Seemingly, when Solomon’s “fairest among women” described his belly, “as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires,” she had reference to the delicate texture of his skin: ivory setting forth its whiteness; sapphires, the blue of the veins showing through it.

We are not too sure that the antitypical “fairest among women” would be describing the outward appearance of her “Solomon’s” belly; in fact, the Hebrew word here rendered “belly” is in Cant. 5:4, rendered “bowels.” Perhaps reference is really to inward emotions! If so, the ivory seemingly would signify their purity and nobility; and the sapphires, their heavenly character. (See Exod. 24:10; Ezek. 1:26)

“...This, no doubt, speaks of the deep feelings of the Lord. It is the same word as ‘bowels’ in verse 4. The spouse had her deep feelings moved then; ‘my bowels yearned for him.’ But HE had deep feelings too, and she is now thinking of them. He could say prophetically, ‘my heart is become like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels’ (Psa. 22:14)...He was moved with compassion when He saw the crowds ‘because they were harassed, and cast away as sheep not having a shepherd.’ (Matt. 9:36) He was moved with compassion when he touched the blind man’s eyes. (Matt. 20:34) He had compassion on the crowd when they had stayed with Him three days, and had not anything they could eat. (Mark 8:2) He had compassion on the widow of Nain who was bereft of her only son. (Luke 7:13) The Samaritan – a blessed picture of the Lord – was moved with compassion when he saw the half-dead man. (Luke 10:33) And Jesus could speak, as no other could speak, of the father as being moved with compassion when he saw His lost son arise to return to him. (Luke 15:20) And it is to be noted that in all these instances the word for compassion signifies a

yearning of the bowels. And, with the exception of the case of the two blind men, these compassions were unsought by those upon whom they were exercised. They were sovereign in character. This is the true character of compassion; it flows out to need which is realized in the feelings of the One who shows it. What the Lord said and did was the outcome of how He felt things; it was not according to how the people felt them...” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, pages 154-156)

5:15 – Solomon’s Beloved next describes his legs, saying they are like “pillars of marble set in sockets of gold.” Notice, she does not mention his feet, save perhaps that these may be suggested in the sockets. Sockets are ordinarily not identified with a movable structure; we therefore conclude, it is stability, sturdiness, rather than movement, that she would impress upon the daughters of Jerusalem. It should also be noted how the emphasis throughout her charge has been “whiteness”: his color, “my beloved is white,” (Cant. 5:10); his belly is “bright ivory” (Cant. 5:14); and now, his legs, “like pillars of marble,” (Cant. 5:15); as if to stress the fact that he is in no sense of the word, swarthy.

Surely, such also has been the testimony of the “espoused virgin” to the “daughters of Jerusalem” concerning her “Beloved.” She has ever and always placed emphasis upon the fact of his purity, righteousness, and nobility – his separateness from sinners, yea, there in no sense is any tincture of darkness in or about our blessed Lord. The legs “like pillars of marble” we believe, are intended to show the characteristic qualities, inherent in our beloved Lord. He was, as we too are admonished to be, “steadfast, unmovable...” (1 Cor. 15:58); for are we not told that He is (even as His Father is – James 1:17), “the same yesterday, and today, and forever”? (Heb. 13:8) As for the “sockets of gold,” they would indicate Him also, to be “rooted and grounded” in things that are divine – the Love of God. (Eph. 3:17)

“His legs, pillars of marble, set upon bases of fine gold.” This intimates the stability of all that is in Christ. His feet are not mentioned; His movements are not contemplated here but his immovable stability. God has introduced in Christ what is marked by stability, in contrast with all the instability that marked Adam and his race. ‘And He shall be the stability of thy times.’ (Isa. 33:5, 6) It is righteousness which gives stability...

“Christ as the Beloved is the Righteous One, and every promise of God is righteously secured in Him so that it can never be invalidated. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, ‘did not become yea and nay, but yea is in Him.’ There is no uncertainty or instability about Christ, no possibility of anything being overturned or even moved...what is established in Him stands firm eternally. In being brought to that we receive a kingdom that cannot be moved.

"The 'pillars of marble' are 'set upon bases of fine gold.' All that is in Christ is stable because it is purely of God, and is established upon the foundation of divine righteousness and glory.... God himself, we may say, is the base of all, and all that is of God is so confirmed in Christ that it can never be overthrown by any power of earth or hell. The two pillars for the porch of the temple – Jachin and Boaz – suggest a very similar thought to the 'pillars of marble.' Jachin means 'He will establish'; and Boaz means, 'In him is strength'." (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, pages 158-160)

Solomon's "fairest" having already described his eyes, his cheeks and his lips, now returns to these, and speaks of his countenance, saying it "is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars."

5:16 – So too, the antitypical "fairest among women" – the "espoused virgin," speaks of his countenance; to her, it is the most beautiful ever! Of course, while eyes, cheeks and lips have much to do with the beauty of the countenance, it is what they unitedly express that gives to the countenance, personality! To the "espoused" who has learned to love Him, and is ever seeking to bask in the sunshine of his smiling countenance, He is, the ONE altogether lovely. (Cant. 5:16) And, beholding that glory – the glory of the Lord, she is changed into the same image (how wonderful!) from glory to glory. (2 Cor. 3:18)

Lebanon was a mountain, an elevated place; perhaps the glory of the surrounding terrain, but the glory of Lebanon itself, was undoubtedly its cedars! Jesus, because of His faithfulness to the heavenly Father's will, was highly exalted (elevated); but His crowning glory was the "crown of life" – immortality – a "portion" as it were, "with the great." (Isa. 53:12) What is represented in all this glory, the "espoused virgin" beholds in the countenance of her Beloved: it is the glory of the heavenly Father himself. Even while still here in the flesh, Jesus was the revelation of His Father. (John 14:9)

"We see the Lord's face with the eye of faith, for we have seen our Lord Jesus, who represents the Father, and who declares that whosoever hath seen him hath seen the Father – has enjoyed the best possible revelation of the Father whom no man hath seen..." (R4055:2)

There is a benignity in the smiling countenance of Jesus: and it is beautifully depicted by Lebanon and its stately cedars:

"As the snow water from Lebanon flows down and waters the valley beneath, from Christ alone flows the pure water of life upon fallen humanity. His majesty appeared to those who loved Him, and His glory was revealed to the three disciples as they tarried with Him upon the Mount of Transfiguration. Lebanon symbolizes not only His majesty, but He was pure and white, bright and

shining, as the head of Lebanon." (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 375)

"...She looks Him all over and says his aspect is like Lebanon. She is not looking at Him in humiliation, but in His beauty, power, and glory. For dignity and greatness, He looks like the cedars." (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 150)

Solomon's "fairest" not yet having run out of metaphors, now speaks unto the daughters of Jerusalem, about his palate (mouth), saying it "is most sweet." She has already suggested this thought when she spoke about his lips, which were "like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh." (Cant. 5:13)

The antitypical "fairest among women," before summarizing her description of her "Beloved," unto the "daughters of Jerusalem," would draw their attention to yet another feature; she now speaks of his "palate" – (See Appendix "R") – really the inside of His mouth, an organ identified with both speech and taste! Though the tongue performs similar functions – the palate serves speech in a *reflective* manner, for it acts something like an echo chamber. This is not true of the lips, though these too, are organs of speech. It is this duality of the palate, as an organ of taste and speech, that we need to consider specifically here. In Cant. 2:3, the Hebrew word *chek* is rendered "taste" – "his fruit was sweet to my taste" and, the same Hebrew word is identified with speech, and is rendered "mouth" in Prov. 8:7 – "my *mouth* shall speak truth." The reverberation or echoing feature of the palate, involving in a sense, both taste and speech, may be recognized in the fact that what our Lord received of Truth from the heavenly Father, He first tasted, and found it to be good and sweet, for Himself, ere He echoed it forth in words of blessing, life and comfort to others. In Deut. 18:18, where, speaking of the Prophet whom the Lord was to raise up for the blessing of all people, Moses declares for Jehovah: I "will put my words in his mouth," and in John 3:34, we read, "for he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God." (See also John 14:24)

"The Spirit has given the appreciation of the Beloved's 'lips' in verse 13, but his 'mouth' is spoken of in verse 16. The 'lips' and the 'mouth' are in very close association, but there is evidently some difference in the spiritual thoughts which they suggest. And a special place is given to His mouth as being the last feature which the spouse mentions. 'His mouth is most sweet.' We have connected with His 'lips' the perfect expression of grace to sinful and needy men as it is presented in Luke's Gospel, its fullness being commensurate with the value of the death of Jesus. But his 'mouth' suggests an additional thought; it is actually the word 'palate'; it is more inward than the lips; and it carries with it in several scriptures the idea of tasting. There is something received, the sweetness of which is perceived and enjoyed by the palate. We may see this force of

the word clearly in chapter 2:3; ‘His mouth is sweet to my taste.’ ‘Taste’ is the same word as ‘mouth’ in chapter 5:16. I think His ‘mouth’ as spoken of in this way conveys the very precious thought that whatever he communicated to men he had first received and known the sweetness of Himself.... And those who love Him are well assured that the words that were put in His mouth were very sweet to Him. Everything that He communicated to men was first communicated to Him by the Father. He was the first to taste its sweetness...” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 161)

“His mouth and his lips are closely connected, yet there is a distinction. His lips speak of grace. She commenced with his mouth, ‘Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth’; now she finishes with his mouth, for she has been made to taste the sweetness of his love. Now she esteems the words of his mouth more than her necessary food.” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 150)

Solomon’s “fairest” now summarizes her description of her Beloved, declaring, “yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.”

This, in substance too, is the testimony that the “espoused virgin” has been giving to the “daughters of Jerusalem” all down through the age, “yea, he is altogether lovely,” and, “This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.”

“There is nothing about Him that we would have different; altogether, and to the smallest detail, He is lovely, He is precious, He is our all and in all. To the bride of Christ, there is no loveliness nor beauty in any other; and not in one thing would she have Him changed or different. There is no defect nor spot in Him, there is no blemish in Him, in all things He is delightful.

“It is not when we are following afar off, that we find Jesus Christ ‘altogether lovely’; it is not when we are flirting with the world, nor when we are compromising the Truth of the gospel, that we experience the sweetness of His mouth. It is when we draw close to Him, and follow hard after Him; when we constrain Him to come in and sup with us, and we with Him, that we exclaim: ‘His aspect is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet.’ It is when all else has faded away into insignificance, and He alone fills our vision, that we apprehend the sweetness of His love, which can only be revealed to us as we enter into this place of separation.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 378)

“If we are able, as divinely taught, to appreciate the beauty and glory of Christ, as it is presented figuratively and symbolically in this description of Him by the spouse, I am sure we shall be ready to

say with her, ‘Yea, he is altogether lovely.’ Each of His features that we can trace is lovely in its perfection, and no feature of perfection is lacking. He is *altogether* lovely.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 166)

Evidently, she is now fully restored to the place of grace and favor in His heart. Through her contemplation of Him, she has learned to so love and cherish Him, as to want to do at all times, *not as she might be disposed to do because of her moods; but as he might command*. If he were now to ask her to open the door of fellowship in her heart, she would no longer hesitate or delay, because of this or that (See Cant. 5:2, 3); but she would be obedient! Thus she has once again become a very close friend to Him and He to her. (John 15:14)

“Finally, she exclaims, ‘This is my beloved, yea, this is my friend.’ Her use now, for the first time, of the word ‘friend’ would seem to be significant...it is the word very generally translated ‘neighbor’; it means one who is near. And as used by the spouse, it seems to suggest that she is now restored to a sense of conscious nearness to Him. She could call Him her Beloved even when she was at ease without Him, but she could hardly have said then that He was her Friend – her near Companion. But now she is consciously near to Him; her affections are fully restored...” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 166)

“She finishes by saying, ‘This is my beloved, and this is my friend.’ He has befriended us in our deep need. He is still our Friend today, the Friend ‘that sticketh closer than a brother.’ If we make friends with the world, we lose His friendship. When we are lonely, tempted, or tried, He is our Friend, tried, unalterable, and unchanging.” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 150)

I’ve found a friend; O! such a friend!
He loved me ere I knew him;
He drew me with the cords of love,
And thus he bound me to him.
And ’round my heart still closely twine
Those ties which naught can sever,
For I am his and he is mine,
Forever and forever.

6:1 – Perhaps, out of sympathy, or at least sincere curiosity to see such an one as Solomon’s “fairest” has described, the daughters of Jerusalem now ask as to whether or not she had any idea as to where he might have gone. They would go together with her to find him. But, strange as it may seem, she now seems to know just where he is, and so tells them, that he is in his garden, gathering lilies.

The “espoused virgin” had asked the “daughters of Jerusalem” should they find Him before she did, to please tell Him of how truly love-sick she was for Him. Now, they ask her as to where He might be found, and they also suggest that they might go together with her in search of Him. But, He is no longer lost to her; in fact,

she doesn't need their help at all. She knows just where He is. For awhile, she had lost Him; but she now has the assurance that He had not lost her! However, the experience she has had, was a most needful one, and as a result of it she has been brought unto a deeper appreciation and desire for a closer fellowship with Him.

"Before she began to describe Him she felt that others might find Him before she did (Cant. 5:18), but by the time she ended speaking of Him she knew far better than they did where to find Him. If there is any sense of distance with us let us not settle down in it. Let us think of Him; let us describe Him, as it were, afresh to our hearts; let us speak of Him, as we have opportunity, to those who are interested in Him. The very doing so will indicate a reviving glow of heart, and it will lead to fully restored affections. And others, it may be, will be moved to seek Him." (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 167)

6:2 – She replies, "my beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies."

His garden is, ever and always, the assemblages of the truly consecrated spirit-begotten saints of God, be they many or be they few. It is here that the sweet-smelling spices are grown – the fragrant graces and fruits of the spirit are developed. It is also from here that He gathers the "lilies" to add, as it were, their beauty and fragrance to the heavenly mansions!

"The daughters of Jerusalem still call the bride, 'O thou fairest among women,' and want to seek her beloved with her. She answers: 'My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.' He has gone down into his garden, for the Lord delights to be found among His own. At one time she tried to find him in the city, but he could not be found there. As the owner of the garden who has cared for it and watered it, has he not the right to be there to partake of the fruit? What marks His garden is beauty and fragrance. In it are beds of spices, and there are no spices like those which have been grown there. The beauties to be seen are not produced by toiling and spinning, for lilies toil not nor do they spin, and yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. These beauties are the work of the Spirit of God in the saints." (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 152)

"The beloved goes down there to feed...he feeds and gathers. And it is the lilies he gathers together. ... 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst.' (Matt. 18:20)

"There is another way in which He gathers lilies: He gathers those lilies which are in full bloom, and ready to be taken home." (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 153)

6:3 – Solomon's Beloved has learned something by way of her recent experiences – she cannot count her chicks before they are hatched! Once she was sure that she possessed him; now she is happy because she can say, "I am his." Now she also knows where he feeds; it is among the lilies!

The "espoused virgin" too has learned much. Humbled and chastened by her recent experiences, she is no longer as possessive as she once was. She had once declared, "My Beloved is *mine*..." (Cant. 2:16); now she is blessed and happy because she can truly say, "I am my Beloved's..." And remembering how delighted He always was to be among "His lilies," she goes there, to be among them! And how very glad He is to see her there again.

6:4 – In the garden, Solomon, once again tells his Beloved, how precious, how dear she is to him; how much he adores her. He says unto her, "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners."

Through the apostolic epistles, the antitypical Solomon – our Lord, has been telling the "espoused virgin" of His great love for her; of how dear and precious she is to Him (Eph. 5:2, 25; Titus 2:14); and by way of typical and prophetic utterances, how beautiful too. (Psa. 45:13,14) Yet, He would not now have her forget completely her former estate, from whence He had redeemed her; and so, by the same means, and in the same manner, he reminds her of this. (Eph. 2:2, 3; 5:8; Col. 1:21; 3:5-7; 1 Pet. 4:3) Indeed it was He that brought her out of the "horrible pit, out of the miry clay" to set her feet upon a rock...and putting a new song into her mouth, even praises unto our God. (Psa. 40:2,3; Eph. 2:5, 6) It is this that is subtly suggested by the ancient Tirzah! "Tirzah" means beautiful, but there are different kinds of beauty. Tirzah was the capital of some of the Canaanitish kings. As a city in the land of Canaan, it was at the time the abode of Canaanites; and much that was evil and sinful took place there. However, the time came when Joshua conquered it (Josh. 12:24); transformed it, and made it a place where in subsequent times some of the kings of Judah held forth. Thus, it will be seen, that Tirzah well represents the former state and condition of the "espoused virgin's heart." "Canaanites" – evil things like fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil-concupiscence, covetousness (idolatry), anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communications, lyings, etc. (Col. 3:5, 8, 9), lived there. But this "city" was eventually conquered by our great and mighty "Joshua" (Christ Jesus, our Lord, Savior and Redeemer), and transformed by Him as it were, through the utter destruction and driving out of all that is inimical to the spiritual well-being of our souls! Now, the "King" lives there! And so the "espoused virgin" is now very beautiful, yea, as comely as "Jerusalem" – the Jerusalem "which is above" (Gal. 4:25), and of which, in a sense, the beautiful Sarah of old, was a type! The antitypical Solomon then compares His Beloved, to an army with banners

– terrible, all-powerful by virtue of the indwelling Holy Spirit – mighty to the pulling down of everything which is contrary to the will of God! (2 Cor. 10:4, 5)

“‘Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners.’ He now tells her of her beauty. Abraham feared the people of Gerar because of the beauty of Sarah; the world would want such a woman. Rebecca was also fair and Isaac likewise feared the Philistines for the same reason. Think of the Church. There has never been anything like her before, so beautiful. Is it any wonder the world wanted the Church, to spoil her beauty?

“‘As Tirzah.’ This city which Solomon praises for its beauty was wonderful for situation, and, at one time, was the royal city of the kings of Canaan. It later, for a while, became the royal city of the kings of Israel, as the residence of Jeroboam and his successors. As Tirzah was built on a hill, the saints are likened to a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid. The Church is as beautiful as this dwelling-place of a king, for in her heart the Lord reigns as King. Paul prayed for the saints at Ephesus, ‘that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith’ (Eph. 3:17), showing his desire for them was that Christ might reign without a rival in their hearts.

“‘Comely as Jerusalem’ – the residence of Judah’s kings – the place of God’s house, whose name one day shall truly be. ‘The Lord is there.’ (Ezek. 48:35) For a description of Jerusalem read Psalm 48; it was beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth; it was the city of the great King; it was compacted together, the tribes go up there for worship. If the description of the earthly city shows it to be so great, what must the New Jerusalem be? (Rev. 21)

“‘Terrible as an army with banners.’ He turns from cities which were capitals of Northern and Southern Palestine, to an undefeated, victorious army carrying banners. No enemy has carried off her standards. Think of the Church, in the Acts of the Apostles, when she was marked by great grace and great power. Some of those men who carried banners were spoken of as ‘those men who have turned the world upside down.’ ‘Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth.’ (Psa. 60:4) Are we displaying our banners, or do we keep them wrapped up? They were given to be displayed. In the days of Moses, the children of Israel marched under four standards. Every man had to know his own banner and stand by it – the tribe of Judah, a lion; the ox, for Ephraim; the face of a man, for Reuben, and an eagle for Dan. So we should be good soldiers today, and know our standards. This is a company that must triumph, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. We must come out

‘more than conquerors through Him who loved us’.” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, pages 154-156)

“Tirzah is a beautiful figure of the bride of the Lamb. First of all, the city was a royal city of the kings of Canaan. In it were idolatry and wickedness, and it was filled with pomp and grandeur, also with the abominations of the Canaanitish kings and their courts. Afterward, it was captured by the Hebrews, and they made it the royal city of the kings of Israel.

