

1 1] **THE SONG OF SOLOMON.** [2 1

NOWHERE in Scripture does the unspiritual mind tread upon ground so mysterious and incomprehensible as in this book, while the saintliest men and women of the ages have found it a source of pure and exquisite delight. That the love of the divine Bridegroom should follow all the analogies of the marriage relation seems evil only to minds so ascetic that marital desire itself seems to them unholy.

The interpretation is twofold: Primarily, the book is the expression of pure marital love as ordained of God in creation, and the vindication of that love as against both asceticism and lust—the two profanations of the holiness of marriage. The secondary and larger interpretation is of Christ, the Son and His heavenly bride, the Church (2 Cor. 11. 1-4, *refs.*).

In this sense the book has six divisions: I. The bride seen in restful communion with the Bridegroom, 1. 1-2. 7. II. A lapse and restoration, 2. 8-3. 5. III. Joy of fellowship, 3. 6-5. 1. IV. Separation of interest—the bride satisfied, the Bridegroom toiling for others, 5. 2-5. V. The bride seeking and witnessing, 5. 6-6. 3. VI. Unbroken communion, 6. 4-8. 14.

CHAPTER 1.

Part I. The bride and Bridegroom in joyful communion (to 2. 7).

THE ^asong of songs, which is Solomon's.

2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: ^bfor 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 ^cDraw me, ^dwe will run after thee: the king ^ehath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remember thy love more than wine: the upright love thee.

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*

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that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?

8 If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents.

9 I have compared thee, ^gO my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots.

10 ^hThy cheeks are comely with rows of *jewels*, thy neck with chains of *gold*.

11 We will make thee borders of gold with 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 ⁱBehold, 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.

a 1 Ki.4.32.
b Song 4.10.
c Hos.11.4; John 6.44; 12.32.
d Phil.3.12-14.
e Psa.45.14,15; John 14.2; Eph.2.6.
f Or, as one that is veiled.
g Song 2.2,10, 13; 4.1,7; 5.2; 6.4; John 15.14, 15.
h Ezk.16.11-13.
i Or, cypress. Song 4.13.
j Song 4.1; 5.12.

CHAPTER 2.

I AM the rose of Sharon, *and* the lily of the valleys.

¹ It is most comforting to see that all these tender thoughts of Christ are for His bride in her unperfected state. The varied exercises of her heart are part of that inner discipline suggested by Eph. 5. 25-27.

2 As the lily among thorns, ¹so 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 ²his fruit was sweet to my taste.

4 He brought me to the banquetting house, and his banner over me was love.

5 Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I *am* sick of love.

6 ^bHis left hand *is* under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.

7 ^cI 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.

Part II. A lapse and restoration (to 3. 5).

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 ²our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, ^dshewing 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. ^cArise, my love, my fair one, and come away.

14 O my ³dove, *that art* in the clefts of the rock, in the secret ^fplaces of the stairs, let me see thy

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a Rev.22.1,2.

b Song 8.3.

c Song 3.5;
8.4.d Heb. *flourishing*.

e v.10.

f Omit places.

g Psa.80.13;
Ezk.13.4;
Lk.13.32.h Song 6.3;
7.10.

i Song 4.6.

j v.9; Song
8.14.

k Isa.26.9.

l Song 5.7.

m Song 2.7;
8.4.

n Song 8.5

countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet *is* thy voice, and thy countenance *is* comely.

15 Take us ⁸the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines *have* tender grapes.

16 ^hMy beloved *is* mine, and I *am* his: he feedeth among the lilies.

17 ⁱUntil the day break, and the shadows flee away, *turn*, my beloved, and be thou ^jlike a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel.

CHAPTER 3.

BY ^knight 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 ^lThe 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 ^mI 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.

Part III. Happy communion (to 5. 1): the bride speaks.

6 ⁿWho *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.

1 How poor are the smiles of the bride as compared with those of the Bridegroom. To Him she is a "lily among thorns"; she can only say that He is "as the apple tree among the trees of the wood."

2 "Our wall." The bride had returned to her own home: the Bridegroom seeks her.

3 There is a beautiful order here. First we have what the bride is as seen in Christ, "My dove." In herself most faulty; in Him "blameless and harmless" (Phil. 2. 15), the very character of the dove. Then the bride's place of *safety*, "in the clefts of the rock"—hidden, so to speak, in the wounds of Christ. Thirdly, her *privilege*. "Stairs" speaks of access. It is not "secret places," as in A.V., but "the secret of the stairs"—the way and privilege of access to His presence (Eph. 2. 18; Col. 3. 1; Heb. 10. 19-22). Fourthly, the order of approach: she is to come near before she speaks. "Let Me see thy countenance," then "Let Me hear thy voice." Lastly, now that she is near and has spoken, He speaks a tender word of admonition: "Take us the foxes," etc.

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.

The Bridegroom speaks.

BEHOOLD, ^athou *art* fair, my love; behold, thou *art* fair; thou *hast* doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair *is* as a ^bflock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead.

2 ^cThy 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 ^dtemples *are* like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.

4 ^eThy neck *is* like the tower of David builded for an ^farmoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.

5 ^gThy two breasts *are* like two young roes that *are* twins, which feed among the lilies.

6 ^hUntil the day ⁱbreak, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.

7 ^jThou *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 ^kand Hermon,

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^a Song 1.15; 5.12.

^b Song 6.5.

^c Song 6.6.

^d Song 6.7.