“How beautifully this portrays the history of the bride of the Lamb, whether applied to the whole company, or to each virgin in the company. Before the Lord found her, each virgin of the bride was filled with idolatry and wickedness, with sin and uncleanness...but the Lord went out and captured her, and He made her the royal city of the King of Israel. She became a city of our God, and she is set on a hill so that she cannot be hid.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 394)

6:5 – While Solomon had many times been bewitched, as it were, by the beautiful glances of his dearly beloved “Dove” (Cant. 1:15; 4:1, 9), yet never quite so deeply as now. He is hardly able to restrain himself from taking her into his embrace and crushing her ‘almost to death’! So, he asks her, though really not too seriously, to turn those eyes away from him. Perhaps it was because he saw something in them he had never seen there before! But then, had she not, as a result of her recent experiences, developed a deeper soul-hunger for him; and was it not this that was reflected in the windows of her soul?

The “espoused virgin” too, has had such experiences as have aroused within her, deeper soul-yearnings for her Beloved Lord; and these are now reflected in her eyes.

“The first sad consequence of her mistake was the loss of her bridegroom’s presence, and the slight and offence which he so deeply felt. He withdrew from her door and left her alone. There is no trial more deep and keen to a devout spirit than the loss of the Lord’s presence. That which once we did not value is now become the very essence of our life and happiness, and the moment that prevailing presence is gone we are conscious of a void that nothing else can fill and an anguish than which none is more keen...

“First, she continued seeking; she did not go back to bed again and fall asleep in languid indifference, but the moment she found out her mistake she endeavored to correct it, and continued to search for her Lord until she found him...‘Then shall ye find me when you search for me with all your heart.’ (Jer. 29:13) Next, she not only searched but she continued steadfastly in her love. Her one continual testimony, when they asked her what was her beloved more than any other be-

loved, was, that he was the chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely. Not for a moment would she depreciate his charms or yield to a disparagement of his worth, but she boldly testified to his grace and beauty in the midst of all her trials; and, in the face of all her temptresses, her true and loving heart was immovable as a rock from its steadfast affection, and all the world could not tempt her to even a thought of disloyalty or compromise.

“Suddenly he stands before her. He has heard the loving testimony, His heart has been moved with tenderness for all her trials, and she is dearer to him than ever as He sees her steadfast purpose, amid all the testing ordeal, to be His and His alone, and so he rewards her faithfulness, ‘Thou art beautiful, O my love’.” (Simpson – *The Love-Life of the Lord*, pages 81, 86, 88 and 89)

Seeing the deep heart-yearnings now reflected in her eyes, her beloved Lord, Christ Jesus, unlike Solomon of old, does not ask her to turn her eyes away from Him. Nor can we believe that she would, were He to ask her so to do. No! she declares:

Since my eyes were fixed on Jesus,
I’ve lost sight of all beside –
So enchained my spirit’s vision,
Looking at the (once) crucified.

Once again (See Cant. 4:1), Solomon speaks lovingly to his Beloved, about her beautiful hair, which, because of its glossy black color and texture, reminds him of a flock of Syrian goats that appear from Gilead.

When the antitypical Solomon, Christ Jesus, the heavenly bridegroom-to-be, speaks to His “espoused virgin,” of how beautiful are the tresses of her “hair,” how much He appreciates her consecration, her dedication, her *separation from* all others, and *unto Himself*; it is not a mere repetition of what He had already told her on an earlier occasion. But He would, in this way, reassure her that despite her deflection (now in the past), His love for her was not any less; in fact, because she then sought Him with all her heart (Jer. 29:13), His love is now even greater! It will be recalled that despite Israel’s deflections, Jehovah God declared that He loved them with an everlasting love. (Jer. 31:3) If, as the Apostle Paul tells us, the things which happened to Israel of old were typical (1 Cor. 10:11); and that they were recorded *for us* (Rom. 15:4); then the everlasting love of Jehovah for Israel, was intended to be typical of the everlasting love of Jesus for His Beloved! (John 13:1; 14:1-3) “O Love, that will not let me go, I rest my weary soul in Thee.”

“He mentions her hair first. We have already noticed that this speaks of her separation. She may have lost this mark of separation in the city, where she lost her veil. If her hair has been cut, it has grown again, as with Samson, who lost his power and became weak

when his locks were cut off, but then his hair grew again and his strength was renewed.” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 157)

“After repenting and seeking Him in contrition, after suffering for His sake and refusing to be turned aside....Her Beloved again speaks to her. His approval rests upon her, and now His words of commendation are far beyond those that He spoke before...”

“...Since she arose and opened the door, since she went out into the night of His withdrawal, she has attained to greater stability and brightness of light; she has entered into greater unity and fellowship with him....Her hair has again become long and beautiful like a flock of goats lying along the side of Mount Gilead...” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 406, 407)

6:6, 7 – Solomon reiterates his earlier remarks to His Beloved, concerning other features of her beauty (see Cant. 4:2, 3), her teeth and her cheeks (temples) in the hope that she will be so deeply impressed with his fidelity despite her recent deflection, so that she will never again tempt him to leave her. She is impressed!

The reiteration, by the antitypical Solomon’s earlier remarks to the “espoused virgin” concerning other features of her *present* beauty, were intended to have a far deeper significance for her now than ever before. Once she had had an inward peace, which enabled her to smile a most gracious smile; a smile enhanced, as her lips parted, with the appearance of a perfect complement of clean, white, and even teeth. Then too, there had often appeared on her cheeks, though sometimes partly hidden behind the tresses of her hair, the beautiful, and sometimes embarrassing blush of purity and innocence. Upon her deflection, these, the smile and the blush, had disappeared with her soul’s inner peace. She knew it; and felt it too. Yes –

O the bitter pain of sorrow
That a time could ever be,
When I proudly said to Jesus...
Some of self, and some of thee!

How comforting therefore, now is this restatement of her Beauty, by her Beloved, which means for her, a full restoration into His grace and favor.

“Brighter than His first appearing, dearer than even the soul’s first love, is the hour when He comes again to the desolate and wandering heart....Oh, the joy of the restored heart when the Lord arises with healing in His wings, and the long night of waiting ends in a morning of joy.” (Simpson – *The Love-Life of the Lord*, page 89)

Solomon seems now to be soliloquizing – talking to himself, but loud enough, so that others standing near, might hear. He is speaking about his beloved “dove,” his undefiled one, contrasting her with other women who

have also striven to become his bride. She stands out, all by herself; there is none other like unto her; and, her own mother agrees to this.

6:8 – The antitypical Solomon, by way of His inspired Apostles, also speaks about his “Beloved,” his “undefiled,” contrasting her with other women, whom she excels: the three score “queens,” and the four score “concubines,” and also, many other “virgins” (the foolish ones – Matt. 25: 3, 8, 11; see also Rev. 7:14) all of whom, in one way or another have aspired to become the Lamb’s Wife.

“A woman is the figure used when the Church alone is referred to, separate from her Lord and Head. Separate and distinct from her Lord, the Bridegroom, she is an espoused virgin...” (B255)

It is not strange, therefore, that a woman is used in Scripture, to represent all such as individually, or collectively, aspire unto becoming His wife – the Lamb’s Wife! The basic requirement for the woman who is to become His wife, is virginity! (2 Cor. 11:2) The “queens” are such religious groups and organizations as openly affiliate with the worldly governments. Such for instance are the Roman, Greek and Anglican, Catholic, and the Lutheran Churches. The “concubines” are those who likewise “sell their favors,” but do it surreptitiously! These all, are really “harlot” systems: the “daughters” having followed the pattern established by their “mother,” (the Mother of Harlots – Rev. 17:5).

“...Protestantism, as it exists today is not the result of the Great Reformation, but of its decline; and it now partakes to a large degree of the disposition and character of the Church of Rome, from which its various branches sprang. The various Protestant sects (and we say it with all due deference to a comparatively few devout souls within them, whom the Lord designates as ‘wheat,’ in contradistinction to the overwhelming numbers of ‘tares’) are the true daughters of that degenerate system of nominal Christianity, the Papacy, to which the Revelator makes reference in applying to her the name ‘Mother of Harlots.’ (Rev. 17:5)” (D28)

Then, there are also those who remain “virgins” but are “foolish” (Matt. 25:3, 8, 11), because they do not separate themselves completely from that which, not merely has the appearance of evil, but is evil (1 Thes. 5:22; see also Manna, Aug. 19) To these, the “call” of this day has been, “Come out of her, my people...” (Rev. 18:4) They contaminate their garments; and, unless they wash them white in the blood of the Lamb, they will have no place before the Throne, nor will they be guests at the marriage supper. (Rev. 7:14, 9; 19:9)

6:9 – The Lord calls His “espoused virgin” His “dove,” “My undefiled” one. Of all the women He has enumerated, there is but *one* for Him; there just isn’t another like

unto her. Rotherham, in his translation of this portion of the Song of Solomon (6:9) has strikingly rendered it as follows:

“Three score are the queens, and four score are the concubines, and virgins there are without number, *one alone* is my dove, my perfect one, *one alone* was she to her mother, pure was she to her that bare her.”

The “mother” here referred to, is undoubtedly, the oath-bound covenant – the Abrahamic Covenant, sometimes represented by Sarah (Gal. 4:22-26), who had but one child, an only child – the antitypical “Isaac,” the heir of all things (Gal. 4:28; 3:29), in the Song of Solomon represented by the bride-to-be, the “espoused virgin!” (See Appendix “S”) And while the Lord indicates that the “espoused virgin” is already appreciated by her “mother,” and the “daughters of Jerusalem,” (now the “virgin” – the Great Company class), the time will come when even the “queens” and the “concubines” will be called upon to praise and honor her too!

6:10 – Solomon continues soliloquizing, as rhetorically, he asks himself the question, “Who is this, that looketh forth as the morning (that breaks forth as the dawn – *Meek, An Amer. Translation*), fair as the moon, and clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?”

Both the sun and the moon are light-givers, though one, merely reflectively. This is true also of *the one, the only one*, the “espoused virgin,” who by reason of her own enlightenment, is able to “break forth as the dawn,” with light for the dawning “Day” for others. This she does both directly – through the spoken word; and reflectively, by her manner of living; for unto her has been granted an understanding of such things as of which the Spirit of God spoke through the types and shadows of old (“moonlight”) and those things which that same holy Spirit was saying by way of the Gospel (“sunlight”). And this is undoubtedly one reason why in the Revelation given to John, she is pictured as a “woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet...” (Rev. 12:1) Wheresoever she finds herself, her’s is an enlightening influence! Yet, as benign and peaceful as this her mission may be; she has still another one in which she is “like an army with banners” mighty to the pulling down of “strong holds, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against God...” (2 Cor. 10:4, 5)

6:11 – Solomon seems now to be speaking to the daughters of Jerusalem, of how (and why) he had come to his garden of nuts, to check, as it were, its fruitage, and to see if there was any budding of the pomegranates. For the moment, at least, his “dove” is not with him.

The antitypical Solomon, our Lord, is now speaking, as it were, to the “daughters of Jerusalem” about his visit (“coming”) to His garden. He calls it His “garden of

nuts,” which yields the “fruits of the valley.” Perhaps this is to indicate specifically that period – that interim time – the great time of trouble with which this Gospel age is to end! A valley is low-lying terrain between mountains. The “mountains” here are two kingdoms: Satan’s, which is already in the course of disintegration; and God’s which is in the process of being established the universal Kingdom of peace and righteousness. The expression “garden of nuts,” we believe, has reference to the time, the trials and experiences, the anarchy and revolution, which will have to be endured – passed through – ere the sweet reign of peace, joy and happiness, can be attained. The shell of the nut is hard; it is also bitter to the taste; but its kernel – reached only after the shell is broken and discarded – is meaty, sweet and nourishing!

During this “time of trouble” with which the age will end, there are three classes, who will constitute the “garden of nuts”:

(1) The Lord’s consecrated and spirit-begotten ones, of whom will be the last “members” of the Christ; and the “Great Company.” The former will not necessarily be called upon to go through the full length of this period; but will be able to rejoice, by looking up and lifting up their heads, seeing their redemption (deliverance) drawing nigh. (Luke 21:28)

“...The Gospel age will not fully end, we believe, until the Gospel message ends; and that will be when the door is shut, when the last member of the very elect shall have passed beyond the veil. It is our understanding that the elect church of Christ, the Bride, will not remain in the flesh to do much of the teaching of the world, but will be glorified in the kingdom either before or during the great time of trouble, and be ready to supervise the world’s instruction from the spirit plane.” (R5697:6)

The latter, the “Great Company,” will

“Through the favor of the High Priest...go into great ‘tribulation’ and have the flesh destroyed. This will not make of them ‘overcomers’ nor give them membership in the body – the Bride of Christ. It will not give them a place on the throne of Kings and Priests, but a position ‘before the throne,’ as perfect spirit beings, though not of the highest order of the spiritual – the divine. Though they will not possess the crown of life, Immortality, yet if rightly exercised by the tribulation they will attain to a condition ‘like unto the angels.’ They will serve God in his Temple, though they will not be members of that symbolic Temple which is the Christ. (Rev. 7:14, 15)” (T70)

(2) The “vine” class – the Jewish nation (Isa. 5:7; Psa. 80:14, 15, 19; Jer. 24:6, 7; 32:41), who, chastened, and humbled by their diversified experiences among the nations of the earth, are now about ready to return unto

their God, with all their heart! This, in part, is evidenced in their return to the land of Palestine; and, in a sense, thus does the “vine flourish”!

“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof, and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof, they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.” (Amos 9:11, 14, 15)

(3) Those of the world of mankind, who already are able to see God’s hands in the affairs of men. In these, we see the evidences of the “budding of the pomegranates” – for beauty, fragrance and fruitage of the Millennial kingdom.

6:12, 13 - This next section of the Song of Solomon (6:12, 13), is quite a difficult one, inasmuch as it is almost impossible to determine who it is that is speaking, and to whom. Nor have the Translators been too helpful here, for they too, have been similarly confused. The text from the *Authorized Version*, reads as follows:

12. Or even I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib.

13. 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.

On the basis of what is said, we have concluded that it is Solomon’s “fairest,” that says, “Before I was aware, my fancy set me in a chariot beside my prince.” (R.S.V.) And, while it is possible that Solomon of old could also be caught in an unawareness of what was going on, it is hardly possible that his antitypical counterpart – our heavenly bridegroom-to-be, would ever find Himself in such straits! It will be recalled that Solomon had just been talking about the how and why of his visit to his “garden of nuts.” On hearing this, his “dove” is herself carried away in fancy (her chariot) to a place beside him. In the *Authorized Version*, the “chariots of Amminadib” are mentioned. It could be that Amminadib was the name of some famous charioteer. However, most translators have rendered the Hebrew term otherwise. (See *Appendix “T”*) We incline to the thought suggested in the *Revised Standard Version* – “my prince.”

The significance of all this is for the “espoused virgin,” that in fancy, i.e., in spirit, for one reason or another, she has been transported to the other end of the Gospel age – to its very beginning; a place beside her “prince.” As is obvious, the Church at this time was made up from two different “camps” or “companies,” (See *Appendix “U”*) – the Hebrew, and the Gentile! Of

this did the Apostle Paul speak, when he declared that our Lord would “make in himself of twain one new man...” (Eph. 2:15)

The respective “camps” from whence these early Hebrew and Gentile converts came (the synagogue on the one hand, and the heathen temple on the other) would undoubtedly have come to an appreciation of the nobility of character which marked those who were endeavoring to identify themselves with the lowly Nazarene. They would, perhaps, therefore miss them in their gatherings, and now cry, as it were, for their return to their erstwhile “camps.” And thus it is their cry, “Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon thee.” But what would they see in the Shulamite now? They call her “Shulamite,” which supposedly is the feminine form of Solomon, meaning, peace! How close this comes to what the early saints were first called at Antioch (though perhaps by some in derision), “Christian” which also implies an identification with Him who is one day to be the “Prince of Peace.”

It is also interesting to note that many of the Translators speak of this “affair” as if it were some kind of dance, engaged in by two. (See *R.S.V.*; *J.P.S.*; *Leeser: Darby*; *Rotherham*; and the *New World Translation*.) If two people do dance *together*, they must of needs, dance *as one* – both in accord with the same music. How beautifully this reflects what took place in the early church, when both Jews and Gentiles, fellowshiped together, as one in the Lord. (Acts 11:1, 18-21; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:11-19; Col. 3:11)

The description of the bride-to-be, which follows in the Song of Solomon, we believe, was given by Solomon himself. When his “dove” had been asked to return, as it were, to the old camps, she very humbly remarked, “but what will ye see in the Shulamite? You already know me for what I was, and what I am!” Nevertheless, Solomon thinks she is most worthy of praise and honor, and he begins this description of her from her feet and continues to her head. He loves every part of her!

7:1 – Nor is it different with the “espoused virgin” who, also having humbled herself, is now privileged to hear what her Beloved “Solomon” thinks of her. To Him, she is the most beautiful creature that ever lived! He begins by saying, “How b-e-a-u-t-i-f-u-l are thy feet with shoes, O prince’s daughter!”

The “feet” of the “espoused virgins” have really been the saints – the Lord’s people “in any part of the age” (*R2827:1*), for they have all been “shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (Eph. 6:15); or, as *Conybeare* puts it, “shod as ready messengers of the Glad Tidings of peace.” The Apostle Paul speaking of these says, “How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” (Rom. 10:15) But, it is possible, that in a certain sense, it is those who are living in the end of the

age – the last members of the bride class, who are particularly referred to, for the Prophet of old also remarked, “How beautiful upon the mountains (kingdoms) are the feet (the last members of the Body) of Him (the Christ in the flesh) that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good (of the coming restitution of all things), that publisheth salvation (the ransom for all) *that saith unto Zion* (the Israel of God), *Thy God reigneth!*” (Isa. 52:7)

“...while it has undoubtedly been true of all the members of the Body of Christ, that they were the bearers of glad tidings, and that to all who received the message their feet were welcome, yet it is true also that the proclamation of many of the sweetest notes of the glad tidings of restitution, are reserved until now during the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Rev. 10:7; Rom. 16:25), when the mystery of God is finished, which he hath kept from the foundation of the world.” (*R757:2*)

“...And the ‘feet’ members of the body of Christ, who still tarry in the flesh, catching the inspiration of the glorified throng who have already ascended into the mount (kingdom) of God, reflect a measure of that transcendent glory, as did Moses when he came down from Mount Sinai. The faces of these messengers shine with that heavenly joy which fills their hearts and overflows their lips as they commune together and with the Lord, and go heralding to every nation (mountain) the good tidings of Immanuel’s reign begun. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him (the feet of the Christ) that bringeth good tidings of Millennial joy.” (*C301*)

As is He the son of a King; so too, is she the daughter of a heavenly Potentate – Jehovah God, himself. In *Psa. 45:13*, she is called “the King’s daughter”! Therefore, her “beloved” now calls her, “O prince’s (a nobleman’s – see *Rotherham*) daughter,” for He wants her to know that He doesn’t consider that when he marries her, He is marrying beneath his “caste”! And with what zeal ought we to strive to be of the bride class.

The description by Solomon, of the physical beauty of his “fairest among women,” which follows, falls short somewhat of our standard of morality. His description of such parts of her body as her thighs, her navel, her belly, her breasts, presupposes that he had already beholden her in her nakedness! Nor are we to understand that the typical Solomon, a fallen man, could have done this without unholy emotions and desires being aroused; for we do know that he had many wives, and many concubines. (1 Kings 11:1, 3)

As already suggested, we believe this Song of Songs was given to Solomon of old, by inspiration, to depict, as it were, the ideal love-life of our blessed Lord. And, it is only because in some respects, he typified our own

“Solomon,” that we have considered him here also, to be the typical bridegroom-to-be. It therefore becomes necessary for us to impute to the typical Solomon, those ideals needed to make him a true type of the heavenly bridegroom.

So have we done with Moses, who as the deliverer of his people, was a type of Jesus; and Aaron, who as high priest and intercessor for the people, was also a type of Jesus; yet both fell far short of the ideal Jesus – the former, when he smote the rock the second time (Num. 20:11, 12); and the latter, when he built the golden calf. (Exod. 32:2-5)

The ideals which we impute to the ancient Solomon, are those represented in Adam, in his original state of purity. He, as well as Eve, had come from the hands of God, naked! Nakedness was then a beautiful symbol of that purity in which he could behold Eve’s bodily beauty without any unholy emotions or desires. It was sin that perverted this ideal and brought about the consciousness of nakedness, and the need of a covering. (Gen. 3:7) However, in the final analysis, these physical charms and beauties were intended to be merely reflective of that charm and beauty which would in due time mark “her” who as the antitypical “Eve,” will become the wife of the Second Adam!

“In this difficult passage, difficult because of the evil tendencies of the human mind, we must ever remember that it is not one virgin that is described, but the company of virgins who make up the bride. Spiritually, there are many meanings that could apply and edify each one who is joined to the Lord; but this is a description of the Church of Jesus Christ, which is set forth under the figure of the perfect beauty and full development...of the female form. The bride of Jesus Christ is always pictured as feminine, but she is composed of many virgins; and here we behold her in her beauty, purity, and full development, worthy of His worthiness.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 434)

According to the Authorized Version, Solomon said this about his beloved “Dove,” – “the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of a cunning workman.” These “joints” by way of which the thighs are *united to other parts of the body*, are at the knees, and at the pelvic bone, respectively. Emphasis, however, would seem to be upon these joints rather than upon the thighs. Other versions render the Hebrew *chammuq* differently (See *Appendix “V”*), so that it would be the thighs in their graceful contour that remind Solomon of the workmanship of the skilled lapidary.

Our “Solomon,” the heavenly Bridegroom, also speaks concerning those things which make for the grace and beauty of His beloved “Dove,” and this by way of the inspired Word, wherein specific reference is made to the “joints.” It is these “joints” which supply “compact-

ness” (togetherness) to all the members of His Beloved’s “body.” (Eph. 4:16)

“...if we neglect to assemble ourselves with those who are the Lord’s people, and in whom we see the ‘seal’ of the Spirit, we will fail to get the benefits and helps which ‘every joint supplieth’ – including the helps which God has promised to the Church as a whole, through various members which he sets in the body, for exposition of his word and the obtaining therefrom of its sanctifying power or spirit. (1 Cor. 15:25-28; Eph. 4:16)” (E245)

This “compactness” (togetherness) of the Church, which is so pleasant to behold (Psa. 133:1), is brought about by the Spirit of the Father, whose beautiful workmanship she is. (Eph. 2:10; Jude 24, 25)

On the other hand, the “thighs” so specifically mentioned in this Old Testament figure of the bride-to-be, has its spiritual counterpart in the “body” of the “espoused virgin,” the Church of the Gospel age!

The largest and strongest bone in the natural body is the femur – the thighbone. Thus, do the thighs bespeak the strength by which the Church is able to move with grace and beauty, so remarkable, that there is not another creature like unto her! She is an entirely new creation! This strength, and its manifestation in the grace and beauty of the “espoused virgin’s” walk, are God-given, and God-ordained! He is the great lapidary who is glorified in his workmanship.

“...There is nothing more beautiful under the eye of Christ than His saints moving spiritually together in unity and peace...”

“Strength for movement lies in the thighs, and if our movements are to appear as ‘jewels,’ and as ‘the work of the hands of an artist’ it can only be through the practical breaking down of the flesh, and what is natural to us. The man who wrestled with Jacob had to touch the joint of the thigh and dislocate it. Natural energy has to be crippled under the discipline of God to make room for a new character of movement in spiritual power....Every movement that shows the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ is a jewel in His eyes; there is a divinely artistic beauty about it....We know that movements of a lovely character are possible, for we have all seen them at some time or other. They are ever seen in the overcomers.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 181)

Once again, let us note that when Jacob of old wrestled to obtain the coveted covenant blessing, before his name was changed, his thigh was touched so that never again could he walk as he did before. (Gen. 32:25-31) Just so is it with those who constitute the “espoused virgin” class; as they also wrestle, as it were, for the coveted prize of the high-calling, before their name is changed, their “thigh” is touched, so that they

can never walk in the old ways. And, though “crippled” insofar as their worldly walk is concerned, there is a certain beauty that marks their “infirmity” – a “sweet savor” fragrance, as it were, of the bitter myrrh!

7:2 – Solomon, in speaking of the navel of his beloved “fairest among women,” he likens it to “a round goblet, which wanteth no liquor.”

The counterpart of this, is the “navel” of the espoused virgin – the mark, as it were, of a covenant relationship. The navel of one’s physical body, marks the spot, where by means of an umbilical cord, he was attached to his mother’s womb – nourished, and prepared for ultimate birth. Thus, does the navel signify covenant relationship. Figuratively speaking, this “navel” is indeed like a rounded (there are no sharp corners to scratch, cut or hurt the lips) goblet, which never lacks the “mixed wines” – *Leeser*, to make glad (Psa. 104:15) the heart of one who would drink therefrom. The “mixed wines” are such doctrinal features of the divine plan, as center in “the seed” of Abraham, that one day, is to bless all the families of the earth. (Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:7, 16, 29)

“...the Mystery – the selection of the Church as the *Bride of Christ* during this Gospel Age, to be sharers with their Redeemer in the sufferings of this present time, and also in the glory that shall follow. Hence, the Apostle was very solicitous that he might share in ‘His Resurrection,’ ‘the Christ Resurrection,’ ‘the First Resurrection.’ Not until that ‘first Resurrection’ is finished will the *Seed of the Sarah Covenant* be fully born. This is quite in accord with the prophetic statement, ‘Shall I bring to the birth (deliver the Head), and not cause to come forth (the Body).’ (Isa. 66:9) The intimation is that so surely as Jesus, the Head of the Body, was brought forth in the Resurrection, born from the dead, so surely will all the members of His Body share with him his glorious ‘change’ from mortality to immortality, from earthly to heavenly nature.” (R4319:3)

It is because of our identity with the Sarah Covenant, that we already have a gladness, a “joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving,” as it were, “the end of (y)our faith, even the salvation of (y)our souls.” (1 Pet. 1:8, 9)

Next, Solomon speaks of her belly, saying that it is like unto “an heap of wheat, set about with lilies.”

And, of course, what the antitypical Solomon’s “Beloved” eats goes to her “belly” too, and is the source of the strength of her thighs, the grace of her movements, the brightness of her doves’ eyes, the blush of her cheeks, etc. Wheat is a symbolism for the Truth; and here also, for the Truth people who feed upon the Truth, and are thereby enabled to give forth strength and comfort to others. Thus, as the “espoused virgin” feeds upon her “Beloved” (John 6:50, 51, 53), who declared, “I am...the Truth” (John 14:6), not only is she made strong thereby,

but others too, through her ministry, have their hunger for truth and righteousness assuaged, and are comforted! (John 17:20; 7:38) And, all about this wheat field of Truth people, there are “lilies” (fully matured saints, whose very lives exude a most benign fragrance), which delight the heart of the heavenly bridegroom-to-be, and who, from time to time “gathers” them (Cant. 6:2) unto himself to glorify his heavenly mansions! (1 Cor. 15:51-58)

7:3 – Now, for the second time (see Cant. 4:5), does Solomon speak in loving terms of the breasts of his Beloved, likening them unto “two roes that are twins.”

Again and again, by way of the Inspired Word, does our Lord, our beloved “Solomon,” draw attention to the beauty, loveliness and tenderness of the “espoused virgin’s breasts” – the two-fold aspect of her love, which, as the “milk of human kindness” flows out from her heart, into the lives of others. The dual (i.e., twin) aspect – self-denying, and self-giving, is most beautifully depicted by the Apostle Paul, when speaking of this love (agape) he says that it is long-suffering, kind, envies not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, does not behave unseemly, seeks not its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil, rejoices in the truth, believes all things, endures all things and, never fails. (1 Cor. 13:4-8)

Love is the filling from one’s own, another’s cup;

Love is a daily laying down and taking up;

A choosing of the stony path through each day,

That other feet may tread with ease, a smoother way;

Love is not blind, but looks abroad through other eyes;

And asks not, “Must I give?” But, “May I sacrifice?”

Love hides its grief, that other hearts and lips may sing,

And, burdened walks, that other lives may buoyant wing.

But self-denial and self-giving are like two young roes that are twins. They are invariably found together; where the one is, the other is too. A characteristic of such roes is that they are extremely sensitive to unwholesome or harmful conditions and circumstances; and, their fleetness of foot, enables them quickly to remove themselves to a healthier clime. Just so is it with the “espoused virgin’s”: should her love find itself in an atmosphere that is unwholesome, or inimical to her spiritual welfare, and that would in any way retard, or stop completely the flow of her “milk” of thoughtfulness and kindness unto others, she will not hesitate, but swiftly draw herself away to the more congenial areas! (Prov. 4:23)

“...Keep the center of the affections right, true and pure, and the words and deeds and plans emanating therefrom will be good, true and pure, even though not always perfect.” (R1562:3)

7:4 – Solomon continues to laud his Beloved’s beauty, likening her neck to an ivory tower, her eyes, to a placid pool, her nose, unto a tower of Lebanon. Once before, he had spoken of her neck (Cant. 4:4), but at that time he had likened it to the Tower of David, builded as an

armoury where were displayed the bucklers of mighty men. He had also, twice before made reference to her eyes (Cant. 1:15; 4:1), likening them to doves' eyes. And now, for the first time, he speaks of another feature of her beauty, her nose! There can be no doubt about the matter, Solomon was really in love with this "fairest among women."

The antitypical Solomon – the heavenly bridegroom-to-be – is also cognizant of every phase and aspect of his beloved espoused virgin's beauty; nor does he hesitate to tell her about it. No, indeed, He loves her so very, very much.

Ivory has been recognized as one of the purest of the products of the earth. It is used here as a symbolism for her outstanding (towerlike) purity, maintained in a deep and sincere humility! She did once cry out with the Psalmist of old, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." (Psa. 51:7) And, she was heard. Thereafter she has endeavored to maintain this purity; and was called, "Blessed," (i.e., her lot being a happy one), by her heavenly bridegroom-to-be; and because of this purity of heart, he promised her, that one day she would see God. (Matt. 5:8)

"...we have the description of the purity and whiteness, the beauty and Christlike dignity, of the bride's neck as it should appear to those about her.

"Her neck is not haughty or outstretched, it is not turning here and there, looking about her in license, which she calls liberty. It is upright with holy, humble dignity; it is firm and erect as regards man, but ever humble toward her Lord. All the spots which once marred its beauty and whiteness, are gone. All the scorch and sunburn that once darkened it, have been washed away by the precious blood; and its whiteness is preserved by her separation to her Lord, and by the protecting shadow of His wing..." (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 444)

Solomon tells his "Beloved," "Thine eyes are like the fishpools of Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim."

The "eyes" of the "espoused virgin" of the antitypical Solomon, may also be likened to pools of water, for they too reflect the depth, and inner peace of her soul! The Heshbon of old, was once the capital city of Sihon, the king of the Amorites, who had refused Israel's request for a quick passage through his territory, into the "land of promise;" and whom Joshua ultimately vanquished. (Num. 21:21-26) Bath-rabbim was the gate of this ancient city "near which there were two pools to which the spouse compares the eyes of his 'beloved'." (*Young's Concordance*) This name, Bath-rabbim, means "the daughter of the many." Antotypically, Heshbon, might well represent the condition of the heart of the "espoused virgin" while Satan was still enthroned there, to resist any and all endeavors made to enter into the "peace with God." Joshua of old, then represents our Lord Jesus, who

vanquished for her the foe who consistently opposed. And He thus won for her, the right to possess "Canaan" (the heart) wherein battles are still raging, since there are still other "Canaanites" (evil and wicked things) within the land who must of needs be driven out! However, with our "Joshua" (the Lord Jesus) we are assured of the ultimate victory, for God himself, has promised it. (Num. 21:34, 35) The pools at the gate might well represent the reflection in the "eyes" of the "espoused virgin" of her present inner tranquility – the "peace of God," which surpasses all (human) understanding. (Phil. 4:7) She is not moved by any trouble about her. (Psa. 119:165; Acts 20:24; Psa. 46:4-7) As already stated, the name of the gate of Heshbon, where the reflecting fishpools were located, was Bath-rabbim, and is undoubtedly given merely for the purposes of identifying these particular pools. And, as already also stated, this name means "the daughter of the many." Yet, it is possible, that this too has a significance for us; and we therefore suggest that, in view of the fact it was the gate, in a sense, that was the "daughter of the many" – the multitudes who lived in the city of Heshbon, so too, the eyes serve as a gateway to the heart and all its diversified emotions, be they good or evil! (See Matt. 5:22, 23)

"Her eyes, once spoken of as doves' eyes, are now compared to the deep, calm, undisturbed fishpools of Heshbon. He does not compare them to a river, or even a lake, but to the still water of the fishpools.... The bride's eyes reflected the quiet peace of her soul, as undisturbed as the waters of the pools.

"They were down by the gate of Beth-rabbim, the place where men transacted their business and congregated for gossip, but the bride is undisturbed by the business matters and markets of the world. She is like the pools for depth, for there is with her great depth of spiritual perception, lacking in so many." (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 170)

"We are not told that her eyes are like waterfalls. We are not told that they are like a river that is rushing seaward, its bosom covered with ripples and waves. We are not told that her eyes are like the ocean, which is moved upon by the moon, and is lashed into fury by winds and storms; which is tempest-beaten and tossed. They are like the pools of Heshbon; still, deep, quiet; not knowing whence this stillness comes or how it is fed.

"...there is tranquility in her eyes and appearance that the world can neither give nor take away. Her life is untouched, unmoved, unpolluted by the unrest and turmoil of the world and the crowds around her.

"Running water cannot reflect perfectly the blue skies and the bright sun, every reflection upon the river and ocean is distorted and untrue. It is the

still pool that reflects the sun and sky in perfect beauty and glory...

"When the peace of God is filling the heart and life, there is no feature that shows it forth as do the eyes. How often when we have looked into the eyes of those who claim to walk close to God, have we read such a different story of selfishness, of unconquered desires and impulses, of arrogance and self-esteem. How often, when we have looked for the light of God in the eyes of those who gave forth glowing testimonies of victory and consecration, have we seen the unrest of the flesh, the taint of the world, and the absence of that which has been claimed by the lips.

"But when consecrated saints have sounded forth their devotion to their Lord, who can voice the joy and hunger that have filled our hearts, as we looked into their faces and saw the light of Heaven in their eyes. We have seen an unearthly light in the eyes of those who were following hard after the Lord, and our hearts have been ravished by the sight. We have cried to God that this holy light might fall upon us and fill our lives, reflecting upon us and shining from us.

"Those about her discern this mysterious, unfathomable light, but they know not whence it is. They do not know it is the reflection of God that they see; and she is unconscious that the image of Christ is appearing, and looking out of her eyes.

"Oh, that all about us might see in us the kind of Christ we have! Oh, that God may so work within us, that our faces and eyes shall be like the pools of Heshbon, with heavenly outlook and calm, perfectly reflecting Jesus Christ.

"It is easy to follow the Lord and look a little like Jesus when there is nothing to disturb us. Even the ocean and the large lakes reflect the skies with some clearness when there is a calm. But He would have us reflect Him as clearly in unfavorable, as in favorable, circumstances. He would have the image of Christ shine as bright and clear in the darkest night, as at noonday. He would have Christ's reflection upon us unbroken and undisturbed when we come up to hard things and face insurmountable obstacles; when we are maligned and persecuted; when we are hated and slandered for His Name's sake." (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 445-449)

Solomon follows through, declaring his Beloved's nose to be unto him like the tower of Lebanon, facing Damascus.

Since all of God's physical creation reflects the greater spiritual law, we are not surprised to find that each of the five senses has a spiritual counterpart. (See *F80*) One of these is the spiritual sense of smell – "a distinctive quality of spiritual apprehension clearly

recognized in Scripture." (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 9)

This sense, a most important one for the "espoused virgin," she has already exercised in the appreciation of the "savour of thy good ointments" (Cant. 1:3); which exercise, pleased her "Beloved" so greatly. The importance of this particular spiritual sense of smell, is reflected in the fact that no son of Aaron (no priest), if he had a flat nose (was unable to sense the savoriness, or unsavoriness of that which was to be offered) was to serve at the Lord's altar, to offer the food of his God. (Lev. 21:17, 18) If this was true of the typical priests, how much more will it be true of the antitypical, the spiritual priests of God, the selfsame class as is represented in the "espoused virgin"! But the Lord recognizes this qualification as adequately met and being maintained by his "Beloved," for in His eyes, she (under the figure of her nose) is like the tower of Lebanon, facing Damascus. She is zealous for all that is good; and jealous lest that which is evil should come to destroy the good! Damascus was often very hostile to Israel of old; and is undoubtedly intended to symbolize that which is evil. A guard in the Tower of Lebanon could watch, or even sense in the very atmosphere, the approach of the enemy, and see that preparations were made to meet him, or to drive him back and away. While the Church throughout all of this Gospel age has been just such a watch-tower against all evil; we incline to the thought that there is a special sense in which this holds true since A.D. 1874, when the Church reached an exalted position, represented by Lebanon. Not too long after this date (specifically, 1879) a "watch-tower" was erected, from whence have come the many warnings, calling for the defense of God's spiritual Israel, against all the various encroachments of the Adversary. This so-called Truth Movement, we believe, involves all the "wise virgin" class living in this end of the Gospel age, the "tower of Lebanon, facing Damascus."

"Her nose is likened to a tower which looks towards the enemy's country. The nose speaks of discernment.... The bride had great power of discernment, and could use this organ to detect whether or not a thing was of God. She could tell too, the differences between odors and sweet savors.

"...She knows from which direction to expect attack. We need be on our watch-tower today, lest any assault be made upon the truth. We must see that those who come bring the doctrine of Christ. If they do not, our directions are clear, to receive them not. (2 John 10)" (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, pages 170, 171)

"...her 'nose' represents the power to distinguish the savour of what is of God. It is figurative of a perspective faculty which is of great importance. If there is keenness of scent in regard to what is of God, there will also be quick perception of what has an evil savour.... We ought to be able to

‘scent’ the character of persons or teachings without a very close examination. The organ of smell is very fine in its discrimination; it can distinguish when there is nothing apparent to any other sense. An evil teacher might be clever enough to make his doctrines appear to be wholly based on Scripture, but a truly spiritual person would perceive an ill savor about them, even if he could not point out exactly what was wrong. So that this faculty is like an elevated watch-tower with a wide range of outlook. The one who has it does not need to investigate minutely, or at close quarters, what is contrary to God. The very ‘scent’ of the thing is enough, and he turns from it. But, on the other hand, he is quick to perceive the spiritual odor of what is of God.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, pages 184, 185)

“She is like a strong mountain tower on the border mountain, Lebanon, which looks toward the hostile and treacherous Damascus, and ever keeps watch over the enemy’s country. She watches every approach that the enemy shall not take her unawares nor deceive her. She submits herself to her Lord, but to none others; she is erect, ready for battle, ready for the foe in whatever way he may come.

“...When the spiritual scent has been exercised through obedience and communion with the Lord, and through dwelling in His presence, to discern the odors of His oils and detect His fragrance afar off, we shall need no other training to prepare us to be quick of scent in discerning evil and the approach of the enemy.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 450)

7:5 – Solomon now tells his beloved “Dove” that her head is so beautiful, it reminds him of Mt. Carmel; and, that her hair (perhaps because of its glossy blackness) looks so royal to him, that he, though a king he be, finds himself imprisoned therein.

Carmel, means a park, or garden spot; in other words a fruitful area. We read in *McClintock & Strong’s Cyclopedia*, that “on account of the graceful form and verdant beauty of the summit, the head of the bride in Cant. 7:5 is compared to Carmel.”