^e Song 7.4.

^f Neh.3.19.

^g Song 7.3. See Prov.5.19.

^h Song 2.17.

ⁱ Heb. breathe.

^j Eph.5.27.

^k Deut.3.9.

^l Or, taken away my heart.

^m Song 5.1; Prov.24.13, 14.

ⁿ Gen.27.27; Hos.14.6,7.

^o Heb. barred.

^p John 4.10; 7.38.

^q Song 5.1.

^r Song 4.16.

^s Song 4.11.

from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards.

9 Thou hast ^ravished my heart, my ¹sister, *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: ^mhoney and milk *are* under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments *is* ⁿlike the smell of Lebanon.

12 A garden ^onclosed *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, ^pa well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.

The bride speaks.

16 Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, *that* the spices thereof may flow out. ^qLet my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

CHAPTER 5.

The Bridegroom replies.

I'AM come into my garden, my sister, *my* spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; ^sI have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

Part IV. A separation of interest: the bride speaks (to v. 5).

2 I ²sleep, but my heart waketh: *it is* the voice of my beloved that

¹ The word "sister" here is of infinitely delicate significance, intimating the very whiteness of purity in the midst of an ardour which is, like the shekinah, aglow but unspeakably holy. Sin has almost deprived us of the capacity even to stand with unshod feet before this burning bush.

² The bride is satisfied with her washed feet while the Bridegroom, His "head filled with dew," and His "locks with the drops of the night," is toiling for others. See Lk. 6. 12; 14. 21-23. The state of the bride is not one of sin, but of neglect of service. She is preoccupied with the graces and perfections which she has in Christ through the Spirit (1 Cor. 12. 4-11; Gal. 5. 22, 23). It is mysticism, unbalanced by the activities of the Christian warfare. Her feet are washed, her hands drop with sweet-smelling myrrh; but He has gone on, and now she must seek Him (cf. Lk. 2. 44, 45).

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.

Part V. The seeking bride (to 6.3).

6 I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, *and* was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought ¹him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.

7 ^aThe 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.

The daughters of Jerusalem speak.

9 What *is* thy beloved more than *another* beloved, ^bO thou fairest among women? what *is* thy beloved more than *another* beloved, that thou dost so charge us?

The bride answers.

10 My beloved *is* white and ruddy, the ^cchiefest among ten thousand.

11 His head *is* as the most fine gold, his locks *are* bushy, *and* black as a raven.

12 ^dHis eyes *are* as *the eyes* of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, *and* ^efitly 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:

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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.

The daughters of Jerusalem speak.

WHITHER *is* thy beloved gone, ¹O thou fairest among women? whither *is* thy beloved turned aside? that ²we may seek him with thee.

The bride answers.

2 My beloved *is* gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.

3 ³I *am* my beloved's, and my beloved *is* mine: he feedeth among the lilies.

Part VI. Unbroken communion (to the end): *the Bridegroom speaks.*

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* ⁴as a flock of goats that appear from Gilead.

6 ⁵Thy 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 ⁶As 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, ⁷and terrible as *an army* with banners?

11 I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, *and* ⁸to see whether the vine flourished, *and* the pomegranates budded.

a Song 3.3.

b Song 1.8.

c Heb. a standard bearer.

d Song 1.15; 4.1.

e Heb. sitting in fulness; i.e. fitly placed, and set as a precious stone in the foil of a ring.

f Song 1.8.

g Song 2.16; 7.10.

h Song 4.1.

i Song 4.2.

j Song 4.3.

k v.4.

l Song 7.12.

¹ Observe, it is now the Bridegroom Himself who occupies her heart, not His gifts—myrrh and washed feet (John 13. 2-9).

² So soon as the bride witnesses to the Bridegroom's own personal loveliness, a desire is awakened in the daughters of Jerusalem to seek Him.

12 Or ever I was aware, my soul ^omade 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 ^bof two armies.

CHAPTER 7.

HOW beautiful are thy feet with shoes, ^cO prince's daughter! the joints of thy thighs are like jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman.

2 Thy navel is *like* a round goblet, *which* wanteth not ^dliquor: 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 ^eCarmel, and the hair of thine head like purple; the king is ^fheld 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 ^gof those that are asleep to speak.

The bride speaks.

10 I *am* my beloved's, and ^hhis 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 pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.

13 The ⁱmandrakes give a smell, and at our gates ^jare all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, *which* I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.

CHAPTER 8.

O THAT thou wert as my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother! *when* I should find

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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 ^kI charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake *my* love, until he please.

The Bridegroom speaks.

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 ^lSet me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; ^mjealousy is cruel as the ⁿgrave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, *which* ^ohath 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.

The bride speaks.

8 ^oWe 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?

The Bridegroom speaks.

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.

The bride speaks.

10 I *am* a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found ^pfavour.

11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-hamon; ^qhe 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 ^rMake haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.

a Or, set me on the chariots of my willing people.

b Or, of Mahanaim. Gen.32.2.

c Psa.45.13.

d Heb. mixture.

e Or, crimson.

f Heb. bound.

g Or, of the ancient.

h Psa.45.11.

i Gen.30.14.

j Mt.13.52.

k Song 2.7; 3.5.

l Isa.49.16; Jer.22.24; Hag.2.23.

m Prov.6.35.

n Heb. Sheol. See Hab.2.5, note.

o The reference here is obscure.

p Heb. peace.

q Mt.21.33.

r See Rev.22.17,20.