Already, the “espoused virgin’s” eyes, lips, etc., have been mentioned as instruments by way of which she ministers, as she has opportunity, love, kindness and good-will to *all* men, but especially, unto the household of faith. (Gal. 6:10) And, she is commended by her beloved Lord, through the Apostle Paul, for this. (1 Thes. 1:2, 3; Heb. 6:10) Yet, behind these (eyes, lips, etc.), is the mental faculty, the understanding, the mind (figuratively, the heart), which prompts this lovely ministry. Can it be, it is this latter, the mind, that is here alluded to as the “head...like Carmel”? It surely is true that the mind of the saints – that same mind which was also in Christ Jesus

(Phil. 2:5), flourishes richly with the beautiful and fragrant flowers (thoughts), and most graciously ministers these through the eyes, lips, etc., to others!

“...Paul says, ‘Brethren, be not children in your minds, but in malice be babes; but in your minds be grown men.’ (1 Cor. 14:20) Children act and speak according to their feelings, but men speak and act with understanding. In the assembly (the Church) there is intelligent understanding of divine things, and as it comes into expression there is general edification. The Lord has great pleasure in this. It brings into evidence the feature which is set forth in her head being ‘like Carmel’.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 186)

Then too, the “espoused virgin” is adorned with beautiful “hair,” long tresses bespeaking her separation, and subjection to Him, whom she loves so dearly. Purple cannot here refer to the color of her hair; but that in her “Solomon’s” eyes the “texture”; it is that which He desires for his “queen.” Thus does He subtly declare that she is to be an heir together with Him of the royalty of the Kingdom. (2 Pet. 1:3, 4)

“...‘and the locks of thy head like purple; the king is fettered by thy ringlets.’ There is a certain spiritual beauty which, according to God, ever accompanies spiritual understanding, and that is the ornament of subjection. This is the glory of the assembly (the Church) just as long hair is a glory to a woman. The spirit of subjection is most attractive to the eye and heart of Christ. Every part of the truth demands subjection.

“The truly ‘royal’ character of the ‘prince’s daughter’ comes out in this....If the spirit of subjection to Christ is in us it will affect us in all our relations with one another. One could hardly be subject to Christ, and in subject to those who are Christ’s. The spirit of subjection in the saints is the only witness in the world of the authority of Christ. And we can all have a part in this witness. Many may not be able to preach or teach, or give, but we can all in some way express that we are in subjection to Christ as Head.

“...It is our glory to be marked by subjection, and such a spirit is most attractive to the Lord. ‘The king is fettered by thy ringlets.’ Nothing in the saints appeals more to the heart of Christ than their affectionate subjection to Him as Head. It has power to hold Him ‘fettered’ – a wonderful word when we consider who the King really is! It makes us think of John 14:21, ‘He that has my commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves me; but he that loves me shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will manifest myself to him.’

“Where there is affectionate subjection the Lord gets His full portion of delight in His loved one.

He can say, ‘How fair and how pleasant art thou, my love, in delights!’” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, pages 186-188)

7:6 – Solomon, now hardly able to contain himself, so overjoyed is he, and delighted, with the beauty and the grandeur of his “Beloved,” so that he now draws her yet closer to whisper into her ear, “How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!” And of course, she was thrilled to hear this too.

So too, does the “espoused virgin’s” purity, and the grace and beauty of her sterling character afford her “Solomon,” exquisite delight and joy! He finds all of His delights in her; she is His all and in all. Like Rachel of old, “she is beautiful and well favored” (Gen. 29:17); and like Abigail, she is “of good understanding and a beautiful countenance.” (1 Sam. 25:37) Yea, our blessed Lord, the heavenly bridegroom-to-be, is in love with everything about her: he loves her

“head” – (Cant. 7:5) i.e., her mental faculties, her understanding, her spiritual enlightenment, her mind, yea the mind in her is that mind which was *also* in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 2:5; 1 Cor. 2:16)

“countenance” – (Cant. 2:14) i.e., her manner of ever looking up, for the blessed hope and the glorious appearing of her “Beloved” (Titus 2:13); yea, and the manner in which she is ever looking unto Jesus, as the author and finisher of her faith. (Heb. 12:2)

“hair” – (Cant. 4:1; 6:5; 7:5) i.e., her *separation* from herself, and all else that may be inimical to her “Beloved,” yea, a *separation* unto Him; and, also the manner of her *subjection* to Him and His blessed will. (Num. 6:2, 5; 2 Cor. 6:17; 1 Thes. 4:3, 7)

“eyes” – (Cant. 1:15; 4:1, 9; 7:4) i.e., her singleness of purpose (Matt. 6:22; Phil. 3:13, 14); and her expressions of tenderness. (Eph. 4:32)

“nose” – (Cant. 7:4) i.e., her spiritual faculty which enables her to sense the difference between that which is savory unto God, and that which is not. (Lev. 21:17, 18; 1 Cor. 2:14, 15; Heb. 5:14)

“cheeks” – (Cant. 1:10; 4:3; 6:7) (temples *A.V.*) that which is indicative of her spiritual health; and also that trait of character which enables her to blush the blush of purity and innocence. (Jer. 6:15; 8:12; 1 Cor. 5:1, 2, 6)

“teeth” – (Cant. 4:2; 6:6) not here her means for mastication, but rather a feature of her spiritual beauty; that whereby the teeth are sort of a bulwark or guard for restraining the tongue from uttering things that are not

beautiful, but evil, corrupt, profane or unkind. (Psa. 19:13, 14)

“lips” – (Cant. 4:3, 11) i.e., her testimony of the message of redemption, the glad tidings (Acts 13:32, 33; 1 Cor. 2:1, 2); and the giving of words of cheer and comfort to others. (1 Thes. 5:11)

“tongue” – (Cant. 4:11) inasmuch as she refrains from speaking evil (Titus 3:2); and always speaks that which will edify the hearer. (Rom. 14:19; 1 Thes. 5:11)

“speech” – (Cant. 4:3) i.e., her gracious and kindly manner of admonishing others. (Col. 4:6)

“voice” – (Cant. 2:14) i.e., her singing of the praises of her “Beloved,” and of His and her God and Father. (Heb. 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:9; 4:11)

“neck” – (Cant. 1:10; 4:9; 7:4) i.e., her fearless righteousness in guarding against, and resisting all evil in the interests of herself, her “Beloved,” and his people. (1 Cor. 15:58; 1 Pet. 5:9)

“breasts” – (Cant. 4:5; 7:3) i.e., her self-denying, and self-giving love. (Luke 9:23; 12:33; 18:22; 1 Cor. 13:4-7)

“navel” – (Cant. 7:2) i.e., her identification with (the) Sarah (Abrahamic) Covenant. (Gal. 4:26, 28, 31; 3:29)

“belly” – (Cant. 7:2) i.e., her assimilation of the Truth, which then becomes the source of all of her strength of movement, so that out of her “belly” flow streams of living waters. (John 4:13, 14; 7:38)

“thighs” – (Cant. 7:1) the strength, reflected in all of her graceful movements. (Gen. 32:25, 31; Eph. 4:16)

“feet” – (Cant. 7:1) because she is shodden with the preparation of the gospel of peace; and her walk of faith is in righteousness and truth. (Rom. 10:15; Eph. 6:15)

“garments” – (Cant. 4:11) i.e., her “garments” are the imputed righteousness of her “Beloved” – Jesus, which garments, however, if she keeps them unspotted, she will be privileged one day to exchange for nobler ones, in the glory of His kingdom. (Jas. 1:27; Rev. 19:8)

“ointments” – (Cant. 4:10) i.e., the fragrance of her anointing (1 John 2:27); a manifestation of the fruits and graces of the Spirit, in her life! (Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9)

7:7, 8 – Solomon continues, “This, thy stature, is like to a palm tree; and thy breasts, like a cluster of grapes.” The translators of many versions, both old and modern, have

taken license here, for the words “of grapes” do not appear in the original Hebrew text. We suggest that the cluster referred to, is of dates! – the natural fruitage of the palm tree. (See *Appendix “W”*)

Surely, the antitypical Solomon has the same thing to say about His Beloved – the “espoused virgin;” for she too is as stately and as fruitful as the palm tree. But what a beautiful simile! (See *Appendix “X”*)

To begin with, the palm tree is an endogen, i.e., it is unlike many other trees wherein the life is in the cambium layer, directly beneath the outer bark; the palm tree, on the other hand, grows from deep within. Thus did Solomon of old, liken his Beloved, not unto anything that was superficial, but rather to something, the strength and beauty of which came from sources lying deep within! The antitypical Solomon – our blessed Lord, also recognizes that whereas there are many whose lives are lived near the surface; it is different with His “espoused virgin,” whose manifestations of strength and beauty of character, are the result of very deep and heartfelt emotions. The palm tree does grow erect, and is fruitful. So too, are all the “trees of righteousness” which are of the Father’s planting – the true church, which also grows erect, i.e., upright, and is fruitful. Its fruitage also is in clusters – the fruits and graces of the Spirit, and grows very high, far above earthly levels, and from whence they cannot be easily plucked by passers-by. Incidentally, the palm tree is also an evergreen. There are, therefore, no seasonal changes. The saint of God also has no seasonal changes (moods); for he ever endeavors to live the *Christ-life* (Phil. 1:21); and, Christ lived so as to reveal the Father (John 14:9, 10) – the Father with whom there is no “variableness...turning.” (1 Cor. 15:58; Heb. 13:8; Jas. 1:17) Then too, wherever grows the palm tree, there is water nearby. (Exod. 15:27) The “trees” of God’s planting always indicate the presence of the “waters of truth.” (Psa. 1:3; Jer. 17:8)

“...What marks a palm tree is its growth, uprightness and fruitfulness. It is always to be found beside water, and draws its sustenance from hidden springs. If we are to grow, we too must be planted by the waters. And as the palm grows upright, we should be like that – straight up and down...The palm is noted too, for its fruit, and is prolific even in old age. We should see that we likewise keep fruitful. And as the palm grows older its fruit improves, showing us that we should improve with age also, and thus, like this tree, give more and better fruit.” (Watt – *Ruth and the Song of Solomon*, page 173)

“...The palm tree always grows beside springs of clear, living water. The weary traveler in the desert is encouraged to press on, as he sees in the distance groves of stately palm trees; even one palm tree gives him courage, for it is a sure sign of water. Thus it is with the Christian in the world.

Where Christians are found who are walking close to the Lord, whether it is in companies, or by ones and twos, it is a sure evidence that the pure water of life will be found there also.

“...the refreshing springs are not in the palm tree, but the trees are nourished from the springs; neither does the fountain of living water have its source in the Christian, but the Christian draws refreshment from the great Fountain. As the palm beckons to the traveler in the desert, and ever points to the springs at its roots, so the Christian is a channel through which living streams, which have their source in the throne of God, flow out to those that are thirsty.

“The palm tree never grows earthward but heavenward. No pressure nor weight, however great or heavy, that is laid upon the palm tree, can bear it down or hold it near the earth. It will not be bound down, neither will it grow crooked; but in spite of all opposition, it keeps its face looking upward, and pursues its heavenward course.

“The palm tree is one of the most stately trees. It does not lose its leaves and beauty as do other plants and trees, but it is always green and flourishing. It is an emblem of constancy and patience, of fruitfulness and victory.... It does not spread out its leaves and bear its fruit near the earth, but it is in its highest branches that it spreads out and becomes strong. It is remarkable for its long life and continued fruitfulness.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 465-468)

There is no part of the feminine anatomy which bespeaks bodily grace and beauty, so well as do the breasts. Nor could Solomon of old, in speaking of his Beloved’s stature, overlook this feature. Accordingly, and in harmony with his simile, he now likens these to the fruitage of the palm tree – clusters of dates. As already suggested elsewhere, the breasts are a very apt symbol for the dual aspects of love (the *agape*), the self-denying, self-giving “milk of human kindness” which flows out from the “espoused virgin” into the lives of others. The association here, with the fruitage of the palm tree (clusters of dates), is quite significant. The clustered fruitage represents the fruits and graces of the Spirit; yet, in the ultimate, is there any real difference between these, and the self-denying, self-giving love represented in the symbolism of the breasts? This much is certain, both bespeak an assimilable food for souls that are hungering, or thirsting, for just such evidence of Christian living!

The declaration of Solomon, that he would go (subsequently) to the palm tree to take hold of its boughs, suggests, that since the tree bears its fruitage so high, his purpose was to shake some of this fruitage loose, that it might fall to the ground below, so that those who could

not climb, because of infirmities, etc., might also delight themselves with its delicious and wholesome fruitage.

This, to us, is a most beautiful thought, for it reflects what the antitypical Solomon intends to do with His “palm tree” – the “espoused virgin.” He will make of her, during the Millennial age, a “tree of life,” which will supply food and healing for the nations. (Rev. 22:2)

“So far as the world is concerned, our Lord’s ministry of comfort to them is chiefly a future work. We rejoice, however, that the time is sure to come when all that mourn, and all the ‘groaning creation,’ shall be brought under the blessed influences and provisions of the Millennial Kingdom, and shall there come to know the consolations which God has provided in Christ – the balm for every trouble, every wound; the cure for every blight, every sin and every imperfection; and their privilege of profiting by these to the fullest measure by giving themselves unreservedly into the care of the Good Physician.

“All of the Lord’s people need to remember that in proportion as they are ambassadors of the Lord, and as his representatives, it will be their privilege...by and by in the Kingdom to ‘comfort all that mourn,’ and to be ‘trees of righteousness, whose leaves will be for the healing of the nations.’ (Rev. 22:2)...” (R2664:3, 2665:4)

“The symbolic picture suggests nourishment and healing for the sin-sick, starving world, which then partake freely of the blessings and privileges thus symbolized. No longer will it be necessary to say to men, ‘The weaknesses of your fallen flesh will be with you until death, for although the Lord has graciously covered your sins because of faith in the Redeemer and the desire to walk in his way, nevertheless there is no escape from the consequences of sin, there is nothing that will absolutely heal.’ When the new dispensation, represented by this symbolic city and its river of the water of life and the trees of life with their leaves of healing, is made available to men, it will be the beginning of the times of restitution spoken by the Lord through the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:19-21) The restitution will affect all the willing and obedient, not only physically but mentally and morally: the uplift will be individual and world-wide. This is the very object of providing the river of life, the trees of life, their fruits and their leaves.” (R3571:1)

Thus, from the “breasts” of the “espoused virgin,” then the Lamb’s wife, there will continue to flow forth to all the world of mankind, that which only self-denying, the self-giving love has made possible – restitution blessings!

The going to the palm tree to shake, as it were, its boughs, was something Solomon would do in the future;

but for “now” (the present) her breasts were still to serve him as being like unto clusters of the vine (grapes); and the smell of her nose like apples.

So too, with the antitypical Solomon, in the future he will make his “espoused virgin,” then the Lamb’s wife, a source of blessing to all the world of mankind; but *NOW* (in the present), her “breasts” were still to serve Him in their likeness to clusters of the vine (grapes)! While the ultimate state of the grapes is to be the wine that is to make glad hearts (Psa. 104:15); it is not this that is reflected here. Of course, the fruits and the graces of the Spirit are implied; but there is something more than this; it is this: that self-denying, self-giving, love, alone makes possible for those who would be identified with Christ Jesus in the glory of the Kingdom to bless all the families of the world, their dwelling together in unity (Psa. 133:1) *NOW!* It is this that so rejoices the heart of the heavenly bridegroom-to-be! There may be many individual “grapes” in a cluster, yet no two of these are exactly alike; but there is a togetherness, a oneness of the Spirit there! For these, His admonition is, forsake not “the assembling of (y)ourselves together...and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.” (Heb. 10:25)

“The Lord’s injunction, through the Apostle, respecting the assembling of his people, is in full accord with his own words, ‘Where two or three of you are met in my name, there am I in the midst.’ (Matt. 18:20) The object of these gatherings is clearly indicated; they are for mutual advancement in spiritual things, opportunities for provoking or inciting each other unto more and more *love* for the Lord and for each other, and to increased good works of every kind that would glorify our Father, that would bless the brotherhood, and that would do good unto all men as we have opportunity...” (F302)

Most of the Versions we have been able to check, as well as many of the translations, give the thought (as does the *Authorized Version*) that it is the espoused virgin’s nose that smells like apples. And, while it is possible that one can take on the odors and fragrances of the things by which he is surrounded, we are inclined to believe that the translators have given us a transliteration, rather than a translation, here. *Moffatt*, renders this portion of the text, “your breath sweet as an apple;” and the *Revised Standard Version*, renders it, “the scent of your breath like apples.” And, though the Hebrew text does contain the word “nose,” we believe the basic thought to be rather that of “scent.” Let it be remembered that Solomon’s espoused had spent some time resting in the shade of her “apple tree” (Cant. 2:3), and undoubtedly while enjoying its fragrance had also partaken of its fruitage – apples! Such being the case it would not be strange if her breath had become so laden with the sweetness of their flavor, that every time she opened her mouth one could tell what she had been eating.

This we do know, the antitypical “espoused virgin” has also spent much time beneath the shade of her “apple tree” – the Lord Jesus, himself; and that not only has been feasting her “eyes” upon his beauty of character, but she has also been feeding upon “Him.” It is no wonder then that when she opens her mouth to speak, that her “breath” too is laden with the sweet fragrance of what she has been feeding upon! She ever glorifies her Lord.

“In the natural, the breath bears the odor of that which has been eaten. It is the same in the spiritual; if the bride is feeding continually upon the fruit of this one incomparable Apple Tree, the air about her will give forth the fragrance of this... Apple. Everything that goes out from her life will exhale the odors of Christ’s dwelling in her heart by faith.

“God would not have our breath laden with vile odors of unbelief. He would not have any scent go out from us that does not come from Him who is the source of all fragrance; who is the storehouse of all nourishment and food for the soul; who is the fountain of all fountains and of all spiritual drink. But we should draw from the living waters and look up that our stature would be like the tall, beautiful palm, whose leaves are ever green, whose branches are strong and stalwart, whose fruit hangs in abundant clusters.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 475, 476)

7:9 – Solomon now likens his Beloved’s palate to the very best wine...but ere he has finished the sentence, she interrupts and says, “that goeth down smoothly for my Beloved, and stealeth over the lips of them that are asleep.” (Darby)

As already suggested, the palate serves a dual purpose: it has an important part in the tasting of food and drink; but also serves as an echo-chamber for the voice in speech or song. Our blessed Lord would, of course, recognize both of these characteristics of His Beloved. What the “espoused virgin” eats and drinks of the Truth, when once assimilated, affords the strength whereby she either speaks or sings forth the praises of her beloved “Solomon.” And He commends her, not merely for her good “taste” but also for using the strength thus acquired, in her testimonies to the glory of God. To her Beloved, this is the best “wine” (doctrine – communion), which makes him very glad, yea, indeed, ecstatically happy! However, ere He has a chance to finish his last sentence, she breaks in and interrupts to say, as it were, to finish the sentence “that goeth down smoothly, for my Beloved, and stealeth over the lips of them that are asleep.” This shows that she means, with all her heart, to please and delight Him with her very best; and she is herself delighted with the way in which He imbibes! But this “wine” not only delights Him; but there are those who though practically asleep (spiritually speaking) on having their lips moistened with it, are revived and aroused to renewed interest and activity in matters of the spirit and the truth!

“...And the roof of her mouth, or her palate...is figurative of power to taste the sweetness of all that is spiritual and divine. This is ‘like the best wine’ for the Beloved. How precious is the thought that our tasting the heavenly sweetness and enjoying it is wine – yea, the best wine – for Him! He delights in our private and individual enjoyment of divine things, but how specially sweet to Him are our collective enjoyments! One often looks around when Christ is being ministered to see how saints are enjoying it. If it is a pleasure to us to see the evidences of true appreciation of Christ’s things and the Father’s things, how much more is it to Him! And He loves that we should enter into what it is to Him. Our doing so is set forth after the first sentence of verse 9. The Beloved speaks to this point, and then the spouse breaks in, if we may so say, and finishes the sentence for Him. It is a sweet and striking expression of *complete harmony* between Him and His loved one. She enters into what her appreciations are to Him; they are to Him the best wine ‘that floweth to my beloved,’ as the margin reads. The Lord loves to give us a sense of how our joy in divine things is a joy to Him.

“Nor is there any more powerful influence to affect ‘them that are asleep’ than the appreciations and enjoyments of His wakeful saints. I suppose nothing has been more used to awake and revive dull and sleepy hearts than their being made aware of those satisfactions and delights which are the portion of overcomers. When this steals ‘over the lips of them that are asleep’ it has a sweet awakening power.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, pages 189, 190)

7:10 – On the basis of what the Beloved has said about her, his “fairest among women” continues, probably not aloud, but really to herself, “I am my Beloved’s, and his desire is toward me.”

This is the assurance of faith, given to the “espoused virgin,” the Church of the Gospel dispensation, she is His, and His desire is toward her. How precious! Can you say, “I am his,” and “He is mine”?

“...No tongue can describe the joy and rejoicing that fills the soul that has really come to the Lord and tasted of this uttermost salvation; into whose heart and life the Lord has come and taken full possession, taking up His abode there that He may work out His will in the life.

“We enter into the rest and satisfaction of belonging to Him, and we begin to taste the sweetness of suffering for His sake. We have proved that even one curl of our locks of separation can hold the King of Glory. We are walking along the narrow way with eyes fixed upon Him, with the reflection of His image becoming more apparent upon us at

every step.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 484, 486)

“O wondrous love! what joy is mine,
To feel that I am truly thine.
Thou precious lamb who died for me,
I come to thee, I come to thee.”

7:11 – Solomon speaks again, “Come, my beloved,” he says, “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.”

The time is definitely established as that of the Lord’s second presence, by the use in this passage from the Song of Songs, of the word “us.” This is something they are to do *together*! It will be remembered that our Lord, through His “wise and faithful servant” (Luke 12:42), the Laodicean messenger (Rev. 3:14, 20), gave a similar message to the “daughters of Jerusalem” (Cant. 6:11) in the early days of His *Parousia*; but they were not interested.

“In 1877 Pastor Russell called a meeting of all the ministers of Allegheny and Pittsburgh, showed them the Scriptures, which indicate our Lord’s presence. All the ministers of two cities were present and all of the ministers refused to believe. In the same year he gave up his secular work to devote his entire time and fortune to the work indicated in the Scriptures as incident to the close of the Gospel Age and the change of Dispensation impending.

“...In 1881 there were distributed free, 1,400,000 copies of *Food for Thinking Christians* to the Protestant churches in the United States, Canada, and Great Britain, on three consecutive Sundays, by A.D.T. messenger boys.” (*The Laodicean Messenger*, page 4)

7:12 – However, since then, the present bridegroom-to-be, has been addressing His beloved, the “espoused virgin,” inviting her to go forth *with* Him into the field (the world of mankind – Matt. 13:38); to lodge (not permanently) in the villages (Bethanys – temporary resting places along the way); to arise early (in the Millennial morning) to look at the vineyards to see if the vine (Israel – Isa. 5:7; Ps. 80:14, 15, 19; Jer. 24:6, 7, 32, 41) flourish, whether the tender grape appear (is Israel appreciating the Redeemer’s overruling providences on its behalf?); and, also to observe how the “pomegranate” buds forth (there are those among mankind who already recognize the hand of God in the affairs of men, and are looking forward, as it were, to the full establishment of the Kingdom). In visiting this “garden of nuts” (Cant. 6:11) *with* Him, she is enjoying what may already be seen of the dawning of the better day! Somewhere along the line – very soon, we believe – “*there*” in the Harvest time – i.e., the closing days of the Gospel age, during the great “time of trouble,” He will give to His “espoused virgin” *all* His “loves!” He will take her completely unto Himself, making her His (the Lamb’s) wife. Rejoice, dear

One, thy deliverance draweth nigh! Soon you are to possess the “bright and morning star.” (Rev. 2:28; 22:16)

“Well may the church arise now and put on her beautiful garments; for shortly she is to receive beauty for ashes and the oil of gladness for the spirit of heaviness. The time is come when she may lift up her head and rejoice, knowing that her deliverance draweth nigh.” (Luke 21:28) (*R2036:3*)

7:13 – Solomon next tells his bride-to-be, that the mandrakes give a good smell; and that at the gate (to the garden) are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which he had laid up for her.

Our blessed Lord too, would delight His beloved “espoused virgin” with what “smells” good; things new and old, and pleasant and “tasty” too. While it is true that all through this age the Lord’s “scribes” have been privileged to bring forth out of the great treasure field (the Scriptures) things “new and old” (Matt. 13:52), and place them by the “gate” (make them accessible) for the delight of His “bride-to-be,” it has been specially so of *the* “scribe” of the Harvest. The time of “ripeness” i.e., for the understanding of much of the truth (not previously understood) had come; and the Lord Himself gathered it together at the “gate” (made it accessible) through His faithful “scribe.” And, who is there among us (if we be wise – Dan. 12:10, 12), who hasn’t enjoyed its “smell,” and its deliciously sweet “taste”? In passing, let it be noted that mandrakes are sometimes called “love-apples,” and were once considered to have the strange power of inciting to love, and by extension to fruitfulness. Some exegetes believe this is what is implied in the story of Leah, Rachel and the mandrakes in Gen. 30:14-16; but really, one has to read this into the text! But this we do know, the “sweet-smelling mandrakes” which the Lord has gathered for us (the Harvest message), when partaken of, it does incite love for the Lord and his truth, and also promotes our fruitfulness! (1 Pet. 1:8)

8:1, 2, 3 – Solomon’s espoused, despite all of his expressions of undying love for her, does have some few misgivings! He is of such a very noble strain, and she...! And so it is that she wishes it were otherwise: that they were both on about an equal footing. Then, she might readily express her deepest heartfelt emotions, her very deepest love for him. If she kissed him in public or otherwise, there are always those who would despise her for it, saying that such demonstrations show too much familiarity with Solomon, the King, especially by one of so lowly an estate as is hers. She tells him of this – Oh, if only he could appear to be as her brother; surely, no one would then object to such demonstrations of love, and, under such a guise, she could bring him into her mother’s house; be instructed there; and at the same time minister unto him of her choicest juice of pomegranate wine.

The marriage has not yet taken place. She is still merely the “espoused virgin.” And, there are times when

she does have some misgivings, being mindful of the fact that his station is so very high, and hers, so very low. This is when she forgets her own High-calling, and her own begetting to the divine nature. She forgets then also, that she is already related to Him, not merely by way of her betrothal, but inasmuch as Jehovah God *is* her Father, and (the) Sarah (covenant) *is* her mother; and, respectively His too! Indeed, He *is* her brother! (Adam and Eve were, in a sense, also brother and sister, for was not Jehovah God, the Father of both?) Nor need she ever really fear of being despised for showing her deepest affections for Him, by “kissing” Him (testifying of her love for Him), publicly or otherwise, since *HE* understands.

How much do we forget when for one reason or another, we lose our peace – fearing, worrying and fretting! At such times we are very apt to forget many other things too. The “bride-to-be” forgets that she has already brought her Beloved into her mother’s house. (Cant. 2:4) She forgets that she has already been fully instructed with regard to her attitude toward Him, and now needs no further instructions. (1 John 2:27) In fact, He has already drunk of the “spiced wine” of the juice of her pomegranates, i.e., she has already delighted Him with her understanding of the doctrine of redemption for all the world of mankind, through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. She would however, be reassured, if only he would place his left hand under her head (alert her mental faculties to a consciousness of all His apparently unappreciated grace and favor); and, with His right hand embrace her (draw her ever closer unto Himself).

8:4 – At this point, Solomon’s Beloved sees the daughters of Jerusalem once again pressing-in on her. They know how kind and sympathetic she is to all unfortunate peoples, and would have her engage in works by which much suffering and pain could be alleviated. Yet, this work would seriously interfere with her endeavors to delight with herself and her devotion, her bridegroom-to-be. Accordingly, as she did before (Cant. 2:7, 3:5), she adjures them not to arouse her natural love and sympathy at this particular time, for it would not be too long until both she and her Beloved would engage in this work together.

Nor is it different with the “espoused virgin.” She too can see the “daughters of Jerusalem” pressing-in, for the use of some of her consecrated time and talent. Nor are the projects in which they would engage her, unworthy ones, for they do involve the alleviation of pain and suffering among the groaning creation. Such are temperance work, welfare work, slum clearance work, etc., etc., all of which could require much of one’s time if the work is to be carried on conscientiously. The “espoused virgin” does not have that much time; though she is willing to do good unto all men *as she has opportunity*. (Gal. 6:10)

“If all the consecrated were...busily engaged in putting on the armor of God, and proving it by actual use in zealous endeavor to herald the truth and to help others to stand, there would be no time left for even good temperance reform work, nor for work among the slums of the great cities, nor for the doctrine of healing, nor any such thing. We have no consecrated time for these matters, which are only side issues and not harmful in themselves, *except as they divert attention and consume time which has been consecrated to another and higher use*. All these works will be effectively accomplished in the ‘times of restitution’ (Acts 3:19-22), now in the near future...” (R5045:6)

Yet, there is another group of the “daughters of Jerusalem,” which asks us to engage in still other work, a work which is even more of a semblance to the work which Jesus admonished his disciples to do. (Mark 16:15) Here it is not often easy to differentiate between the “work of the Lord,” and “work for the Lord.” What Jesus told his disciples to do was work incidental to the making of their “calling and election sure.” (2 Pet. 1:10) Such is the so-called “public work” and the “tracting work.” These may be carried on as a “work” by which we seek to please the Lord. Yet how deceptive this can be! One could be busily engaged in this type of work, virtually caring for another’s vineyard, yet neglecting his own. (Cant. 1:6) What will delight the heavenly bridegroom-to-be most is our devotedness to Him; and He will measure this not by the amount of work we have done *for Him*; but the degree of *love* we have developed in doing it *for Him*! Accordingly, work should never be done for the work’s sake, but for *His sake, as a token of our love for Him*.

“...The great work of the true Church during this age has been to feed, strengthen and enlighten all who enter the covenanted spiritual condition. The Bride of Christ is to *make herself ready*. (Rev. 19:7) The witnessing to the world during the present age is *quite secondary and incidental*. The full blessing of the world will follow in God’s ‘due time,’ after the Gospel age...is ended.” (T115)

8:5 – To help his Beloved find herself, Solomon throws her mind back to the time when he had led her forth from the wilderness, to which she had fled to escape the persecutions of a very jealous woman. He likened this experience for her to a birth, for it was at that time that he helped her to become a recognized personality. And since then, he had been helping her to grow into a most beautiful womanhood; eventually intending to make her his bride.

Though the true Church, the “espoused virgin,” has existed from the very beginning of the Gospel age, because of persecutions by a very jealous woman (the apostate Church – the Papacy), she had to flee into the wilderness for 1260 “days” (Rev. 12:6) – 1260 years!

"In the first flush of papal exaltation, the people as a whole were nominally members of the church or else pagans; and all who professed Christ were expected to conform to the usages and regulations of the gradually self-exalting hierarchy. Error, always more popular than truth, when exalted to influence and power, hunted down, proscribed and made disreputable the truth, and all who held it. This was the time when, as pictured in Revelation, the true Church (woman) fled into the wilderness – into solitude (Rev. 12:6) – an outcast because of her fidelity to the truth, and to the true Lord and Head of the Church. In this time, when apostates were being exalted as princes, the true, humble saints were experiencing what the Lord had warned them, and all who will live godly (in this present time), to expect, viz., persecution..." (B329)

It was during that period that the Lord "found" her, and helped her (Dan. 11:34) by way of the Reformation.

"...the full period of the persecutor's (Papacy's) power, 1260 years, would not end until 1799; but before its end God granted a little help through the Reformation movement, which, though at first it rather increased persecution, afterward gave some comfort to those falling because of fidelity to God's work. The Reformation prevented the complete crushing out of the truth from the world..." (C38)

There is then, perhaps a sense in which the Church during this period experienced a second "birth," i.e., she had now come into being, a "protesting" Church; her mother for the occasion, being none other than "Divine Providence." And, He who had served as the "apple-tree" for the sons, His luscious "fruitage," and His delightful "shade" (Cant. 2:3), also served this newly brought-forth "protesting" church, during the period of her growth and development into a most beautiful "woman." It was He also, who in due course of time led her forth from the "wilderness" leaning on His arm. Satan had indeed tried by way of the French Revolution, to...

"...overwhelm the 'woman' (the protesting Church of God), as her three and a half times (1260 years) of wilderness-hiding were about closing, and she was coming forward into prominence 'leaning on (the arm of) her beloved,' The Word of God." (Cant. 8:5) (C65)

Thus would the antitypical Solomon comfort and reassure his beloved "espoused virgin" that there is nothing that can ever separate her from Him, and His love for her. (Rom. 8:35)

8:6 – After Solomon had uttered his beautiful words to reassure his beloved "Dove," she seemed to be more hungry than before for every token of his love. She now asks that she be set as a seal upon his heart, and upon his arm, so indelibly impressed thereon as never to be erased.

The Hebrew word *chotham* has been rendered both signet and seal; and in some respects the two are alike.

The stones of Aaron's breastplate, were in the nature of such signets or seals (Exod. 28:21) as they became identified with him, when born upon his heart; and whenever he appeared in the presence of Jehovah God on Israel's behalf. The suggestion has been made that these stones – signets or seals – bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, represented the "true Israel of God, the 'little flock'." (T36) What a beautiful thought this is; that we are virtually engraved upon the heart of our Jesus! Undoubtedly this is the thought implied here. The true Church, the "espoused virgin," desires that she be the seal upon the heart of her Beloved, and upon his arm too: His "heart" would represent His affections – His love; and His "arm," his strength – both to be exercised by Him, on her behalf.

"All her strength has gradually disappeared, and she is leaning upon His breast; her arm, or strength, finds support only in His arm, or strength. She would have the pressure of her head upon His bosom, remain ever before His eyes as the impress of a seal upon His heart and affections. She would have the pressure of her dependence upon Him remain as a seal upon His arm, or strength.

"In the Jewish Tabernacle, the high priest always bore the names of the tribes of Israel upon his shoulders and upon his breastplate. The shoulders or arms are symbolic of strength, and the breastplate is symbolic of the heart affections. Whenever he went in and appeared before Jehovah, his shoulders and his breast were adorned with the precious stones, upon which were engraven the names of the tribes of Israel. This was a symbol of our High Priest, who bears us upon His heart and upholds us by His strength as He stands before God; for 'Christ has entered into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God for us.'

"The bride prays that she may be so engraven upon His heart and cherished within His affections, that she shall be before His eyes continually..."

"It is as our Beloved is continually in our minds and hearts, as our love goes out to Him in adoration and obedience, as we lean upon Him harder and harder, that we apprehend and enter into the rest and sweetness of being engraven upon His heart and shoulders. Upon His heart, that we may receive and rejoice in all His infinite love and faithfulness, with which He would surround us, and which He would extend in our behalf. Upon His arm, that all His power and strength may operate in our behalf and may work in our lives. He would have us so trusting Him that we should never be dismayed, knowing that whatever came He would take care of it. He would have the

communion between us unbroken; then can we say that we are set as a seal upon His heart and arm.” (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 517, 518)

“...It is a necessity to the heart that loves Christ to be assured of a permanent place in the affections of the Beloved. Nothing could be more destructive of all true Christian affection than any degree of uncertainty as to our place in the love of Christ. A seal upon His heart and arm is a permanent pledge of love and service, and nothing less than this will satisfy the spouse. She is conscious that the seal which will secure her permanently must be on *His* heart and arm.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 205)

It is quite certain that Solomon’s “fairest among women” is seeking to justify her request that she be set a seal or signet upon his heart and upon his arm, “for” says she, “love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave (*sheol*), the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.” That she speaks of human love appears from her use of the phrase, “cruel as the grave.” Human love, because of man’s fallen condition is never pure; it is always an admixture involving a certain amount of jealousy. Such love, however, can be strong as death, inasmuch as it never gives up what it has taken up to be its own; and it is because of jealousy, that it is “cruel as the grave,” robbing those who ought to be happy, of their peace and contentment of mind. This jealousy of love, burns with such a vehement flame, that it virtually destroys everything it comes in contact with.

“Jealousy of another is always an evil quality...it is ‘cruel as *sheol*,’ which engulfs all mankind; it is unreasoning and insatiable. One has said of it, ‘Jealousy is really – whether so recognized or not – a thirst for blood, life; at any moment when reason is a little weaker than usual, jealousy is ready to kill the thing it hates or the thing it loves.’ It signifies either apprehension of being displaced in the affections of another, or of being outdone by a rival in matters of favor or popularity with others.

“(this) jealousy...is the most vicious kind of cruelty, committed in the name of love, through envy; it is one of the great foes which confront every Christian and is closely allied to hatred, malice, envy, strife, and should be slain on sight as an enemy of God and man, and every good principle; and to the extent that its presence has defiled the heart even for a moment, a cleansing by the spirit of holiness should be invoked. It is not only a cruel monster of itself, but its poisonous fangs are almost certain to inflict pain and trouble upon others. The mind which is once poisoned with jealousy so rapidly brings everything within its environment to its own color and character that it is with great difficulty that it can be entirely cleansed from it.” (R4789:1)

However strange it may seem, this human love and jealousy have a spiritual counterpart, that is of a most noble strain, and by which the “espoused virgin” could justly desire to be set a seal or signet upon the heart of her Beloved, and upon His arm.

“Nevertheless, love, wisdom, hatred, jealousy, are attributed to God and should be in all of us. We read, ‘I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God.’ If man could have his hatred and his jealousies along the same line as God, it would be all right....He tells us that when we have other gods, we must consider him jealous; but the impropriety of jealousy is when it leads to bitterness and other like qualities to which the fallen mind is subject and liable. When the Lord announces himself as a jealous God, he means us to understand that he wants all of our affections, all of our confidence, our entire trust. He wants that we should be so fully in accord with him that his will shall be supreme in all the affairs of life.” (R4789:2)

But this is a God-like love and jealousy (1 John 4:16; Exod. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 5:9; 2 Cor. 11:2), a jealousy whose “coals of fire” also burn with a most vehement flame! In fact, the Hebrew text gives the sense of this portion of the passage as follows: “the flashes (or heat) thereof are flashes of fire, a very flame of the LORD (Jehovah).” See *Leeser, J.P.S., Rotherham*. See also Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:9

“‘Love is strong as death’ would...set forth how firmly He holds His loved ones. Death holds those who come into its embrace with a grip which will not yield to any creature power. And the love of Christ will never relax its hold upon those whom the Father has given to Him. (See John 10:27-29)

“Then jealousy, as known in Christ, is very wondrous. Such is the intensity of His love that any thought of a rival which would steal our hearts away from Him is intolerable to Him. How hateful to Him is every influence that corrupts the affections of those who are espoused as a chaste virgin to Him! (2 Cor. 11:1-3) His exhortations, warnings, convictings, and discipline all express the jealousy of His love. It comes out in innumerable dealings which are sometimes of a very searching character. ‘Flashes of fire, flames of Jah,’ remind us that the chapter in the New Testament which speaks of divine chastening ends with the statement, ‘For also our God is a consuming fire.’ (Heb. 12:29) But there is ever behind all the divine ways, however searching and severe they may be, the burning power of an unquenchable love. That love is against all the influences that tend to divert us; it ever acts to consume and destroy them; but this is to liberate us from their power, that we may enjoy, and respond to, the Love of Christ.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, pages 206, 207)

"The bride has been imploring the Bridegroom to set her as a seal upon His arm and upon His heart. She knows that if she is a seal upon His heart, His love, which is strong as death, will ever hold her and uphold her. Nothing can snatch her from this tender place of privilege. She knows that if she is set as a seal upon His arm, His strength will support Her, and His arm will fight all her battles. She also knows that with jealousy as exacting and unyielding as Sheol, He will hold His own possessions and protect His own seal. He will suffer neither man nor devil to use or mar or have any part in those who have become a seal upon His heart and arm.

"This divine love appears cruel when it separates us from father and mother, from brother and sister, yea, from every earthly tie and dear one that comes between our precious Lord and ourselves. This love is cruel to all who would steal away even a little place in the life that belongs to God; and it is cruel most of all to the self-life of the believer himself.

"...The word translated: 'flashes,' has the significance of flashes of lightning that strike an object; or sparks that strike, and either set on fire or consume the object struck. Thus it is with divine love and jealousy. The vehement flame, which is contained in the flashes and sparks that are sent out from divine love and jealousy, will consume all that oppose God, and will set on fire with divine fire and zeal, those who receive and yield to Him.

"The love of God is mighty and mysterious, not only when manifested from Him to us, but when found in His children. Those who could never love each other in the natural, nor find anything in common with one another, are drawn together by bands that are woven from the everlasting love of God; bands that will abide through Eternity.

"The 'Flame of Jehovah' that is kindled in our hearts, is the beginning of the sweet unity and fellowship, the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit, which will bind us together in a bundle with our Lord, and will forever abide in perfection throughout endless ages." (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 519 – 523)

8:7 – Solomon does not interrupt his Beloved; but lets her go on philosophizing, and uttering encomiums to his love. She declares that many waters could not quench its fervency; nor floods inundate it. It was also the kind of love that could never be purchased, though a man might offer all of his wealth in houses, land, etc., for it. Furthermore, he would be scorned for even suggesting it.

Of course, the desire of the "espoused virgin" has always been to be as a seal set upon the heart and arm of her beloved "Solomon." Yet, when contemplating the depth and grandeur of His love for her, she has ever felt herself most unworthy of it. She could speak of this

wonderful love and care, as did the ancient Psalmist of God's, "how precious...are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them; if I should count them, they are more in number than the sand..." (Psa. 139:17, 18) Recognizing this love as unfathomable, and immeasurable in its vastness, and by virtue of its infinite character, like a great conflagration which "many waters cannot quench," nor could "floods drown it," she is appalled. Indeed, she knows that it was His great love for her, the "espoused virgin" (Eph. 5:2), that enabled Him to withstand the "floods" and "billows" which assailed and passed over Him. (Psa. 42:7, 8; 69:1, 15)

"When we remember what our Lord passed through as He came and died for us, we see that many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. As He hung upon the Cross of Calvary, all the waves and billows of God's wrath went over His head. All the floods of the devil and his hosts came up against Him as he wrought out the redemption work which God had given Him to do. But none of these things quenched His love." (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 523)

Nor can such love, as the love of Christ for His "espoused virgin" be purchased, though one should be willing to give all of his earthly wealth in exchange for it: in fact, he would be scorned for even suggesting it. And yet there are

"...many...rejoicing in their knowledge and wisdom;...many are giving their substance to feed the poor;...many are doing penance and practicing austerities;...many are pouring out their lives in all kinds of 'works.' But they have neither love for God nor for man. They are trying to work their way into Heaven, and in the place of loving confidence and trust in God, there is a slavish fear..." (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, page 525)

Our Blessed Lord, however, asked nothing more of His disciples than that they have a love for one another in their own hearts, as He had manifested in His for them (John 13:34; 15:12); for, inasmuch as they loved one another fervently, they were loving Him. (Acts 9:4, 5; 22:7, 8; 26:14, 15)

"...We may safely conclude that there is some of the gall of bitterness in the heart, if we take pleasure in seeking flaws in the flesh of members of the body of Christ. Their flesh, justified by the Redeemer and consecrated, becomes His flesh. Whoever, therefore, is a faultfinder and busybody in the affairs of the brethren, is doing this against the flesh of Jesus. 'I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.' (Acts 9:5, 22:8)" (R5274:3)

There is no better way to show our appreciation of the love of our Lord for us, than in showing a like love unto Him (in the person of His body member!); and this also, should be so deep and grand, like unto a great conflagra-

tion that as it sweeps along, burns up everything in its way (of evil-reports, etc.); and that “many waters cannot quench,” nor “floods drown.”

8:8, 9, 10 – The marriage of Solomon and his Beloved is not now too far off; and his Beloved shows some concern for their little sister. What is to become of her after the marriage? This little sister, whose development shows much to be lacking, is without breasts! Solomon tells his Beloved that much will depend upon the little sister’s temperament and disposition. Is she like a wall, willing and able to resist all improper advances? And is she like a door, that swings open, as it were, to all comers? If the former, he says, we will build for her a palace of silver; if the latter, we shall need to protect her, by enclosing her within boards of cedar! Evidently, the daughters of Jerusalem have been listening to this conversation; so that the Beloved, now addresses herself to them, saying that she herself is, and always has been a wall; and, that her breasts are like towers; and that because of this, she has found favor in the eyes of her Solomon.

The “espoused virgin” has been likened in her stature unto a palm tree (erect and upright); and her breasts to its delicious fruitage. (Cant. 7:7) In the simile now before us, she is likened to a wall; and her breasts to towers: two symbols reflecting the character of the “espoused virgin” – the wall, *her resistance to all that is evil*; the (upstanding, outstanding) towers, her self-denying, self-giving, as *outstanding traits of her spiritual grace and beauty*! Because of these, she has found favor in the eyes of her beloved “Solomon.”

The “little sister” who is retarded in her development, having no “breasts,” i.e., who is lacking these outstanding characteristics of spiritual grace and beauty, is the Great Company. Lacking these features, she could never become a “mother” to the regenerated race of mankind in the Millennium, she never could become the Lamb’s Wife!

This Great Company does not love righteousness, nor hate iniquity *sufficiently*, to make her calling and election to obtain the prize of the high-calling – immortality – sure! There is a certain amount of compromise and hesitation, underdevelopment of the full spirit of sacrifice, which keeps her more or less in bondage (for fear of death she is all her life in bondage – Heb. 2:15), so that she fails to separate herself completely (2 Cor. 6:17); fails to respond to the call, “Come out of her, my people.” (Rev. 18:4) But this Great Company does love righteousness, and to a certain extent resists that which is evil (this is the *wall* characteristic), and will, because of this be established in a “silver palace” – the spirit nature – an abode prepared for her to serve her for the ages. Yet, because of the measure of compromise (this is the *door* characteristic) that spirit nature will not be of the highest, the divine order (a golden palace). It will be a mortal state. However, *perfect mortality on the spirit-*

plane, will afford her all the protection necessary – the protection, as it were, of the “boards of cedar.”

“...Scriptures (Rev. 7:9, 13-17) show us that there will be a ‘Great Company’ who during this age have entered the race for the grand prize of joint-heirship with Jesus, and who fail to ‘so run’ as to obtain it. These, though ‘castaways,’ as regards the prize (1 Cor. 9:27) are nevertheless objects of the Lord’s love; for at heart they are friends of righteousness and not of sin. Hence, by his providences through the circumstances of life, the Lord will cause them to come through ‘great tribulation,’ thus accomplishing for them ‘the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.’ (1 Cor. 5:5) They consecrated their justified human life, God accepted that consecration and reckoned them, according to their covenant, dead as human beings, and alive as new – spiritual – creatures. But, by their failure to carry out the contract of *self-sacrifice*, they cut themselves off from the ‘Royal Priesthood,’ from membership in the Body of Christ. ‘Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away.’ (John 15:2)

“Through the favor of the High Priest, this Great Company are to go into ‘great tribulation’ and have the flesh destroyed. This will not make of them voluntary overcomers nor give them membership in the Body – the Bride of Christ. It will not give them a place *on the* throne of Kings and Priests, but a position ‘*before the throne*,’ as *perfect spirit beings* though not of the highest order of the spiritual – the divine. Though they will not possess the crown of life – Immortality – yet, if rightly exercised by the tribulation they will attain to a condition ‘like unto angels,’ ...Rev. 7:14, 15.” (T69, 70)

8:11, 12 – Solomon’s “fairest among women” now tells of a vineyard that belonged to him, located at Baal-hamon; and which vineyard he let out to keepers, who themselves paid for the privilege of working therein; the cost was 1,000 shekels of silver (*Meek – An American Translation*); and, who for their labor received in return 200 shekels of silver.

The Church of the Gospel dispensation, is our “Solomon’s” vineyard at Baal-hamon; and in which vineyard he delights to see it flourishing with an abundance of fruitage (saintly character) which in due time is to be made into a most delectable “wine” to gladden, as it were, Himself, His Father, and eventually, the whole world of mankind! “Baal-Hamon” means the Lord, or Master of the Multitude; surely a very proper title for our “Solomon” who at a great cost to himself purchased this field – the world! For a while He entrusts the care of this vineyard – at least a certain part of it – to the care of “keepers” who are to regard it as a sacred trust. Theirs, however, is to be different from that of another vineyard (Israel) which Jehovah God “rented” out to certain

husbandmen (scribes, Pharisees, doctors of the law, priests, etc.) and which vineyard gave its owner, practically nothing in return. (Matt. 21:33-41) Each, and every member of the “espoused virgin” class is a “keeper” in “Solomon’s” vineyard at “Baal-hamon,” to whom a certain part of the vineyard has been “rented.” The price for the privilege of working in this “vineyard” is the same for all of the “keepers,” regardless of their individual skill or talent or ability. This, figuratively speaking, is 1,000 shekels, and corresponds to their consecration – covenant relationship to Jehovah God, without which, “Solomon” accepts none! Nor is there a difference in the “pay” accorded these “laborers in the vineyard,” it is the same to all – a “penny” (kingdom honors), here represented in the 200 shekels of silver, and corresponding to a double share (2 x 100) in Jesus: (1) identification with Him in His humanity and suffering; (2) identification with Him in the glory (His glory) to follow. – Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:12 (See *Appendix “Y”*)

“...The laborers are those earnest, consecrated children of God who throughout this Gospel age...are faithfully spending their time and energy, not in the service of self, the service of Mammon, but in the service of God. Only the faithful therefore are represented by the laborers, all of whom get the same reward, the Kingdom honors represented in the parable by the ‘penny’.” (C223)

“The general lesson of the parable would seem to be that we should appreciate the fact that whatever God has to offer is a gift. We should enter his service with loving loyalty to principle, to righteousness. If we have served many years, that privilege of serving should be esteemed; and our interest in the Lord’s cause should make us happy. From such a standpoint of appreciation of the privilege of service, we should be glad to see the Lord’s work carried on, glad to see others enter the service and glad to see them get the same reward that we hope for ourselves. Only those who have such a broad spirit, such an appreciation of the privileges of the vineyard, such a sympathy for ‘as many as the Lord our God shall call’ – only these will be fit for the Kingdom proper and in readiness to receive the special privileges of knowledge and opportunity when the Kingdom is really to be announced.” (R5473:6)

Speaking of her own share in this vineyard, the “espoused virgin” is happy to declare that it is *hers*, that she realizes her own responsibility for the producing of a rich fruitage in her character. Yet, she is also mindful of the fact that her privilege to work upon it, is based on the covenant of sacrifice she entered into with Jehovah; and she is glad to know that together with others who work in their vineyards too (all of which are “Solomon’s”) she will receive a part of her reward now, and the rest in the kingdom, later. (Eph. 1:18-21)

“...our hearts are our vineyards which we must keep with all diligence.” (*Matthew Henry*)

“...Nothing is more plainly set forth in the Scriptures than the fact that all labor will have its sure and full reward. No one ever did anything in faithfulness to the Lord who will not receive full recompense.” (Coates – *An Outline of the Song of Songs*, page 216)

8:13 – Solomon appreciates the fact that his “Beloved” dwells in the gardens, the place where fragrant flowers and delicious fruits are always in evidence. Her companions too, are near her, enjoying, as it were, the lilt of her voice. She has been quite busy talking to them; now he would have her talk to him too.

The “espoused virgin” dwells, in the gardens of the Lord, where the fragrance of the beautiful “blossoms,” and ripening “fruits,” ever serve to delight her heart. It is no wonder then, that there is music in her voice, which her companions, being near, enjoy listening to.

These companions are not merely the Great Company: for there are others who like to listen too. They may not always understand the words, but they do enjoy the music! (One can enjoy good music, without having any real music appreciation.) But the “espoused virgin” speaks in many different ways, oftentimes without saying a word. She sings too, and this, often without there being any real sound! This is through the testimony of her life. (Actions do sometimes speak much louder than words!) Yet it is possible to be so busy communicating with others, that we fail to talk to, or sing for, our dearly beloved Lord – the heavenly bridegroom-to-be. Nor is he ever jealous of another; but He will remind us of the fact that He too, would appreciate something addressed directly to Him personally!

“The people around us are watching us, they are looking and examining us to see exactly what we are, regardless of our testimonies. They are harkening for our voices, not only in the meetings... but when we are not conscious of their scrutiny. They are measuring our lives and watching us when we do not know it. It is not for our sakes alone, that God is calling us to walk softly before Him, and admonishing us that our words and actions must be like Jesus Christ. In one sense, our personal interest and profit are of minor importance. The most important thing is that Christ may be honored and not dishonored, that He may be shown forth in our lives in all His beauty and glory. The next important thing is for the sake of those about us who are repelled or drawn to Christ by what they see in the lives of His followers.

“Those around us are listening for our voices; they are watching to see if there is eternal fruit in our lives. Many who are hungry for God, who are reaching out their hands for Him if so be they may

touch Him, are hearkening for our voices to teach them and guide them to the Fountain where their hunger shall be satisfied and their thirst quenched.

“They are hungry for words of life, of edification, of grace seasoned with salt. They are longing for words of comfort and admonition; or warning and advice. Their hearts reach out to those about them who know the Lord better than they do. They would learn of the pitfalls that have been avoided or fallen into by older Christians, that they may escape the danger. They would know how to dwell in the presence of Christ and love Him more.

“... What do those around us hear who are hearkening for our voices? When they are hungry for words of life that will point them to Him who is the life, do they hear only unworthy words that point out our own defects and lack of entering in? When the babe in the Lord or the discouraged Christian hearkens for our voices to impart edification and encouragement, when they need the grace, well-seasoned with salt, do they hearken in vain? Child of God, you little know how many around you may have hearkened for your voice, and hoped to hear from God through you, and have been disappointed. You little know how many have come to you, attracted by your testimonies and the appearance of spirituality when you were at your best, and they have found only leaves.

“When error has arisen, how many of God’s children have hearkened for the voice of this or that leader or servant of God? And how many of God’s dear children are today off in rank error because the watchmen did not know the Truth and warn them? That which is spoken in Isa. 56:10, 11, has come to pass with many of the so-called servants of God. ‘His watchmen are blind, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber.... These are shepherds that cannot understand; they have all turned to their own way, each one to his own gain, from every quarter.’

“Our Beloved would also hear our voices ascending to Him in praise and worship, in prayer and intercession. He would have us commune with Him continually: for through communion and fellowship with Him, our souls and lives are nourished. When our precious Lord is waiting for us to talk with Him, are we in the flesh chattering with men and women, hindering them and ourselves? Our Lord always covets our confidence. He would have us come to Him first and tell Him everything. He would have us confide in Him, ask help from Him, talk everything over with Him before we go to anyone else.

“If we did this, many times we would not go to any one else at all, and would be saved much trouble

and humiliation. But so often do we speak first with those about us; we confide in them and ask advice of them; we trust in man whose breath is in his nostrils, who is nothing to be accounted for. We forsake the Fountain of living waters for cisterns broken and dry, unreliable and treacherous.”
(MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 543-545)

8:14 – Solomon, expecting to be gone from her immediate presence, though within hearing and speaking range, admonishes her to remain in the beautiful and fragrant gardens. It would be from these that she should be able to maintain communications with him, though not able to actually see him. He went to make the final preparations for the taking of her to her new home; there, to make her his bride, his wife! Already, some of her belongings have been transported to the Palace – the treasures, which she wishes to keep with her, forever and a day! As she now waves to him, she says, very earnestly, “Make haste, my dearly beloved, be like the roe, or the young hart upon the mountains of spices” – return speedily for me, for I can scarcely wait!

The words of the “espoused virgin” at this time, are not any different from those she has uttered to her beloved “Solomon,” from the very beginning of the Gospel age; for they do most beautifully express her hopes – “Come quickly, Lord.” She would have Him be swift, like the roe, or the young hart. She has already told Him that she would eagerly be awaiting Him – His return to take her to her heavenly home, where he will make of her, His bride, the Lamb’s wife! How she does look forward to the day when He shall change her name to His – “*Jehovah Tsidkenu*” – the Righteousness of Jehovah. (Jer. 33:16; 23:6) Her bridal garments are all in readiness (Psa. 45:13, 14); and, already, some of her treasures (tokens of His love given to her during their period of courtship) have been transported to the Royal Palace! Is this not also, the significance of the Master’s words, “I go to prepare a place for you”? (John 14:2) “Come quickly, Lord,” she says.

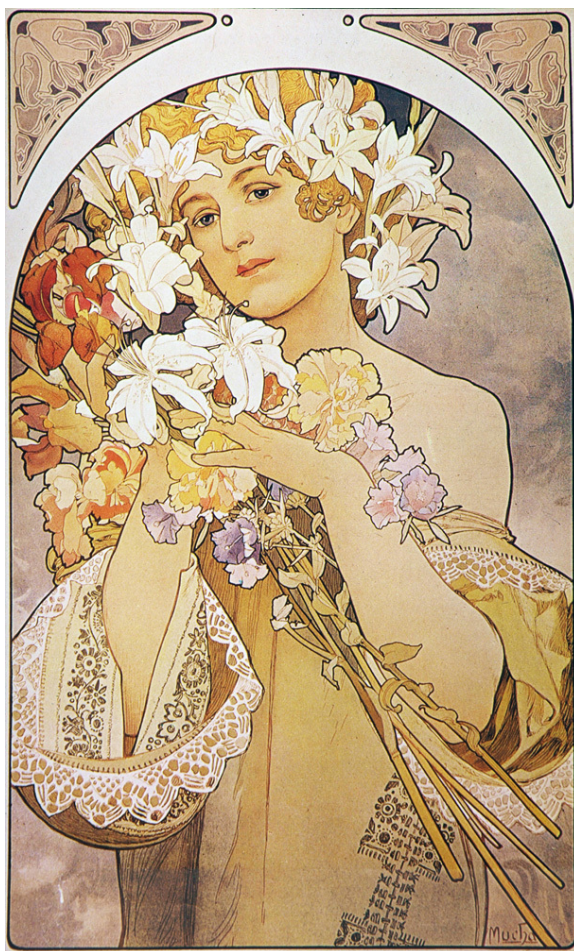
“A little while; with patience Lord,
I fain would ask, how long?
For how can I, with such a hope
Of glory and of home,
With such a joy awaiting me,
Not wish the hour were come?
How can I keep the longing back,
And how suppress the groan?”

To her, “Come quickly, Lord,” he responds, “I (shall indeed) come quickly” (Rev. 3:11, 22:7); and to which, her final salutation is, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

“Our lamps are trimmed and burning,
Our robes are white and clean,
We’ve tarried for the Bridegroom,
And soon we’ll enter in.”

Surely we have been thrilled, and our hearts have throbbed within us as we read, meditated upon, and contemplated this idyll of the ancient King. We have found depicted therein the most beautiful of all romances – the love-life of our blessed Lord, the heavenly bridegroom-to-be, and His “espoused virgin.” How minutely, how accurately, has the Holy Spirit reflected here, for us, our own vacillations and deflections; and these in very deep contrast to the steadfastness, and unwavering character of His undying love for us! It has revealed, as it were, that Jesus is verily the same, “yesterday, today and forever.” (Heb. 13:8) O, the blessedness with which the sweet and tender chastening

of His church, are depicted; His sincere admonitions; His pleasant words of endearment and encouragement, too! O, could we be more like the Shulamite of old, who truly humbled herself before her Beloved; yet was not ashamed either, to ask that she be made like unto a seal set upon his heart. Let us strive to be worthy of a love so great and tender as His. Let us seek ever and always to glorify Him before others; and, never, no, never, prove ourselves unworthy! Contemplate, dear heart, if you will, the transcendency of His love; think upon what He has declared He thinks of His beloved: then, endeavor, more and more, to grow into the image and likeness – His “Ideal”!



APPENDIX

A – “THE ROSE OF SHARON, AND THE LILY OF THE VALLEYS” (Cant. 2:1)

From *Smith’s Dictionary Of The Bible*: Rose:

“(Hebrew *Chabatstseleth*) occurs twice only, viz. in Cant. 2:1; Isa. 35:1. There is much difference of opinion as to what particular flower is here denoted. Tremellius and Diodati, with some of the rabbins, believe the rose is intended; but there seems to be no foundation for such a translation. Celsius has argued in favor of the narcissus (*Polyanthus narcissus*). Gesenius has no doubt that the plant denoted is the ‘autumn crocus’ (*Colchicum autumnale*). It appears to us more probable that the narcissus is intended than the crocus. The narcissus and the lily (*Lilium candidum*) would be in blossom together in the early spring, while the *Colchicum* is an autumn plant. Chateaubriand mentions the narcissus as growing in the Plain of Sharon. Though the rose is apparently not mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, it is referred to in Ecclus. 24:14 (comp. also chap. 1:8, 39:13; Wisdom 2:8). Roses are greatly prized in the East, more especially for the sake of rose-water, which is in much request. Dr. Hooker observed seven species of wild roses in Syria.”

But with regard to the passage, translators have shown very little unanimity of thought, as is evidenced in the following:

“...the rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys”	R.S.V.
“...the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valleys”	Leeser
“...a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys”	J.P.Soc.
“...a Narcissus of Sharon, a lily of the valleys”	Darby
“...the meadow-saffron of Sharon, the lily of the valleys”	Rotherham
“...eine Blume ze Saron und eine Rose im Thal”	Luther
“...a flower of the plain, a lily of the valleys”	Septuagint
“...the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys”	Douay
“...the flower of the field, and the lily of the valleys”	Confraternity
“...a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys”	Standard
“...a blossom of the plain, a mere lily of the dale”	Moffatt
“...a saffron of the plain, a hyacinth of the valleys”	An Amer. Tr.
“...the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys”	Eng. A.V.
“...mere saffron of the coastal plain...a lily of the low plains”	New World Tr.

Ferrar Fenton, in his translation, renders the passage in question form: “Am I your Rose of Sharon? – Your lily of the Valley?”

W.M. Thomson, in *The Land and the Book* suggests that what is really referred to by the rose of Sharon is the marsh-mallow.

B – “THE LILIES OF THE FIELD” (Luke 12:27, 28)

From *Nature Magazine* – Dec. 1934:

“The use of the term ‘grass’ and the phrase about casting into the oven, as well as esthetic and philological considerations, led him to the conviction that the flower referred to is the common daisy. *Anthemis palestina*, which dots the fields of Palestine after the rains. The flower, Dr. Ha-Reubeni (Professor of Biblical Botany, at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem) points out, is ‘beautiful at all hours of the day, even when old and drying. When it has dried up, it is gathered with the dried grass and cast into the furnace.’ And, he further reminds us that ‘the daisy has a crown, which gives special aptitude to the comparison with Solomon, the crowned King’.”

C – “APPLE TREES”

From *Smith’s Dictionary Of The Bible*: Apple-Tree: Apple.

“...It is a difficult matter to say what is the specific tree denoted by the Hebrew word *tappuach*. Most modern writers maintain that it is either the quince or the citron. The quince has some plausible arguments in its favor. The fragrance of the quince was held in high esteem by the ancients....On the other hand, Dr. Royle says, ‘The rich color, fragrant odor, and handsome appearance of the citron, whether in flower or in fruit, are particularly suited to the passages of Scripture mentioned above.’ (These included Cant. 2:3.) But neither the quince nor the citron nor the apple appears fully to answer to all the Scriptural allusions. The *tappuach* must denote some tree the fruit of which is sweet to the taste, and possesses some fragrant and restorative properties, in order to meet all the demands of the Biblical allusions. But the quince and the citron may satisfy the last-named requirement; but it can hardly be said that either of these fruits are sweet to the taste. The orange would answer all the demands of the Scriptural passages, and the orange trees are found in Palestine.

“But there does not appear sufficient evidence that this tree was known in the earlier times to the inhabitants of Palestine, the tree having been in all probability introduced at a later period. As to the apple-tree being the *tappuach*, most travelers assert that this fruit is generally of a very inferior quality. Moreover the apple would hardly

merit the character for excellent fragrance which the *tappuach* is said to have possessed. The question of identification, therefore, must still be left an open one..."

From Thomson's *The Land and The Book*, pages 545-546.

"...Dr. Kitto has laboured in several of his works to prove that the Hebrew *taffuah*, translated 'apples,' means citron; but I think this is one of his least happy criticisms. The Arabic word for apple is almost the same as the Hebrew, and it is as perfectly definite, to say the least, as our English word – as much as the word for grape, and just as well understood; and so is that for citron, but this is a comparatively rare fruit. Citrons are also very large, weighing several pounds each, and are so hard and indigestible that they cannot be used except when made into preserves. The tree is small, slender, and must be propped up, or the fruit will bend it down to the ground. Nobody ever thinks of sitting under its shadow, for it is too small and straggling to make a shade. I cannot believe, therefore, that it is spoken of in the Canticles. It can scarcely be called a tree at all, much less would it be singled out as among the choice trees of the wood. As to the smell and color, all the demands of the Biblical allusions are fully met by these apples of Askalon; and no doubt, in ancient times and in royal gardens, their cultivation was far superior to what it is now, and fruit larger and more fragrant. Let *tuffah*, therefore, stand for apple, as our noble translation has it."

D – CANTICLES 2:7 (latter portion of text)

Here again, the translators have had considerable difficulty in rendering the Hebrew text. Seemingly much depended upon their own conclusions as to whether it was he or she that was doing the talking. Note this in the following:

- Authorized* . "...stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please"
Eng. Auth. . "...stir not, nor awaken my love, till he please"
Standard . . . "...stir not up, nor awaken my love until he please"
R.S.V. "...stir not up nor awake love, until it please"
An Amer. Tr. . "...rouse not nor awaken my love, until it please"
Douay "...stir not up, nor make the beloved to awake, till she please"
Confraternity "...stir not up nor make the beloved to awake, till she please"
Darby "...stir not up, nor awake (my) love, till he please"
Leeser "...awaken not, nor excite my love, till it please"
J.P.S. "...awaken not, not stir up love until it please"
Fenton "...disturb not my love, until it may please him to awake"
Rotherham "...wake not nor arouse the dear love until she please"
Moffatt "...never rouse lovers, never stir them, till they are satisfied"
New World "...try not to awake or arouse my love (in me) until it feels inclined"
Septuagint "...so not rouse or awake my love, until it please"

E-1 – RESTITUTION

"Let (none) hastily conclude that there are no evidences of Restitution about us, nor that the Sun of Righteousness is not already gilding the watch towers of Zion and enlightening the world. Let him, on the contrary, reflect that we are already in the day when the hidden things are being made manifest; and let him remember that the first work of Restitution is properly a breaking down of the old and decaying structure which stands in the place which the new is to occupy. Remember that the first work of the tenderest physician is often to open the wounds, and to cleanse and amputate according to the necessities of the patient, in order to make thorough work of the healing. That such services cause pain and is seldom appreciated by the patient at the time, none need be told; and so it is with the work of the great Physician, the Restorer, the Life-giver; He wounds to heal, and the trouble and sifting in the Church and the world are but the lancing and cleansing needful, and a most important part of the Restitution work." (B197)

E-2 – RESTITUTION AND THE JUBILEE

"In the type, the Trumpet of Jubilee was to be sounded when the Jubilee Year began, to proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof. (Lev. 25:10) The antitype is ushered in with the sounding of the (symbolic) 'Seventh Trumpet,' the 'Trump of God,' the 'Last Trump.' It is indeed the great trumpet: it announces liberty to every captive; and while at first it means the surrender of many expired claims and privileges, and a general time of disturbance and unsettling of usages, habits, etc., its full import, when rightly appreciated, is 'good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people.'

"In the early commotion, each one who hears the Jubilee Trumpet of the new dispensation is forcibly struck by some one of its many features and heeds no other. One sees the propriety of, and calls for, government reforms, the abolition of standing armies and their burdensome tax. Another calls for the abolition of titled aristocracy and the recognition of every man by his manly qualities. Others call for the abolition of landlordism, and demand that landholding shall be as at first, according to necessity, and ability and willingness to use. Others call for temperance reform, and by prohibitory and other laws, by Law and Order Societies, seek to chain this great evil, and begin to restrain men who for the love of money would ensnare, enslave and de-

stroy fellow men, and who, fastening their fangs into their weaknesses, would fatten and luxuriate upon their blood. Others form Humane and Anti-Cruelty Societies, to prevent those who have the ability from injuring the weak and dependent. Others form societies for the suppression of vice and demoralizing literature. Others form Anti-Adulteration Societies to examine into adulterations of food, and to expose and prosecute and punish those who for love of greater gain adulterate food and make it even injurious to health. Laws are enacted for the protection of the lives and the health of the people. Miners must have pure air, no matter what the cost; they must have two ways of escape in case of fire. Working people, powerless to help themselves or to choose their places of work, are cared for by the public laws. They can no longer be paid when the employer may please, and in store-orders, but the law now demands that pay-day shall be at least every two weeks and in cash. They can no longer be crowded into buildings where in case of fire they would be liable either to burn to death or to maim themselves for life by jumping; for 'fire escapes' are compulsory, and for any death or injury traceable to carelessness on the part of the employer, he is held responsible, and is punishable, either by fines, damages or imprisonment. Wealthy corporations, such as own railroad and steamship lines, are compelled to care for the lives and interests of the people, the poor as well as the rich. These reforms are the results of the awakening of the people by the Jubilee Trump of knowledge and liberty, and are not traceable to pure benevolence on the part of the more favored class. For though all in the favored or wealthy class who are benevolent, and such as love righteousness, can and do rejoice in these beginnings of reform, others, and the majority, regretfully yield from necessity. True, such laws and arrangements are not yet perfected, nor are they universal; but the beginnings noticed rejoice our hearts, and give evidence of what may be expected in the exalting of the humble and lowly, and the abasing of the proud, when the Jubilee regulations are fully in operation. All these things are parts of the reform commotion ushering in Earth's Great Jubilee; and though much has been demanded, and much has been gradually conceded, yet kings and emperors, and queens – political, social, ecclesiastical and financial – will not submit to the great leveling process of this Jubilee or Restitution age without a great and severe struggle, such as the Scriptures point out as just before us, and which, though severe, is unavoidable, and will work out ultimate good." (B197-199)

F – TURTLE-DOVES

"Turtle-Dove, a wild pigeon of migratory habits, similar to our mourning-dove, singing frequently (Cant. 2:12), abundant for sacrifices (Gen. 15:9), so that they were a godsend to the poor (Luke 2:24)." (*Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*)

"It is always mournful....Their low, sad plaint may be heard all day long at certain seasons in the olive groves and in the solitary and shady valleys among these mountains. I have, however, been more affected by it in the vast orchards around Damascus than anywhere else – so subdued, so very sorrowful among the trees, when the air sighs so softly and little rills roll their melting murmurs down the flowery aisles. These birds can never be tamed. Confined in a cage they droop and like Cowper, sigh for

‘A lodge in some vast wilderness,
some boundless contiguity of shade,’

and no sooner are they set at liberty than they flee as a bird, to their mountains. David refers to their habits in this respect when his heart was sore pained within him: ‘Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest. Lo, there would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness.’ And there you will meet these timid birds, far away from the haunts of cruel hunters, of whose society they are peculiarly suspicious.” (Thomson – *The Land and The Book*, pages 248/9)

G – THE MOTHER’S HOUSE

It should be remembered that the promises of God for the blessing of all the families of the earth, centered in "*the seed*." The first of these promises was to the effect that it would be "*the seed* of the woman," (Gen. 3:15) that was to be the source of this blessing. About 2000 years later, the promise was reiterated, but this time it was to the effect that "*the seed* of Abraham" was to be its source. These two promises, however, concern but *the one* "*seed*," and involve but *one* "*woman*" and *one* "*man*." The three, are members of but the *one family* – *one household*! The "*woman*" is, of course, the Sarah Covenant – "*Jerusalem, the mother of us all*" (Gal. 4:26); the "*man*" is Jehovah God (typified by Abraham, Sarah's husband – "*the Father of us all*" (Rom. 4:16); and the "*seed*" is the Christ, Head and body (Gal. 3:29) – the "*household of faith*." (Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:19) However, since in the Song of Solomon, Christ Jesus is represented by the bridegroom-to-be, who is brought into the espoused virgin's mother's house, the household of faith here, represents the rest of the Church only!

H – THE HOLY ANOINTING OIL INGREDIENTS

The anointing oil with which both the high priests and the kings of Israel were anointed, consisted of five ingredients – olive oil, myrrh, cinnamon, calamus and cassia. (Exod. 30:31-33)

The Olive Oil was the base of this ointment, and held the four aromatic spices in suspension; and, represented the holy Spirit.

The myrrh, was a substance quite fragrant to the smell, but very bitter to the taste. This is, undoubtedly, to express the thought Bro. C. T. Russell suggests in connection with the gifts brought by the Magi unto Jesus, viz., *submission*, and a *willingness to serve, even to the extent of bitterness and suffering*. (See comments on Matt. 2:11 in Bible Students Manual.) Myrrh, has many uses. It was among other things, an antiseptic. One of the functions which the holy Spirit binds unto those who would be identified with Jesus, is the doing of good unto all men, as they have opportunity (Gal. 6:10), to bind up the broken-hearted...to comfort all that mourn. (Isa. 61:1, 3)

“God gives to those whom he has accepted, opportunity to use in his service in the present life talents which he has entrusted to them. They are, as far as they are able, to bind up broken hearts and give ‘the oil of joy for mourning,’ and thus to help allay the suffering of others, especially of the Lord’s household, though they are to assist any as they have suitable opportunity.” (R5537:1)

The Cinnamon came from the inner bark of a tree belonging to the Laurel family – an evergreen! We suggest that *the constancy* of our loyalty unto Jesus, and of our friendship for the brethren, is here indicated. Who will deny that the holy Spirit binds this grace unto us?

The Calamus, is a sweet-smelling substance obtained from the reed plant. One peculiarity of this reed plant is that it is easily bruised or broken; but it will perfume the very instrument that bruises or breaks it. What a beautiful picture is this of those whose sense of justice – of right and wrong – has been made keen through the Word of Truth, and who, therefore, may be unusually sensitive to unkindness resulting from unthoughtfulness on the part of those who should know better; instead of retaliating, or reviling, they shower kindnesses upon the offending. Is this not another of the graces bound to us by the holy Spirit? Can you say nice things about those who hurt you? Can you bless those who curse you? If so, it is an indication that the anointing which came upon Jesus (who reviled not again – 1 Cor. 4:12), has come upon you.

The Cassia, was a spice frequently used as an unguent; but also by the ancients as a perfume at

funerals. Two very beautiful thoughts are suggested here. It is ours, who have come under the anointing, to allay all suffering to the extent that we are able, of the sting of each and every “burn” to which human kind are heir to. On the other hand, its use as a perfume at funerals by the ancients, reminds us that in other days, dead bodies did send forth or emit foul odors, which, of course, were minimized by the use of the fragrant perfumes. In this connection, we cannot help but think of this body of corruption which is bound to us (Rom. 7:24), and, the “foul odors” which continually arise as from our natural traits, ways, and mannerisms. How comforting it is to know that the anointing which we have received does greatly minimize the evil effects thus produced; the “fragrance” of the new creature’s life should be sweet, so that the “old man” and his evil ways will not be recognized at all. Seeing how much we need this “perfume” to cover our own shortcomings, etc., how kindly should we be disposed toward others, similarly afflicted! As for our brethren, we should no longer know them according to the flesh (2 Cor. 5:16), we ought rather be breathing-in the “fragrance” of their lives; and rather than expose their little weaknesses and frailties unto others, we ought to cover these with the robe of charity!

I – SOLOMON’S BED (Cant. 3:7)

“...the word beds here (Psa. 149:5), in harmony with usage elsewhere in the Bible, would signify *a rest of faith*; that these saints were at rest in the midst of conditions to the contrary. This would hardly be the case if the reference be to those who have experienced the first resurrection ‘change.’ Theirs will not be a *rest of faith*, but an absolute entry into rest.” (R5451:2)

J – “THREE SCORE” (Cant. 3:7)

Three score is the equivalent of six (6) times ten (10). “Six” is the number of man!

“The waterpots symbolize *the Lord’s people*; their number, six, might indicate that it refers to *the Lord’s people in the present time of evil*, because the number six is the symbol of imperfection and evil conditions...” (R3164:1)

“Ten” (i.e., the ten times to arrive at sixty), suggests completeness – *all*, entire. The complete Law consisted of ten commandments; the total number of *all* the saints living at the time of the parable (Matt. 25:10-13) is represented by ten virgins, despite the fact that “five were wise and five were foolish.” (See R5522, “*The Ten Virgins*”)

K – “LOVE” VS. “EBONY”

The fact that the Hebrew words for love and ebony are very similar (*Dummelow*) has led some

scholars to conclude that there has probably been a corruption in the text; that it should read “ebony” for it would be more in keeping with the thought of an inlay....Both Meek, in *An American Translation*, and Moffatt, in his translation, have so rendered it.

On the other hand, these two translators, seem to be the only ones who in their translations say *nothing in this connection about the love of, for, by or to, the daughters of Jerusalem.*

L – “ESPOUSALS”

The Hebrew *chathunnah*, which in the *Authorized Version*, Leeser, the *Jewish Publication Society*, and *Confraternity (Douay)* translations is rendered “espousals,” is in the *Revised Standard Version*, rendered “wedding,” and by Rotherham, “marriage” and by Moffatt, “nuptials.” We believe that “espousals” is the best rendering; and, that the others – “wedding,” “marriage,” and “nuptials,” are due to the failure of the respective translators to properly evaluate the difference between an espousal and a marriage in the ancient Hebrew economy. Surely, they were not one and the same; for the espousal always took place at a considerable time before the actual marriage.

“Among the Jews this was the ceremony of betrothal or coming under obligation for the purpose of marriage, and was a mutual agreement between the parties which usually preceded the marriage some time. The espousal frequently took place years before the parties were married.” (*McClintock & Strong’s Encyc.* – Article: Espousal.)

“....The betrothing was performed a twelve month or more before the marriage....From the time of espousal the woman was considered as the lawful wife of the man to whom she was betrothed...” (*McClintock & Strong’s Encyc.* – Article: Betrothal.)

Thus we have suggested that the day of our Lord’s espousal was that of his consecration and dedication – the day wherein the crown was set apart for Him though He had not yet earned it.

A similar thought is suggested in the Tabernacle types, wherein Aaron, on the day of his consecration and dedication unto the priesthood, was garbed by Moses, in garments which we designate as of “glory and beauty” – long before he had actually earned the right to them. (See Lev. 8:7-9) It was nevertheless, the day wherein Aaron espoused to become the priest of blessing unto all the people – the whole nation of Israel. Yet it was not until the closing events of the great Day of Atonement had set it, that, after he had “died” (in the sin-offerings), for the people, that these garments became rightfully his;

and he was specifically instructed to take off the linen garments, and, himself, put on the other garments – those of typical “glory and beauty”! (See Lev. 16:23, 24; also Lev. 9:23)

M – “EWES”

It will have been noted that in the text under consideration as it appears in the *Authorized Version*, the words “of sheep that are even” are in italics, to indicate that they have been supplied by the translators; that they are not a part of the original Hebrew text. However, since reference is made to the bearing of twins, and to barrenness, only possible with female sheep, there is justification for the use of the word “ewes” by some of the more modern translators. The *Revised Standard Version* renders the complete text as follows: Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes that have come up from the washing, all of which bear twins, and not one among them is barren.”

N – “CEDARS OF LEBANON”

“The Rev. Hugh Macmillan, gives the following beautiful description: ‘The cedar’ is the tree, par excellence, of the Bible – the type of all forest vegetation. Religion and poetry have sounded its praises so loudly and repeatedly that it has become the most renowned natural monument in the world. For untold ages it covered the rugged slopes of Lebanon with one continuous forest of verdure and fragrance, and formed its crowning ‘glory.’

“The ravages of man, carried on century after century in the most ruthless manner, laid its proud honors low; and now only a few scattered groves survive amid the fastnesses of the highest valleys to tell of the splendor that had perished. But what a magnificent relic the one grove of Kadisha is! Each huge trunk, scarred and hoary with the elemental strife of hundreds of years, still spreads out its great gnarled boughs laden with emerald foliage and exquisite cones, ‘full of sap’ in the freshness of undying youth, so that we cannot wonder at the superstition of the awe-struck Arabs, who attribute to the cedars not only a vegetative power which enables them to live eternally, but also a wise instinct, an intelligent foresight, by means of which they understand the changes of the weather, and provide accordingly....It is a spot unique on earth. The sacred associations of thousands of years crowd around one there.

“In the fragrance of the cedars comes up the richness of Bible memories: each sight and sound suggest some incident alluded to by psalmist or prophet, and a feeling of awe and reverence, such as few other scenes can inspire, fills the soul to

overflowing. There, at an elevation of six thousand feet, with their roots firmly planted in the moraines of extinct glaciers, with their trunks riven and furrowed by lightnings, with the snows of Lebanon gleaming white through their dusky foliage, with the stillness of earth's mightiest powers asleep around them, who can fail to feel the force of the Psalmist's words, 'The trees of the Lord are full of sap; the cedars of Lebanon which He hath planted?' (*Biblical Things Not Generally Known*, pages 222-223)

O – "RUDDY" (Cant. 5:10)

The Hebrew word (*adom*), rendered "ruddy" here, according to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*, and *Young's Analytical Concordance of the Bible*, means "red," "ruddy." However, it is also possible that etymologically, the word is related to the Hebrew (*dom*) meaning blood; for, as Prof. Strong says, it basically means "to show blood (in the face), i.e., flush or turn red."

"...the meaning of the word 'ruddy' is 'red, to show blood, to dye or make red...'

"...According to the meaning of the original language, the word 'ruddy' is closely connected with blood, and is only produced by blood." (MacIlravy – *Christ and His Bride*, pages 247, 249)

P – "LILIES"

It is quite difficult to determine precisely just what flower is referred to by the Hebrew word *Shoshannah*, rendered "lilies" in the *Authorized Version* of Cant. 2:1; 4:5; 6:2; 7:2.

"Botanically the word *shoshannah*, like the modern Arab, *susan*, included in all probability a great many flowers, and was used in a way at least as wide as the popular use of the English word 'lily'." (*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*)

"...The following description of the Huleh-lily by Dr. Thomson (*The Land and the Book*) were it more precise, would perhaps have enabled botanists to identify it: 'This Huleh-lily is very large, and three inner petals meet above and form a gorgeous canopy, such as are never approached, and king never sat under, even in his utmost glory.... We call it Huleh-lily because it was here that it was first discovered. Its botanical name, if it has one, I am unacquainted with.... Our flower delights most in the valleys, but is also found on the mountains. It grows among thorn.... Nothing can be in higher contrast than the luxuriant velvety softness of this lily, and the crabbed, tangled hedge of thorns about it. Gazelles still delight to feed among them; and you can scarcely

ride through the woods north of Tabor, where these lilies abound, without frightening them from their flowery pasture'." (*Smith; McClintock & Strong's Encyclopedia*)

It will have been noted that Dr. Thomson does not mention the color of this Huleh-lily; and from the Article in *McClintock & Strong's Encyclopedia*, the lily referred to in the Song of Solomon might have been almost any color though white, red and purple are specifically mentioned.

Q – RENDERING OF CANTICLES 5:14

The translators seem to have had considerable difficulty with the rendering of this text, to wit:

Coverdale (1535)	}	"hands are full of gold rings and precious stones"
Matthew (1537)		
Cranmer (1540)	}	"hands are like gold rings having enclosed the pleasant stone of Tharsis"
Bishop's (1568)		
Geneva (1560)	...	"hands as rings of gold set with chrysolite"
Authorized (1611)		"hands are as gold rings set with beryl"
Standard (1901)		"hands are as rings of gold set with beryl"
Rev. Stand. (1952)		"arms are rounded gold set with beryl"
Leeser	.....	"hands like wheels of gold beset with chrysolite"
J.P.S.	.....	"hands are as rods of gold set with beryl"
An Amer. Trans.	...	"hands rods of gold, studded with Tarshish-stone"
Confraternity	...	"hands are turned, and as of gold, full of hyacinth"
Darby	.....	"hands gold rings set with chrysolite"
Fenton	.....	"hands ringed with gold set with topaz"
Moffatt	.....	"fingers are golden tapers tipped with topaz pink"
New World	.....	"hands are cylinders of gold, filled with chrysolite"
Rotherham	.....	"hands cylinders of gold set with topaz"

Where there is no unanimity of thought among scholars, what is the layman to do? We are accepting the rendering of the *Authorized Version* as being good, inasmuch as it fits into the Bible symbolisms more readily than do the others!

R – RENDERING OF CANTICLES 5:16

Here again, the translators have had considerable difficulty, much of it centering about the Hebrew word *chek*, rendered "mouth" in the *A.V.* It is not, however, the same word (Hebrew *peh*) which is rendered "mouth" in Cant. 1:2.

The following will serve to show the divergences among the translators:

Authorized	.....	"his mouth is most sweet"
Standard	.....	"his mouth is most sweet"
Rev. Standard	....	"his speech is most sweet"
Leeser	.....	"his palate is full of sweets"
J.P.S.	.....	"his mouth is most sweet"
An Amer. Trans.	....	"his mouth is sweet"
Confraternity	.....	"his throat most sweet"
Darby	.....	"his mouth is most sweet"
Fenton	.....	"his speech is most lovely"
Moffatt	.....	"his kisses are utterly sweet"
New World	.....	"his palate is sheer sweetness"
Rotherham	.....	"his mouth most sweet"

S – THE “ESPOUSED VIRGIN’S” MOTHER – SARAH OR RACHEL

We have suggested that Sarah – the Abrahamic Covenant – is the “mother” of the “espoused virgin,” merely because Sarah had but one, an only child, Isaac, honored above all the others of Abraham’s (not Sarah’s) children. (Gen. 25:5)

It is, however, possible to consider Rachel – the special covenant of sacrifice – as the “mother of the espoused virgin”! Rachel had two children, Joseph (the firstborn) and Benjamin (the latter-born), but the most honored of the two was, of course, Joseph, who typified the Messiah class, whereas Benjamin, well typified the less honored Great Company. In the Song of Solomon, the former would be represented in “the espoused virgin,” whereas the latter, in the “other virgins.”

“...Jacob in due time had the Abrahamic Covenant confirmed to him; and his two children by his wife Rachel seems to typify the fact that there are two classes of Spiritual Israelites, represented in Joseph and Benjamin.” (R4436:6)

“Rachel, the mother of Joseph and Benjamin, typified a special covenant – the covenant of sacrifice – which operated during this Gospel Age, and which brings forth two distinctively separate classes of saints. These two classes of saints seem to be typified by Joseph and Benjamin.

“The highest class is represented by Joseph – the Messiah – the class that includes the specially faithful of God’s people during this Gospel Age...” (R5231:3)

T – “AMMINADIB” (Cant. 6:12)

Though this may have been the name of some famous charioteer of ancient times, and has been so rendered in the *Authorized Version*, and in Roman Catholic versions – the *Douay*, and the *Confraternity*; most other versions and translations have rendered it according to the meaning of the two Hebrew words of which it is constituted.

<i>Rev. Standard</i>	....	“my prince”
<i>J.P.S.</i>	.....	“my princely people”
<i>Leeser</i>	.....	“my noble people”
<i>An Amer. Trans.</i>	..	“my ardent lover.”
<i>Rotherham</i>	.....	“my willing people”
<i>New World</i>	.....	“my willing people”
<i>Fenton</i>	.....	“my prince.”
<i>Darby</i>	.....	“my willing people”
<i>Standard</i>	.....	“my princely people”

U – “MAHANAIM” (Cant. 6:13)

The Hebrew word “*Mahanaim*” which occurs in Gen. 32:2, and there has the significance of “two hosts or camps,” has by some of the Translators been left untranslated, and by others given the original significance, in this place:

<i>Authorized</i>	.....	“company of two armies”
<i>Standard</i>	.....	“dance of Mahanaim”
<i>Rev. Standard</i>	....	“dance before two armies”
<i>J.P.S.</i>	.....	“dance of two companies”
<i>Leeser</i>	.....	“dance of a double company”
<i>An Amer. Trans.</i>	..	“in the Mahanaim dance.”
<i>Moffatt</i>	.....	“in the sword dance”
<i>Rotherham</i>	.....	“the dance of a double camp”
<i>Confraternity</i>	.....	“the companies of camps.”
<i>New World</i>	.....	“the dance of two camps”
<i>Fenton</i>	.....	“a Mahanaim dancer”
<i>Darby</i>	.....	“the dance of two camps”

V – “THE JOINTS OF THY THIGHS” (Cant. 7:1)

The Hebrew word *chammuq* rendered “joints” in the *Authorized Version* has been otherwise rendered in other translations and versions:

<i>Standard</i>	.....	“thy rounded thighs”
<i>Rev. Standard</i>	....	“your rounded thighs”
<i>Leeser</i>	.....	“the roundings of thy thighs”
<i>J.P.S.</i>	.....	“the roundings of thy thighs”
<i>Rotherham</i>	.....	“the curving of thy hips.”
<i>Confraternity</i>	.....	“the joints of thy thighs”
<i>An Amer. Trans.</i>	..	“the curves of your hips”
<i>Moffatt</i>	.....	“your thighs are swaying like links of a chain”
<i>New World</i>	.....	“the roundings of thy thighs”
<i>Darby</i>	.....	“the roundings of thy thighs”
<i>Fenton</i>	.....	“the edge of your skirts is like lace”

W – “CLUSTERS OF GRAPES” (Cant. 7:7)

It is quite evident here, that some of the translators have taken license, for the words “of grapes” do not appear in the Hebrew text. Some translators have endeavored to rectify this, as the following will show:

<i>An Amer. Trans.</i>	..	“like clusters”
<i>Moffatt</i>	.....	“clusters of fruit”
<i>New World</i>	.....	“date clusters”
<i>Rev. Standard</i>	....	“like its clusters”
<i>Rotherham</i>	.....	“like clusters”

X – THE PALM TREE (Cant. 7:7)

“Look now at those stately palm trees, which stand here and there on the plain, like military sentinels with feathery plumes nodding gracefully on their proud heads. The stem, tall, slender, and erect as Rectitude itself, suggests to the Arab poets many a symbol for their lady-love; and Solomon, long before them, has sung, ‘How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights! this thy stature is like the palm tree.’ (Cant. 7:6, 7)

“Yes; and Solomon’s father says, ‘The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of God. They shall bring forth in old age.’ (Psa. 92:12-14)

“The royal poet has derived more than one figure from the customs of men, and the habits of this noble tree, with which to adorn his sacred ode.

The palm grows slowly, but steadily, from century to century, uninfluenced by those alterations which affect other trees. It does not rejoice over much in winter's copious rain, nor does it droop under the drought and the burning sun of summer. Neither heavy weights which men place upon its head, nor the importunate urgency of the wind, can sway it aside from perfect uprightness. There it stands, looking calmly down upon the world below, and patiently yielding its large clusters of golden fruit from generation to generation. They bring forth fruit in old age. The allusion to being planted in the house of the Lord is probably drawn from the custom of planting beautiful and long-lived trees in the courts of temples and palaces, and in all 'high places' used for worship. This is still common; nearly every palace and mosque and convent in the country has such trees in the courts, and being well protected there, they flourish exceedingly. Solomon covered all the walls of the 'Holy of Holies' (1 Kings 6:29) around about with palm trees. They were thus planted, as it were, within the very house of the Lord; and their presence there was not only ornamental, but appropriate and highly suggestive; the very best emblem, not only of patience in well-doing, but of the rewards of righteousness – a fat and flourishing old age, a peaceful end, a glorious immortality." (Thomson – *The Land and The Book*, page 30)

Y – THE 1000, AND 200, SILVER PIECES (Cant. 8:11, 12)

In the numerical symbolisms of the Tabernacle, ten (10) is the sacred number. It appears as the height of the boards (Exod. 26:16); and therefore in the height of the pillars supporting the first and second vails. The Tabernacle's Most Holy, externally measured 10 x 10 x 10 cubits; the Holy measured 10 x 10 x (2 x 10 =) 20 cubits. The Court of the Tabernacle measured 50 (5 x 10) cubits in width; and 100 (10 x 10) cubits in length. (Exod. 27:18) There were also 100 (10 x 10) silver sockets that supported the Tabernacle's superstructure and the posts supporting the second veil. (Exod. 38:27)

Jehovah's dwelling place, the Most Holy, as already set forth, externally measured 10 x 10 x 10 cubits; that is 1000 (the 3rd power of 10), which we therefore designate to be JEHOVAH'S Number! In Cant. 8:11, 12, the cost of the privilege of working in Solomon's vineyard is given as 1000 shekels of silver. We believe the significance of this to be, that the antitypical Solomon, our Lord, will have no one labor in His vineyard, *unless he is in a covenant relationship with Jehovah by way of sacrifice!* (Psa. 50:5)

When the sacred number of the Tabernacle ten (10), is lifted to its second power, the result is 100! This we designate as JESUS' Number, because the gate which led into the Court of the Tabernacle measured 5 x 20 (100) cubits (Exod. 27:16), which gate, according to Tabernacle Shadows, represents Jesus. (T18) Again, the sockets which supported the Holy and the Most Holy of the Tabernacle, and the four pillars which supported the second veil, were also 100 in number. Inasmuch as they were made of the redemption money paid by the Israelites as a poll tax (Exod. 30:12-16; 38:27), we are suggesting that they too, represent Jesus – the redemption price for the sin of the world. It seems, therefore, that we are justified in declaring 100 to be JESUS' Number; and that the undoubted significance of the 200 shekels paid as a remuneration to the laborers in the vineyard of the antitypical Solomon, is that "they" will receive a *double* portion in Christ (2 x 100 = 200); (1) identification with Jesus in his flesh, and the sufferings left behind (Col. 1:24; Gal. 2:20); and (2) identification with Jesus in His glory in the Kingdom. (Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:12)

Z – "BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH..." (Rev. 2:10)

"These are the words of our glorified Lord, given through St. John the Revelator in the Island of Patmos. This thrilling exhortation is given to the church, to those who have entered into a special contract, a special covenant with the Lord. The invitation of the present time, to suffer with Jesus that we may reign with him, implies the attainment of membership in his body. His members are his disciples; they have been invited to walk in his steps.

"It is required of these, that they continue to hold fast the faith that first led them to make a consecration. They are to continue in this attitude through evil report and through good report, to follow their Leader 'whithersoever he goeth.' They must not faint before they reach the end of the journey. The world, the flesh and the adversary will try to dissuade them and turn them back – try to cause them to think that the invitation they have received is an intangible, impossible thing.

"In one of his parables, our Lord represents some who when the sun of persecution arises, are not sufficiently loyal to the principles of righteousness to stand. They become offended. They wither away. So this word faithful seems particularly to signify loyalty, including also the thought of being full of faith. God's children are to be full of faith, and those in whom God can have faith – those proving worthy of his entire confidence.

“Our Lord will say to such as are *wholly faithful* to the end of the race, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’ These shall have ‘a crown of life.’ Their loyalty must be proved even unto death. This does not mean merely that they shall die as a consequence of their consecration to the Lord; for *there will be two classes* of those who thus die – the Little Flock will die sacrificially, and the Great Company will die through ‘the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.’

“‘Unto death,’ therefore, would in this text mean a faithfulness which would persist until the sacrifice is finished in death, a faithfulness ready to encounter death at any moment, which would lead to the performance of the covenant of sacrifice even unto its consummation.” (R5913-5914)

“...The Lord speaks of the class now called to discipleship, saying, ‘Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice’ – by a complete consecration of themselves: ‘Present your bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable, unto God, your reasonable service.’ (Psa. 50:5; Rom. 12:1) If we have been accepted in Christ, if we have been begotten of the holy Spirit, it is because we have entered at this strait gate and upon this narrow way, and have made this covenant of sacrifice to the Lord, giving our wills and all earthly rights to him, *that his will may be done in us.*

“After having entered this strait gate and narrow way, we should continue therein – not necessarily without stumbling, nor necessarily without making mistakes; if we can go on ever so falteringly, to the best of our ability and *with hearts loyal to the Lord*, we shall be granted to sit on his throne – *members of his bride class.*

“As we are all aware the Bible shows that some who make this consecration, afterward become involved with the world, the cares of this life, and the deceitfulness of riches. These fail to carry out their agreement. Thus they are *holding back the very price necessary to make them joint-heirs with our Lord*....How many people are overcharged with the cares of this life! How many people are being deluded by the deceitfulness of riches!

“There was a gentleman with whom the writer was once very intimate; we were like brothers.

One day he said, ‘Brother Russell, I should like very much indeed to be out in the Lord’s work and to do some kind of service for the truth, but I have a wife, and I understand that the Lord holds me responsible for the care of my wife. I could not think of going out and leaving her dependent. But if the Lord in his providence should ever send me money so that I could go without my wife’s suffering any serious inconvenience, I would be very glad to go out and preach the Gospel.’ The Lord took him at his word. He was then a bookkeeper; but the Lord opened the way, by the death of a member of the firm, for him to become one of the principal partners in that firm. Without any effort at all he prospered financially until he was worth at least half a million dollars.

“One day we said to him, ‘Brother, we have a very serious matter that weighs on us a great deal.’ He said, ‘Tell me what it is and I will assist you, whatever it costs.’ You see how gracious he was! He thought that we were after his money! Dear friends, we thank God that we have never yet found it necessary to ask for money; and we do not suppose that we ever shall. We said, ‘Brother, we are in great distress, and no one but you can help us.’ ‘Tell me what it is,’ he replied. We said, ‘Dear Brother, we desire to call your attention to something which you said several years ago when you were poor.’ Then we recited our previous conversation as best we could, and said, ‘The Lord has given you money: He has done his part; are you ready to do yours?’ With streaming eyes he answered, ‘Brother Russell, I am so bound to my business – hand and foot – that it would be impossible now.’ The cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, according to his own words, had bound him both hand and foot; *but his heart was still loyal to God.*

“We have no desire to be his judge, but we are inclined to think that dear brother did not get into the kingdom. While we do not know, yet we fear that his being bound ‘hand and foot’ may have stood in his way, though we think that he was truly a child of God. Are we to suppose that because he failed to make that sacrifice which he had agreed to make, he would go down into the second death? We hardly think so. We think that the Lord loved him and that he had a very loyal character. The Lord loves good characters. Our thought is that quite probably the dear fellow will be in the Great Company; and we are very glad that there will be a Great Company class.” (R5055:3,5,6)

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*I am
My Beloved's,
and My
Beloved is
Mine...*



Song of Solomon 6:3